

of the our totality. With the border between good and bad within us we create civil war and disperse precious energies, because every conflict costs. The agreement puts an end to the conflict because it cancels the division between parts of ourselves: the bad parts are then reintegrated and transformed, and we are richest in psycho-spiritual terms.. Among the various types and ranges of acceptance we have: self-acceptance (of which we have said). The acceptance of factors and natural events (for example, to accept that winter cold face, that rains today, etc.). Acceptance of the limits of time and energy that each of us has (and this leads us to seek the essence and simplicity). Acceptance of passing time: in other words, aging and death (each season has its fruits, death is part of life and is transformation). Acceptance of pain and suffering (sometimes only the pain, if accepted, can shake us from the comfortable routine and let us turn to the most important values: accepting the pain means we can use it and transform). Acceptance of the other.

Acceptance is finally finding our own place in the world, among others, and want to live, sometimes claim it. Moreover, only those who can accept themselves can love themselves: in fact as could we ever love (and we see it better with things or people) what we do not accept? Accepting - loving ourselves leads to an accept-love one's neighbor (and life) consequentially. Accepting it also means becoming humble and fully human; see that there are in us, as in the others, strengths and weaknesses, virtues and vices, limits and potential, growth rates different from ours. To conclude this brief notes I would add that the acceptance must not become an excuse for taking off responsibility in life, a say, so that's just me ...! We have to accept only what cannot be changed, what instead is open to change, if we do not like, when appropriate, we must strive to change it. But acceptance itself, as already said, is the beginning of the transformation and leads to that existential position of totality that is the only consistent with the existence.

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Daniele De Paolis

## BUT WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

*Translation by Achille Cattaneo*

Since the Psychosynthesis is a practice, not a theory, speaking of the Self seems a priori impossible, precisely because many have or have had direct experience? Not to mention that even those who had, hardly should speak of it: both for retention and because it seems this is an ineffable experience, not translatable into words. The Self remains a mystery, but it is permissible trying to probe, to approach, attend. In what way?

A) With the theoretical speculation, that in the absence of other still remains permitted, albeit somewhat hypothetical. Assagioli too legitimates after all this when he says that the approach to the Self is sizes in three phases:

- 1) To believe that the Self exists
- 2) To believe that you have a Self
- 3) To be the Self

in which the first two stages are evidently also speculative, and only the last fully experiential.

B) With the techniques usually used in the relationship/dialogue with the unconscious contents. In this case, especially invocation, prayer, meditation, application, dialogue.

C) But above all experiencing that particular dimension of the Self to which all potentially may or might have access, that is the Ego. Especially if we take into account the fact that - as well Massimo Rosselli reminds us - the Ego is also called by Assagioli "personal Self", the Ego being the reflection of the Self in the space-time dimension, which is that of the personality.

But even by representing only a reflection, the Ego is anyway also an expression/manifestation/aspect of the Self, and then experiencing the Ego means at the same time also making an experience, albeit partial, of the

Self: The latter mode is, among other, the one I use and I have personally used, and of which I can then speak from direct experience. (Together with the first one, of course, that for type I inalienably congenial!)

### **The mystery of the Ego**

Not by chance Assagioli wrote an article entitled “The Mystery of the Ego”. Not “The Mystery of the Self”, but the Ego! This should warn us that defining or understanding the Ego is even more difficult than defining or understanding the Self, even the Ego is possible (but really rarely) to be experienced! Evidently the Ego, that is, the “reflection”, is even more fleeting and elusive of its “source”, the latter despite being placed in the unconscious. Just like the physical light, which is still more mysterious and not understood of its source: the sun.

### **What the Ego is not**

To ease the difficulty of the subject, I would like to begin by distinguishing first of all what the Ego is not. It is not the ego, agree, or the self identified structuring of the personality.

But there is another thing that the Ego is not, and it is the identity.

Personal identity, if understood as a perception of our own irreducible individuality, it is already present in very young children, in which the Ego is beyond by the structure itself. And also - outside of psychotic dimension, that is a different matter - even the most (unconsciously) identified person in a sub-personality or in a role is always perfectly aware of his identity. Ditto for a person such as drunk, or altered, that not even remembers his name, but he will still be conscious of “being”.

This sense of identity that permanently accompanies us from childhood to old age, takes us therefore also in any position of the Ovoid we identify ourselves during our life and the day.

But if in any of these positions we always feel ourselves,

if the perception of our identity remains the same, then it is clear that the experience and the nature of the Ego at the center of the Ovoid will be quite another thing compared to the only sense of identity.

Another thing that Ego is not, take care, are the transpersonal content that from the superconscious flow into the area of consciousness. How Assagioli detailed several times and in more locations specified, Self and superconscious are two areas well distinct from each other, with different channels of access to the area of consciousness.

The contents of the superconscious descend “from above”, metaphorically from the sky of the psyche, like manna.

On the contrary, the energy of the Self – the Self not having contents, as indeed the Ego - enters into the area of the consciousness only from its center, or passing from the “eye of the needle” constituted by the Ego, as dimensionless point.

That the only access point to the Self consciousness is the Ego, here Assagioli is very clear; and then vice versa also on the fact that the Ego is the only point of overlooking of the Self on consciousness, and then on the personality.

And it is precisely for this reason that the experience of the Ego (or personal Self) and the Self (or higher Self) coincide “positionally”, and are both characterized by the centrality.

But if the contents of the superconscious descend from above, and those of the Self flow from the center, it follows that to access to the superconscious we must “climb”, or “rise”; while to get closer to the Self we must instead go to the center. Are two paths, two very different roads.

### **Centrality and depth**

If we try to imagine the Ovoid in three dimensions, then it becomes clear why in psychology centrality and depth are considered equivalent. As well as the

center of the Earth is at the same time its “deepest” site and even the most central, so it is with the Ovoid. Given all this, it is then clear that artistic, scientific or creative inspirations, insights, openings to others, humanitarian impulses and empathetic, superior qualities as love, joy, beauty, etc. - in short the transpersonal contents - all come from the superconscious, and have little to do with the Self.

### **The approach to the Ego**

Now, how happens, however, this process of approaching the Ego, or “going to the center”? In an extremely interesting and particular way, because as we will see significantly implies and involves also the process of integration and synthesis of personality. Unlike in this process of elevation to the superconscious, which instead can be without problems, and maybe even better, leaving some pieces of itself behind, ballast of the not solved items ... that is enough to relieve (see “remove”) to go up (?) faster.

For a naive view, the approach to central Ego would seem to happen through the simple separation of contents and elements of personality (which we can imagine as placed on the outskirts of the Ovoid). I turn my back to those contents, I’m posting, I leave them “behind”, on the outskirts, and I turn and go to the center. What could be easier? Or simple? But this way does not work well. Unfortunately, on the one hand, because the process is much more complex, long and difficult; but fortunately, because this mode would cut schizoid that would exclude much of the personality from the process of self-identification.

The misunderstanding is all in the term or concept of “separation”. What is meant by that is posting? That is, as understood by Psychosynthesis?

It has a concept a bit special and complex, which in hindsight it is clear from the famous sequence of “identification-disidentification-selfidentification.” Which tells us that if we want first selfidentify with the Ego we must before disidentify by the contents of personality, but also tells us that in order to disidentify from these

contents, we must first... identify in them, or immerse ourselves in them, get in, attend them, be there with ! What this is not always easy, as is known, for which the identification in this case becomes a problem for the fact of not being able...to realize it...! Paradoxically, not because there is not, but because there is not!

Now, keep in mind that all parts of us removed are parts in which we refuse or fail to identify; because doing so would mean recognizing them as our own, and accept them (and yet we do not like them). But then it happens that - by virtue of the famous sequence above - if we do not get there, if we do not recognize ourselves in them, we can not stand back!

This is a fundamental paradox of Psychosynthesis, so I can detach myself from a situation only after having lived it; I can detach myself from experience just after the crossing it; I can let go of a part of me just after taking it well in hand; I can give up a conquest only after we have got it.

In this sense, and to paraphrase a famous motto of Assagioli, we could say that “the only way out is the way in”:the only way to get out of a relationship (with a part of us) is to get into it, make it own, and then to resolve it as after comparing - humbly and courageously, that is, with integrity - with it. A little as happens in Dante’s Inferno, where the way out is... from its deepest point, after having gone through everything.

So detachment by crossing, and not schizoid detachment of rejection, separation, denial, the fissure... or the anti-integration. That is the gap that disintegrates, fragments that isolates.

The posting of Psychosynthesis is a detachment that aggregates, which includes and finally assimilates; which “leaves behind” something only after had it fully integrated and woven into the viral web of the intrapsychic relationships, ie after having actively inscribed it in our own psychic family, or the crew and the organic of manifold soul.

With this in mind, it is then clear that the process of

approaching the Ego will start, indeed will be only able to start from the far psychic periphery of the edge of the Ovoid, so to speak. Identification, assimilation, integration or inclusion, and then detachment, which at this point will be quite a letting go of the contents so “assimilated”, releasing them in a common psychic space, made free to express themselves and play their role (as from the IX law of psychology). Contents that will be represented first of all by the primary and fundamental psychic elements: instincts, impulses, needs, desires, etc.

Well done, this progressive approach to the Ego takes place not leaving behind a desert, a void, a chaos removed from which to escape, or on the contrary a psychic structure stiffened and blocked by repressions and forcing, but a psychic fabric homogeneous and vital that having been “processed” will have among other things metaphorically got also the ownership of transparency.

So not a vacuum, but a full, an orderly and transparent full that then acts as a support, and not as an obstacle to the centrality of the Ego. With an image, it is as if the arrangement of the central podium of the conductor emerge following the progressive placement of the orchestra each in its proper place. Or as the central focus of receiving of a satellite dish that is “product” from the ordered, concise and complete convergence of all the elements that make up the dish itself (in the analogy, the personality).

Consequently, the Ego for sure is an immanent reflection of the transcendent Self, that is, its roots are in “heaven” while those of the personality are in the ground. But the central position of the Ego, to be clear on the bottom of the well the quiet surface of which reflects sunlight, as in the well-known metaphor, this position/well is formed, built and rebuilt, or constantly maintained active, by personality.

Besides, the concept itself of center, of centrality, is exquisitely correlative: we are in fact only the center of something, either of a field, a group, a set, a structure...

So did not the Ego in itself, but the centrality of the Ego is strictly codependent by the personality. Moreover, the geometry itself teaches us: in a circle, the more the circumference is distorted, the more the center is lost...

What is therefore more “democratic” of this conception of the centrality of the Ego? Of a center achieved and maintained only through continuous and active “cooperation” of the personality? And through its work? Moreover, there is also to be noted that this process of approaching the center takes place simultaneously from any “direction” of the psyche: from below, from above, from the side, in a process of appropriation/identification and subsequent detachment that occurs in exactly the same way for both the contents so-called lower and upper.

An Ego in fact that finds its (only) possible collocation thanks to the essential concurrence of each element of its personality, or crew, regardless of its level. A final point to be made concerns the precious requirement of transparency of this structure (the personality) that supports the centrality of the Ego. Valuable because first of all it is a guarantee of the best functionality of the Ego, whose principal purpose of agent of awareness, or Observer, can only be helped by this requirement.

And also because this transparency is revealed also crucial in order to radiation outside of transpersonal energies and qualities, so that do not meet frictions or overshadowing or distortions within the personality, but rather an amplification and reinforcement.

### **The experience of the Ego/Self (personal)**

After this broad but fundamental premise, that is how happens the conquest of the centrality, “premise” that actually as a psychosynthesist I think much more important than the following, we can finally try to answer what is the experience of the Ego. Experience we have already seen to coincide with that of the Self (personal).

Based on my personal experience, which is quite as

theorized by Psychosynthesis, the experience of the Ego/Self is essentially characterized by a few elements:

- 1) Immersion in a space of deep inner silence, in which the voices and the facts of life outside arrive as muffled and far, but with the utmost clarity.
- 2) A sense of absolute independence and total invulnerability, coupled with the highest availability and openness to all that is, and a total letting be.
- 3) Above all, a total and complete sense of presence, of being, in which the “doing” disappears, and the movement, or rather its perception slows. Taking a well-known expression, it is like a “present to the Present in the present.” That is, in the here and now, in the instant, or the size of Being.

These are the main features of my experience of the Ego / Self, features that actually seem to be able to be defined precisely well as threshold, or border than switching from / to the space-time dimension. To these characteristics we could then add some other, comment on them and interpret them theoretically. You could also describe the conditions and techniques that facilitate this experience, but I do not seem these aspects are essential. Taking instead to theorize, I want to emphasize that the experience described is only the one concerning the Ego / Self, that is the reflection of the Self. And that experience is, for me at least, already absolutely apical, and as such rare, non-permanent, non-reproducible, long and challenging to achieve. I would also say exclusive, in the sense that requires a work of introversion that is not compatible with the normal outdoor life.

This is to say that this centrality of the Ego seems to be already a great achievement, a great result, because its effects are reflected immediately and then very powerfully over the entire psychic structure. That said, however, occurs immediately after the inevitable question: “If these are the experiences of the reflection, what then are those of the source, of the Self?” The answer, my answer is: I do not know. Because

obviously in my case the channel, or with an image a bit more modern we could also say the optical fiber that connects the Ego to the Self, the reflection to the source, is apparently blocked at some point. Because if it was patent, or free, it is evident that reached and experienced the reflection, would be achieved automatically also the source, flowing in a moment without time along the “optical fiber” itself.

There is therefore no automatism, no follow through on the experience of reflection, of Ego/Self, and that of the source, the Self. At the first one many persons can get , possibly all, because it requires a lot of work and a long commitment, which falls inside the area in full consciousness, and is therefore within the reach of the will.

The second experience, the experience of the Self, on the contrary is for the most part out of control, and exactly for that portion of the channel (or optical fiber) that develops in the unconscious. Here are traffic lights, barriers, filters - probably of karmic and evolutionary nature - that can be more or less open or closed, and that obviously dose and size both the intensity of the reflection and the accessibility to the source. And then - another question - when these filters are closed, as is the case of most people, and since we can not take action on them (here the will is powerless), this means that the experience of the Self is precluded ?

### **The experience of the Self**

Yes and not, I would say. Depending on that is what we mean by experience of the Self. Because if the direct experience of the Self is precluded, meaning that its direct inclusion in the consciousness, however, remains in my open in my opinion another possible form of his experience, albeit indirectly: a form with deliberate provocation

I would like to call like the experience of faith. Faith certainly not intended as an opinion or belief shared by law, this would be the faith the kindergarten, but faith just as literally expressed by the beautiful and unsurpassed Pauline definition: faith as “substance

of things hoped for, certainty of things not seen". In the psychosynthetic meaning, the Self is by definition among the things not seen, lying in the unconscious. But can we be sure about this?

The Self is also "hoped" because its location in the Ovoid is deliberately to indicate the direction of our future, the direction of evolution, the point of universal synthesis or final convergence (the Omega Point of Teilhard de Chardin) that as Aristotelian final cause calls us to the Self, we and all men, liberally but finexorably, or with free necessity. Recurs in short here the situation of St. Thomas, who had to touch to believe. The same happens in Psychosynthesis towards the Self. Blessed, I would say, the ones that do not need to "touch" the Self, or to have a direct experience, to believe.

Because obviously, if they do not see, they "feel" in their hearts, in other words they feel that is present, the energy, the closeness and support, and this with the probes of their sensitivity and perception, probes which - let us remember - if well trained can penetrate and get very far in the unconscious, where the view can not even look out. Precisely because of this workout to dialogue with the unconscious, which in theory every good psychosynthesist should have already completed in plenty on the work on his personality, I would say that the belief in self, in Psychosynthesis, should be commonplace.

But I will say more about it: it is my belief that the so-called "refusal of the sublime" or the transcendent - in the various forms it can take - when it emerges within psychosynthetic area, is a clear indication of the presence of complexes and unresolved personal conflicts in personality.

That is conflicts with the authorities, lived abandonments, rejects of the hierarchical concept and so on, that are projected towards the size of the "superior" - of course not recognized or accepted, but masked by the usual rationalizations, that does not really have almost never solid and authentic ideological or theoretical reasons on which to base (otherwise

they would not have arrived at the Psychosynthesis). And this is one of the main reasons why it is recommended the transpersonal psychosynthesis before the transpersonal one. Not because the latter is more "important" or difficult, but because the first represents an indispensable preparation and an unavoidable prerequisite.

In fact, if we have not ventured to untie our knots in the arena of our personal life, for example, if we still feed resentments and frustrations, if we still believe in injustice, if we still feed expectations or claims, if we still cultivate illusions and delusions, if there are still feelings and frustrations not elaborated, and so on, we will ever have the lightness and simplicity that lacked the rich young man of the Gospel, to pass through the eye of the needle of Ego / Self? We will ever have the necessary transparency to intercept the indirect rays of the Self that subtly seep into the unconscious? We will ever have the opportunity to grasp the rarefied perfume?

To conclude, I want to connect to the title of these reflections, considering that "Christ in you, hope of glory," says St. Paul.

"Self in you, hope of glory" says Psychosynthesis.

Authentic faith, neither in Psychosynthesis nor anywhere else, never abolishes the free will and the individual autonomy. So ultimately, the experience (indirect) of the Self will inevitably pass for the answer that in the first person and freely each of us sooner or later will be called to give to the crucial question posed by his Self: "But who do you say that I am? "