

# EDITORIAL

Translation by  
Gordon Leonard Symons

Dear readers,

*The occasion of the theme of the XXXI National Convention of the Institute of Psychosynthesis “The Time of Renewal” is enriching our magazine with new impulses. In fact, there are columns that speak of art, music and creativity that will certainly give new life to all of us. Interesting articles offered by psychosynthesists also lead us into a diverse polyphonic world of the desire to know and deepen. It is as if the objective were giving way to the new, with a sense of adventure and research, thinking globally, but acting locally. On this theme you will find eight ideas from Assagioli’s notes on the meaning of “New” (c.1965.)*

*This issue sees the end of the story of Luisa Lunelli on the life of the founder of Psychosynthesis, but at the same time you will discover her Library with the restoration interventions on books and publications that have nourished her knowledge and her connections with other wise men.*

*In “Letters to the Director” we published some tributes to the figure of the esteemed and beloved psychosynthesist Dr. Massimo Rosselli who left this life in the last days of last year.  
Thank you for reading,*

Patrizia Bonacina

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# WHAT DOES “NEW” MEAN?

Extract from unfinished notes (c.1965)  
by Roberto Assagioli

*Translation by Silvia Trolli*

The word *New* has a large range of meanings and it is used in various ways. We must discriminate to understand them clearly and use them appropriately.

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*New* can be and is employed to indicate eight different attitudes:

To experiment once more individually with something which is well known to others.

This could be called the *new existential*.

*Existential* meaning any experience which is subjectively new and unique.

- ***New forms and new symbols used to express in a new form an idea, a principle, a value, previously expressed.***

Many people do not make a distinction between the idea and its expression, between a truth and how it is expressed. The lack of discrimination, of acknowledgment of a truth or principle *apart* from its expression can have very damaging results. Often the rejection of a certain form can lead to the rejection of the eternal idea and the eternal principle which underlies them.

- A less accentuated type of newness is that of ***a more or less large change in existing forms; adaptation or renewal. This is the truly constructive meaning of re-form.***
- The ***new emphasis or importance*** given to specific qualities or aspects, contained in different areas but with fundamentally the same meaning.  
This can be observed for example in the religious

field. All the major religions proclaim the same fundamental principles and values. The differences of emphasis have given rise to different doctrines, to different forms and ways of religious life, and are therefore in a certain sense, *new*.

- ***New applications of a known principle or law.***  
This always happens, especially today [year 1965 approximately], in science and in technical inventions.
- ***New combinations*** of existing elements, to produce new substances.
- ***New procedures*** and new techniques to produce the same benefits, or energies, in more practical and economic ways.
- ***What is new in an intrinsic and complete sense is the appearance of something original, which has never existed and is sometimes opposed to what exists.***  
This takes place in nature and in human activities. In nature, it has been defined as emergent evolution and manifests itself in biological mutations, in the appearance of new plant and animal species. In humanity it is the result of creative activities that give rise to new styles in art, to new literary productions, new discoveries, new theories and “models” in science.

**All these types of “New” are present and active in the manifestation of the New Age and it is good to recognize them when they manifest.**

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT INSPIRING A PSYCHOSYNTHETIC INTERPRETATION CONCERNING HEALTH, ILLNESS AND THE THERAPIST-PATIENT RELATIONSHIP

*Translation by Annalisa Gasperi*

Food for thought inspiring a psychosynthetic interpretation concerning health, illness and the therapist-patient relationship

There has always been in every person, as a background to his/her being and acting in the world, an interpretive model of existence that deeply influences his/her progress in life.

Such a model could be:

- conscious or unconscious
- influenced by formative elements – personality – family – culture – religion – society
- a result of contemplation – intuition – a conscious choice

It steadily functions in all of us and determines the way we interpret and act in relation to life events.

Therefore, the answers to the following questions depend on our type of model:

- Who am I, who are you?
- What is Soul?
- What is Personality?
- What is meant by health ?
- What is meant by illness ?
- What do we mean by therapy and healing?

Let us synthetically illustrate the Psychosynthetic Model

## **Key Words**

Evolution  
I/Self (Soul)  
Personality  
Subpersonality  
Integration  
Self-awareness  
Levels of self-awareness  
The process of the Self  
Identification/Dis-identification/Identity  
Will

In Psychosynthesis, evolution means a process of growing, progress, a transition from being potential to being actual, which functions on every level and in each aspect of its manifestation.

Although it is not entirely perfect, the whole uni-verse is evolving (towards one) and all beings, from the tiniest to the biggest, take part in this process of perfection that reveals itself as a complete manifestation of the Essence in the Form.

Such an evolving tension reflects a deep reality, a primary Law of life, that functions both in the natural process and in the human being in which two supporting pillars are progressively built up: the Self (the Essence) and the Personality (the Form).

The approach, the union, the integration, the synthesis between the Self and the Personality, gradually occur at interpenetrating levels, by promoting, stage by stage, the path of growth and development of self-consciousness (self-awareness) and

thus helping the emergence of more progressively inclusive levels of life and action and a more distinct ever-growing awareness of the meaning to be given to the self in the world and to the events that distinguish it.

According to the psychosynthesis model a person is a bio-psycho-spiritual unity which has various parts and levels that can be separately illustrated and evaluated. However, they are actually connected to each other and each of them mutually influences and is influenced at the

same time. Therefore, the interpretation of health and illness is seen as a consequence of the dynamic, functional or dysfunctional interaction between all of these aspects. We can very briefly assert that life generates such an evolution by providing situations in which, once they have been gone through, progressive identifications (experiences), dis-identifications (detachment-elaboration) and self-identifications (self-awareness-identity) inevitably occur.

A person slowly becomes aware of him/herself and becomes familiar with his/her own deep dynamic strength: the will.

Such a process is not to be completed once and for all but it continuously re-occurs, similarly to a spiral, by generating prevailing identifications on the most advanced stages of consciousness until an enduring identification with the Self has been manifested, thoroughly and clearly, through the means of an integrated personality that is able to act in the world.

As a result of the assertion above, every human being is involved in:

- an incessant process of change that entails a capability of detachment and choice
- an incessant need for balance between diverse elements, which are often unconscious and conflicting and have to be accepted, recognized and transformed
- an incessant need for improving insufficient and immature aspects while maintaining the developmental direction

All of this produces in him a deep travail, crisis, to which he can and must respond with the baggage he has, psychological and physical, and this involves the inevitable confrontation with suffering, (as part of the evolution).

So what do we mean by health?

Health is a dynamic condition in which physical, emotional, mental and transpersonal aspects function in a harmonious way and all of them play an important role in the individual's unity, as they consciously or unconsciously take part in its evolution, so that the soul's ex-

istence can freely flow with no obstacles in the organic group that composes the form. Therefore, it is not about either physical health or psychic health, neither can we simply consider health as a static condition in the course of our evolution in which temporary critical moments come in succession from one balancing level to another that hence generates suffering. However, suffering is not illness.

In fact, we can affirm that suffering is part of existence – it is not illness – and it is related to the process of evolution. The consequences of avoiding suffering are staleness, regression or illness as chronic suffering, as a denial of suffering due to life's experiences of transformation.

According to what has been claimed above, illness at any level of manifestation and at any level of apparent cause (physical disease, emotional imbalance, psychic distress, moral conflicts, transition crisis, etc.) displays a transitional dis-function of the entire individual and the way it should be coped with.

We can distinguish two essential attitudes towards illness and distress:

- Identification that may entail various reactions such as: fear, denial, trivialization, anger, defiance, atonement, helplessness, desperation, resignation, depression, vital blockage...
- Dis-identification – Self-identification which fosters: relativization, acceptance, accountability, elaboration, learning, growing, existential healing.

A person's philosophy of life inspires, fosters or keeps him/her attached to one of these two attitudes.

What does illness generally cause? Some elements are:

- Rigid identifications
- Non-acceptance and resistance to change
- Static condition
- Attachment
- Inappropriate use of psychic functions
- One part of the Self dominating another one
- Experiencing loneliness while suffering
- Absence
- Loss
- Abuses
- Avoiding existential suffering
- Ignoring how the bio-psycho-spiritual unity functions
- Illusory thoughts about life
- Negative interpretative models of life
- Friction due to divergence of direction between the Self and parts of the personality or between the Self and the integrated personality in toto...

In order to start following a path toward real healing, it is important to acknowledge the signal aspect at the emergence of the disease as well as the need of realignment, the chance to redirect one's own way of living and his/her opportunity for learning and becoming aware of his/herself, and the way s/he deals with the process of

internal growing by deeply considering the existence of a healthy part – the Self as identification and means for healing. It is essential to take full responsibility of the evolutionary step to be completed.

However, a constructive attitude toward illness is not always possible. Everyone of us passes through stages of identification and developmental phases of consciousness that confer opportunities and limits and different grades of internal freedom, on which the approach to suffering, illness and health depend, and which become obvious during the therapeutic relation as well as in the search for solutions, prevention, healing and recovery. All of this is true for both for the therapist and the patient.

According to the psychosynthesis map, we can synthetically divide the process of evolution of the human consciousness in four essential phases:

- 1) **Pre-personal**
- 2) **Personal**
- 3) **Existential crisis**
- 4) **Transpersonal**

The approach to suffering, illness, therapy, health, recovery as well as the relationship between therapist and patient depend on both the therapist and the patient's phase of evolution of consciousness and the aspects of transference, roles, humanity and souls.

### **Pre-personal Phase:**

#### **Features**

Prevailing unconscious identification with fragmented content of consciousness or with a subpersonality

Prevailing unconscious conditions and needs that shape one's behaviour

Immaturity

Egocentricity

Separateness

Barely aware I

Paralyzed will

Passiveness

Defense mechanisms

Dis-accountability

Patient: Identification as illness – Non-acceptance or uncritical acceptance – Expectations for recovery, also magic one – Mistrust or passive commitment – Suffering is endured without giving it a meaning – A search for healing without learning – Poor possibility for an actual therapeutic union – Poor possibility for an actual healing.

Therapist: identification as a need or subpersonality, acted through the therapeutic role – Patient's identification with illness – Egocentricity – Self-affirmation – Rigidity – Refusal for listening – Unrecognized human relations – Therapy as a routine practice without renewal nor uniqueness – Recovery as elimination of symptoms.

### **Personal Phase:**

#### **Features:**

A prevailing identification as a conscious and self-fulfilling Personal I.

Personal, still egocentric motives: satisfying one's own needs, achieving one's own well-being at all levels, displaying one's own skills – developing one's specific personal potentiality, achieving one's own goals

Individualism

Egocentric altruism

Personal will

Success

Independence

Satisfaction

Mechanisms for adjustment

The personality undergoes a phase of integration, the individual constructs and efficiently plays his/her various roles. S/he faces and prevents possible conflicts and diseases, s/he is independent and is capable of providing for and taking care of him/herself. His/her attitude to life is dynamic.

Possible physical or psychic disease is faced with intelligence and with a capability of collaborating and recognizing mutual roles and duties. A healthy state prevails until the crystallization of this state of evolution collides with the willingness to acquire new states of evolution.

Therapist and patient: during this phase they make a good therapeutic union which is grounded on the mutual recognizing of their roles and their relating personalities. Correct information, competence, in-depth analysis, decision and organization are available.

There is a prevailing scientific approach to the disease with its obvious aspects that are possibly correlated to the patient's personal way of life and the unrecognized value of other therapeutic approaches that are based on the existence of more subtle reality, more or less unconscious blindness regarding the bio-psycho-spiritual relation or simply the psychophysical one.

### **Existential Crisis Phase:**

#### **Features:**

But life is constantly changing ... therefore, without there being necessarily an apparent cause, you can start to feel a sense of dissatisfaction .. of lack .. life begins to

appear empty, arid ... what had value starts to fade into the background .. new problems arise, internal questions begin to resonate that become increasingly pressing:

- Questioning the up-to-now acquired identity in the search of a deeper one in the push of inner needs. Searching for existential meanings.
- A moment of weakness that highly enables the emergence of diseases, especially psychic but also physical ones and somatizations. Losing certainties and up-to-now reference points
- A need for: Courage – Patience – Ability to proceed without asking for certainties – Ability to tolerate frustration at various levels – Trust – Discrimination – Common sense

This is the beginning of a long inner search, a search for interpretations, knowledge, meanings, teaching, encounters, Teachers, maps, models, techniques, adventures into the exploration of inner worlds.

The official medical science is no longer enough.

The individual wants to know what is happening to him/her and starts searching for answers because s/he cannot be passive.

S/he is looking for that therapist who is able to listen to and help him/her by deeply resonating with each other, by sharing the same affinity of approach to life...

The person is not simply looking for technical expertise but mostly for existential one as s/he does not feel like being the subject of a preconceived record and s/he is willing to collaborate for his/her own healing by playing an active role in it.

The disease turns out to be an opportunity for him/her to come in closer contact with him/herself and with his/her own inner world as well as to broaden his/her horizon from being an individual to being human, so as to achieve a significant expansion of his/her self-awareness. This is valuable, for both the patient and the therapist, establishing a relationship of a mutual growth, while respecting their own positions that are supported by a common human matrix and a shared elaboration of experiences regarding suffering and illness.

## Transpersonal Phase:

### Features

The process of evolution continues...

Moments of bliss interchange with moments of discouragement... Light and shadow...

The contents of the superconscious flow into the consciousness by providing new understanding... the intuition sharpens... there is a need for changes in life, some of them are painful for the personality... for every achievement there is something to renounce, the personal I and its demands fades into the background... but sometimes it revolts...

The individual's motives undergo a transformation along with the expansion of his/her consciousness, that indeed becomes more and more altruistic...

The Inner Path has been opened – one for all but different for each of us...

In the stillness of the moments of inner contact the voice of the Self starts resounding: “I am the Self, the center of pure self-consciousness and will – creative and dynamic energy – this is the center of real identity from which I can observe, direct, harmonize all psychological processes as well as my physical body”

Prevailing identification with the Self that reveals itself to the personality

Authenticity

Uniqueness

Individuality

The intellect of the heart

Harmony

Fullness

Wisdom

Knowledge about and respect for the laws of life

The distinction between patient and therapist blurs

The Human-Therapist emerges: He is Apollo – Asclepius – Chiron

### Conclusion

**Blessed be the crises that lead us into a new world**



# THE POWER OF ATTENTION

*Translation by Achille Cattaneo*

When I tackle a topic that I am passionate about, I always start by looking for the etymology of the terms contained in the title. This time, however, playing on the word **attention**, first I want to direct attention to another word apparently far from the topic in question, but which offers interesting ideas, that is, SIMPLE.

“Simple”, understood in a negative sense, can indicate something mediocre, trivial, obvious, expected. Sometimes when describing an object that does not convince us, of uncertain taste, we resort to the expression: “It’s a bit too simple, banal” and even in talking about a person it happens to say: “He’s a simpleton”, or even, the synonymous, not very edifying, of “silly”.

On the other hand, the positive aspect of the word simple, evokes something frank, genuine and pure. If we think of the biographies of some charismatic figures (beginning with our Assagioli), they led lives in the name of simplicity, in their way of life, in food, in clothing; I think of Ghandi with his white robe, woven by himself, the dhoti, or the white sari bordered with blue by Mother Teresa of Calcutta, without speaking of the habit of St. Francis (well known also in India). The simple lives of the friars, of the monks, of lay people, like Terzani a the Orsiglia, elected as a dwelling place of peace and quiet, and of many other people who live their lives in simplicity, in a natural way, in close contact with nature. In Florence there is the beautiful Giardino dei Semplici, meaning simple medicinal herbs, remedies, in fact natural. There would be so much more to say, but I stop here, with this little eulogy on simplicity.

What motivates me to mention of the value of simplicity? A spontaneous answer arises in me: “It would be too easy to attach to the word simple the importance of being attentive”. In fact, come to think of it: “It’s simple, just be careful to live well and not have any troubles!”. Sometimes the obviousness makes us indulge in super-

ficiality. It is easy to pay attention to crossing the road in order not to be knocked down; it’s simple, just pay attention to wear more, so as not to get cold, or be careful to watch the clock, so as not to be late, and so on, for many other situations in life. Simple becomes almost a synonym for easy, in the sense of superficiality. Another word game: “It seems easy but it is not at all simple,” to regulate, for example, our attention; too much, excessive, becomes obsession, a fixation, on an idea, on an illness, on a feeling, until it becomes delirium. Too little attention, becomes superficiality, trivialization, dispersion, both at the level of our physical energies, and in relationships, and in drawing hasty conclusions in certain situations.

Well then? Is it really easy to fix our attention on what we do? Or terribly difficult? If you were alert a few moments ago when reading, I put another term to the word simple, that is easy. I stressed that it would be too easy to call simple a whole series of things that require our attention. Easy can lead to the false belief that there is not a certain amount of commitment; to get something without effort, without application. Simple does not mean obvious, as for easy, in the sense, yes, of easy, feasible, achievable, but anyway, it always requires a certain amount of will. It’s here that this word, will, comes in, which is so dear to Psychosynthesis. Being attentive to life represents an act of will, a real commitment to ourselves, to others, to the environment, to the various interpersonal relationships. Taking responsibility for our actions, for the care of our body, for the coherence of our thoughts, for respect for interpersonal relationships; all this requires attention. How many times do we happen to say: “I did not pay attention to what I said and I ended up wounding him”, or, “I misunderstood, because I was not caring”, and again, in other situations. In short, paying attention to what we do, think, act, if it is not really a life saver, it improves our way of life, makes us present, savoring the taste even more. Often, when we eat, we are absent, distracted; we know that to feel satisfied, we must chew slowly and taste every single bite. But we are in the age of fast food.

Assagioli talks a lot about letting oneself live, more than anything else in the sense of being carried away by in-

instincts, feelings, passions, without a critical conscience or awareness. Letting oneself live, can refer to the search for an easy life, perhaps full of comforts, obtained in a free way, without effort, without commitment. Making things easy, in a regressive sense, recalls the idea of the childish situation where the omnipotent parent provides everything to the needs of the child, but when this attitude remains, it becomes an impediment to growth, to maturation, to experiences of life, to test, assay, developing skills and abilities. How many of us have had the experience of acquiring quality, resources, only through the difficulties and obstacles that life has placed on us and that never before would have been considered to be confrontable and surmountable .... I leave aside the consideration on the educational side, and not only, of easy living, would open unimaginable fronts.

However, I believe that these brief ideas help us to understand the value, the immense power of the conscious use of attention. Power as potentiality, but also as the driving force of our actions, directed towards an end, a viable goal, feasible. This is the act of will.

But we have other points to see. What is meant by attention, and how can you be careful, and again, can you develop this capacity of the mind? Does attention concern only the mental plane? Let's see!

According to the dictionary, attention means an application or concentration of the mind. In fact, some teachers often use the expression to some students "does not apply himself, he is not careful", and often this lack of attention, coincidentally approaches the other phrase, "he is lazy". This brings us back to the widespread disorder of attention deficit, a diagnosis that is often used too hastily with particularly lively children. But let's leave this subject, other scenarios would open up, such as those of the highly intuitive, imaginative children diagnosed with diagnosis of hyperactivity, who become difficult and marginalized subjects, rather than encouraged and valued by specific didactic paths.

Let's go back to the vocabulary, because in addition to mental concentration it also speaks of the sensory one. Our body also enters the field, which guides us through the senses, helps us, becomes an instrument of knowledge towards the external and internal world. We know

how the visually impaired, through other sensory sources, orient themselves and perceive physical and psychological situations in a more precise way compared to the given norms. Assagioli in fact among the various techniques to enhance the ability to self-observation, proposes the exercises of sensory evocation, auditory, tactile, olfactory, taste, as well as visual, through visualization. In fact, the practice of meditation, reflexive meditation, is also a method for developing, enhancing the mind's capacity, on what are the other components of the art of thinking: concentration and focus. But returning to the meaning of the word attention, in the etymological research we find that it derives from the Latin term, *attention-onis*, derivative of paying attention, or *turn the soul*, interesting expression!

Well, we have several points to investigate. One of these concerns the will. Psychosynthesis has studied its nature, its different meanings and the qualities that characterize it. Among these qualities we find **concentration, convergence, attention and focus**. Assagioli considers essential concentration to make an act of will effective. Concentration is achieved through attention which in turn requires directionality, persistent intentionality. It seems a bit convoluted, but in the application, we find the validity of this process. There is a piece by Roberto Assagioli which deals with the theme of concentration, I invite you to consult it and above all to put it into practice like all the techniques of psychosynthesis; it is called "Concentration", taken from a 1934 paper, and can be requested from the Centers or the Institute.

Converging, focusing, directing attention, however, depends on the interest, on the attraction that the topic causes or the purpose that we have set. It is easy to bring attention to something we like, a movie, a book, an activity we have chosen, but often it does not. When we have to pay attention to things that are far from our tastes or our choices, for example, for some, filling out the tax return, it becomes much more difficult, like studying a subject that goes beyond our usual skills. Many examples, in which an effort of will is required, a total concentration.

In this regard, Roberto Assagioli, in the above mentioned piece, writes:



“If we try to focus on some abstract topic or something that does not involve any personal interest or benefit, we find it difficult to do so, and we find that we do not really have any real dominion over our mind.”

Then he goes on to state that this finding is somewhat disheartening, even if very realistic. How can our mind then be attracted to a subject that is difficult to us, unfamiliar to our usual interests. When I was studying banking in high school, it was a real pain for me, but if I wanted to take the diploma to enroll in the Faculty of Letters (studies that I had discovered more congenial to me) I had to study it, out of love or force; I would say strength of will but also love, benevolence towards the goal that I would later achieve.

And what kind of mind are we referring to? The mind is an “animal” difficult to domesticate but at the same time an instrument of knowledge, both of the external and of the internal world. Among the various functions of the mind, in addition to the imaginative one, we find the function of thought, distinguishing it in the analytic and the synthetic one; therefore a mind that analyzes with a precise method and a synthetic mind that processes the data and gives an overall result. This also happens for the **attention** that orients the thought towards objects of knowledge of external reality, or towards internal psychic worlds (for example meditation) or even towards higher Realities, of a spiritual kind.

As we are complex, yet our bio / psycho / spiritual life is a wonderful living mechanism and to study, to know its functioning, should be considered, a privilege, an honor. “Fatti non foste a viver come bruti ma per seguir virtute e canoscenza”, as the great poet reminds us.

I realize that this theme is likely to be educational, perhaps a bit heavy and your attention is put to the test. I still ask you a few moments, however, because being attentive to life, is one of many, small, simple, secrets to feel better about yourself and others.

Giving attention, bringing attention to our living, means nurturing our psyche in a virtuous way; let us nourish ourselves for example with positive, encouraging thoughts, choose feelings that enlarge our hearts and do not restrict our coronaries like hatred, anger, violent emotions, perhaps more for those who try them, than for those to whom they are directed. Let’s nourish our-

selves with foods cooked with love, slowly and just as slowly let us enjoy them. In the process of awareness of the knowing, owning and transforming yourself, it is precisely to give attention to who we are, to how we are made, to become more masters of us and consequently to transform certain behaviors that even in good faith, maybe rather than facilitate us, instead they harm us, because of lack of attention.

How can we be careful, to strengthen this faculty of the mind? Above all when we have to apply ourselves in a field that interests us little and difficult to understand.

We have to cheat our mind a little, with the wise use of the will. This is the use of the intervention of the wise will, besides being strong and benevolent. I can force myself as much as I want to study a subject, but if I do not find the purpose, the usefulness, and I do not plan a suitable, flexible and feasible study plan, I will be able to study very little, just to give an example.

Here help us the words of Assagioli, always from the famous “Concentration” piece:

“The technique to be used to gain control over the mind and the ability to concentrate it and use it at will is to direct and keep the attention on objects that are indifferent to us that do not present any attraction for themselves. In this way we learn to keep the mind fixed, without the help of interest or personal desire. “

So the trick is in training, let’s say, in a neutral field, even far enough from the task that is more difficult to do. We make our muscles, and so, slowly, our will will be able to develop other functions as well as that of thought.

Meditation serves precisely this purpose, the right use of the mind; constancy in training, regularity, is one of the most important requirements. We are stormed by a thousand external stimuli, all to make us move away from another function of the mind, the discriminatory one. Knowing how to discriminate, requires self-observation skills, paying attention to our needs, authentic desires and not imposed from outside. To test our qualities, to overcome the fears to face life, perhaps the one that others would like to impose on us. But, take care, is our life: handle with care!

## THE BABY AND THE BATHWATER A PARABLE OF RENEWAL

Translation by Greta Bianchi

We all know the meaning of the injunction not to “throw the baby out with the bathwater”, in its harsh but effective combination: *do not confuse what is more valuable* (especially related to an experience) *with what is less valuable, or even of no value at all*. This saying seems to be of Germanic origin, from around 1600, but perhaps it is even more ancient and derived, as well as other sayings, from the parable of the “weeds”, also called plant of the “bad lolium” (lolium temulentum).

In the Gospel parable, at night, the “enemy” of the owner of a field (i.e. the devil, from the Greek *dia-ballein* = *to separate, to divide*, therefore “the separator”, but also “the separated”) sows weeds among the wheat. It is important to learn to distinguish *opposing elements* by coexisting with both, patiently experiencing them in order to better recognize them at the time of the “harvest”, when it is time to decide which of the two to keep. If the immediate reaction to the suffered damage had prevailed, the owner of the land, following the impulse to eradicate the weeds, would have risked destroying the young plants of wheat together with the weeds.

The image of the “baby and the bathwater” takes us back to the dimension of our daily experience, animated by an energy that expresses itself, at its most conscious level, through responsibility and choice. Just as the owner of that land decides to wait for the wheat and the weeds to grow, so that they are better defined and recognizable, and only then he makes the choice between one and the other, a *good internal mother or father* will not confuse the baby with the bathwater made impure by the “remains” of the experience. Every time that the *child* is immersed in the water of that wash tub, that is, in the psychic energy of love and care, it is as if he also renewed his right to be loved the way he is and the right to grow, to develop. It is as

if all the fears, the errors, the false myths and the illusory beliefs about oneself and about the world became evident, visible in that “bathwater”, that therefore becomes an image of a possible redemption and transformation; as well as valuable information on how, until that moment, the experience of living was carried out and on the obstacles it encountered. Therefore, the “bathwater” testifies the renewal of life.

**According to Assagioli, the *renewal* is “the awakening of latent energies, of the plastic, new unconscious, not yet impressed. It requires the overcoming of inertia and the liberation from the illusion of security”** (*Lessons on psychosynthesis*, year 1967, section XII).

This is why I like to consider it “the theme of themes”. Both because it represents the potential of the ordinary, and because in these times we observe a certain tendency, especially among the protagonists of public life, to compete to see which are more legitimized to promulgate the “in with the new”. As if this did not involve the ability, neither simple nor obvious, to renew themselves first.

In the same way, when years ago we heard for the first time the word “dumping” referred to the action of some human beings *versus* other human beings and not versus refrigerators, washing machines or cars, many of us wondered if the “in with the new” was really just that..

On the other hand, it does not seem that today’s observable results have honored that promise of renewal, given the reappearance of adulterated faces that now deny the *Vetus*

(the Old), the extension of sexist, racist and xenophobic behaviors, the preaching of macro-economic recipes that consider well-being and dignity (I am not saying happiness) as negligible extras for the human being; not to mention those nostalgic-absolutist tendencies not exactly oriented towards brotherhood and inclusion among the whole of humanity. But this, of course, is only my personal opinion and is addressed to the “shadow” side of current affairs. The bright side, on the other hand, highlights the countless experiences of cooperation and practice of authentic solidarity - together with the many examples of responsibility and openness to the future by those who “do business” risking doing it in the first person - who place the common good at the center of their aims and, above all, of their actions. Indeed, whenever we exercise a free and conscious choice, we place ourselves on the ground of renewal. Not just this. We choose to abandon certainty for uncertainty, we leave our *comfort zone* to explore the unpredictable territory of the “unknown”. Be it idea, person, neighborhood, city, nation or continent; and each of these territories and dimensions, reflected within us, reshape our inner world. Nevertheless, in order to do this, it is important to look closely both at the *child* (his innate drive to exploration, to growth and evolution, but also his fears and illusions), and the *bathwater* (“residues” of previous experiences, mista-

kes, disappointments, remorse and regrets). It is necessary to observe them from another position, on another level, transcending our oscillation from one pole to another, from one extreme to another, from one illusion to another. Einstein used to say that **“no problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.”**

From a psychosynthetic and psychodynamic point of view, we can say that the overcoming of the repetition of ideas, beliefs, thoughts, images and behaviors that are hindering or dysfunctional can only happen by drawing on a part of us that is not conditioned by the past and therefore not denying that we can be and become something else.

Assagioli defined this unconditional part, not yet impressed by the past, a *plastic unconscious*. Namely the enormous reserve of psychic energies that are latent in each of us and which gives us an indefinite ability to learn, to elaborate, to create, even more and better if we cooperate with it respecting the laws (*psychological laws*), the rhythms (*recognizing and developing these latent energies*) and methods (*work with the dreams, imaginative techniques, creative and autobiographical writing, meditation, theatrical dramatization, bodily work*).

To draw on the plastic unconscious, however, you must want it.

You must want to make a choice, you must “want to want”. But how can we activate this capacity?

**First of all it is necessary to get rid of the “up to now”**, and to stop considering our regressions, defeats, errors, failures, disappointments as a triumph of the impossibility of overcoming repetitions. Every time we find ourselves living again an “old script” of the past, we can learn to grasp new aspects, to get to know it better. And by knowing it better, observing it from other angles, we can become more capable authors and directors, more skilled performers. We acquire a better mastery. We grow into awareness and therefore we free our will.

**After that, we must start saying “from now on”**, thus affirming the possibility, or better, the right to transform our lives from a precise moment.

This explorative aspect of research and discovery can be developed and showed by moving to a higher level, expanding the visual horizon and with it the perspective of life. However, with growing, with venturing higher, we also become more exposed to the wind - be it gentle breeze or storm winds - just like the tops of the trees that know how to bend to its strength, sometimes brutal, just because they are supported by a solid but elastic trunk and by deep roots.

From the moment we conquer the upright position, it is this vertical dimension that leads us to follow, through successive stages, the path of the Self, the profound nature of our soul, and therefore to profoundly recognize what we are and *who* we can become. In other words, we become spiritual beings, more evolved at all levels of our personality: we renew ourselves on the physical and emotional level, on the level of affections and feelings, thoughts and aspirations.

And like this, even if we feel we are in a phase of regression, of a return to “old scripts”, we can get help from imagining ourselves traveling along the swirls of an *upward spiral*, similar to our DNA. In this way, even if we have the feeling of returning momentarily backwards, we are still moving to a higher level, we are ascending, we are growing and expanding our horizon, as we gradually get closer to the center, to the soul of our tree.

It might also be useful to remember that wise Zen aphorism: *“Water which is too pure has no fish”*, signaling the risk of coming to an aseptic personality, without nuances or affective warmth capable of nurturing ourselves and others, if we let ourselves be seduced by the myth of purity and perfection. That is, if we fall in love with the colored glasses of the lantern, forgetting the flame that burns inside. The latter, for sure, pure and perfect.

In this journey, what does “bathwater” represent then?

We could simplify it by saying: *everything that hinders our self-realization from within ourselves*. Delegating our choices to others, complacency and inauthenticity, the neglect of our creativity, mental laziness and self-deception. In other words, all those tendencies that originate **from two great illusions, or misunderstandings, about ourselves: the fear of risking and the belief that we do not deserve happiness.**

If it is true that *the foolish man seeks happiness in the distance, while the wise man grows it under his feet*, we also know that only by risking, exploring, by creating new experiences do we truly become freer and wiser.

Only by overcoming the idealization of a perfect, compensatory future, “coming from beyond”, and instead by carrying out new actions capable of creating a future that is already present, can we renew ourselves by remaining faithful to the flame which burns within each of us. In this way, we could say that the perennial flame that enlightens and guides our personal psychosynthesis, leads us to know better the “up to now” to begin to discover our “from now on”, one step after another.

This is a good path, a good practice to learn how to activate our potentialities and renew our way of being in the world, at the same time liberate our creative energies.

# THE AMATEUR

*Translation by Achille Cattaneo*

An 'Amateur' is someone who 'delights' in approaching an activity, a source of knowledge, a culture, with the awareness that he will never reach its peak. The peak will always be there, in the distance, unreachable.

In psychology, and particularly in Psychosynthesis, the correct attitude, in the commitment to know Man, is that of the amateur. Every way of being of Man, every one of his thoughts, every one of his sub-personalities, every one of his disturbances is nothing but a symbol whose interpretations are prolonged in the Beyond. "Everything that is perishable is a symbol" (J.W. Goethe). Life itself, therefore, even the earthly life of the human being, is a symbol.

"Ah, everything is a symbol and an analogy! The wind that passes, the night that refreshes are anything but the night and the wind: shadows of life and thought. All we see is something else" (F. Pessoa).

Reality lies behind a succession of symbolic veils of which the last one will never be raised.

The 'veil of Maya' is the illusion that for Schopenhauer veils the reality of things in their authentic essence. "It is Maya, the deceptive veil, which wraps the faces of mortals and makes them see a world of which it can not be said that it exists, nor does it exist, because it resembles the reflection of the sun on the sand, which the pilgrim confuses from afar with water".

To the amateur psychologist, to know what he can of the human being, he seeks symbols coming from remote eras, from distant lands, from unknown corners of the world, buried by sand or hidden among eternal glaciers. Already at the dawn human existence, life was symbolically interpreted with rituals, dances, masks, hieroglyphs, talismans, fetishes that played the role of producing ever new insights into its *unattainable* meaning.

The fundamental difficulty in examining symbols, which make up the various aspects of a man's personality and

way of being and operating, lies in the fact that symbols are not reducible to certain and immutable diagnoses and concepts. They are not definable once and for all.

Their meaning is inexhaustible. This is why the professional psychologist, forgets that he is an 'amateur', due to his need to offer psychological incontrovertible certainties to the client, retreats when he sees fields of symbolic knowledge where the land becomes dangerous, contestable, evanescent, compared to the psychological 'certainties' that he wants to transmit. He strives for his reputation with judgments of 'truth and reality' typical of common thought and becomes 'pedantic', unshakable in supporting them. He feels fear, and even repulsion, for non-usual symbolic fields. It is also true that those who rely on the psychologist, or perform their own self-analysis, have an insatiable need for certainties but, if they really want to know themselves, they should sense that in the background Reality is 'always' something other.

A symbol hides meanings that occur one in succession to another, if we do not focus on the first interpretation of the instinctual level, as proposed by Freud. Assigning interpretations that are static and considered valid only in the context of one's own authoritative school, results in evaluation rigidity and arid comprehension. It does not enter the systemic totality of the psyche. With such a professional attitude one does not descend into the abyss, nor ascends to the skies of the human being.

The attitude to be taken is that of the enthusiastic 'amateur', ready to start over again. Even the 'advanced amateur' cannot fail to discover that he is a beginner who sees unexpected levels of interpretation of the symbol, if he approaches the various cultures and schools that, on the planet, address the theme of Man, his personality or his 'Egg Diagram' which welcomes in itself its own Self. Psychological treatment has, therefore, two classes of therapists and customers: on the one hand 'the amateurs', on the other 'the pedants'.

The analytic current ends in the plain or rather in the cellars of the lower unconscious. For Freud and his followers it is natural to consider the snake as a phallic symbol and to freeze this interpretation, as a convinced pedantic.

Jung goes further: “The symbol is ‘alive’ only as long as it is full of meaning. But when it gives birth to its meaning, when that expression is found with which you can formulate what was sought, the expected or foreseen thing, even better than the symbol in use until then, the symbol ‘dies’”. From ‘amateur’ he becomes professionally ‘pedantic’.

Assagioli expands the interpretation. The symbols have for him an energy, a vital impulse, which strives towards ever new knowledge, some of which will remain constantly beyond. “Psychosynthesis is an open system, it does not have obligatory symbolic reference points (...) The inclusive potential of Psychosynthesis is perhaps the most vivid and original characterizing feature” (G. Dattilo).

If someone abandons the amateurish attitude in deepening the meanings on the symbols and is sure of their correct and static interpretation as he considers himself an ‘expert’ in their understanding, he deprives himself of the vivifying and inspiring contact of the internal wealth they possess. The symbolic contents are classified into already known categories, preventing the emergence of any new meaning, of a new understanding.

Playing with symbols - and all that exists is a symbol - is not a distracted game, but the way to get in touch with Life.

For graphic patterns, or Assagioli’s thought phrases, even those contained in the ‘Assagiolini’, it is appropriate, today, as forty years have passed since his departure, to activate levels of reading concerning the knowledge of Man that reach levels of understanding which promote renewed interpretative openings. Each of his writings is an allusive language that deals with knowledge that does not stop at the rational interpretation which jumps to the eye at the first reading, but requires an approach of renewed symbolic translations, aware that his scientific production entrusts us with visions that would fade even in the skies of Tibet. As the sea and the rock allude to earthly and metaphysical realities, so every symbol opens onto exoteric and esoteric spheres.

Believing that symbols arrive at a closed door beyond which one does not proceed, is behaving like an Indiana Jones who stops on the chasm that separates him from

the grotto of the Holy Grail and returns convinced that he has performed the task entrusted to him.

“The symbol creates a relationship between the original source of that man and his finitude, that is, it leads him from his origin to his end” (M.Davy). And Berkeley notes: “The symbol is the language with which the Infinite Spirit speaks to the finite spirits”.

It is not for nothing that Psychosynthesis contains the term ‘synthesis’ that alludes to the synthesis of opposites including the opposites of matter and spirit, personality and Self, exo and esoteric aspects. Psychosynthesis undoubtedly investigates personal experience and belonging to a culture, but in Man it also traces meanings that go beyond the apparent aspect of the personality and reach into the universal. It links to the visible image of Man the invisible part, the exoteric to the esoteric.

Coming down on one side, no matter which of the two, is to go against the synthetic essence of Psycho-synthesis.

If you synthesise the ‘amateur’ with the ‘pedant’ not so much by finding the midpoint that divides them, but the vertex that contains them and transforms both. The function of the symbol is to bring together lines of thought that open to the awareness the doors of rooms that continue into other rooms with other doors and new understandings. If deepened with an ‘amateur’ attitude, the symbol is a mirror from which the pedant can gradually clear away the dust, a mirror reflecting the widening of consciousness of the researcher on the path to understanding Life.

The ‘amateur’ and the ‘pedant’ should not forget that all thought-forms survive for a time, but are inexorably destined to appear for what they are, that is, partial truths destined to give way to other, broader, forms of thought.



# THE SOURCE OF AUTHENTICITY

Translation by Achille Cattaneo

Each historical period has its own specific *mission*. If they want to contribute to its realization, the “children” of a given epoch are called to grasp its *coordinates, indications and signs*. Roberto Assagioli sensed something extremely important in relation to this: the changing of the world, the emergence of a new humanity, requires that “the good ones become strong”. Like the great masters of suspicion (Marx, Nietzsche, Freud), it did not escape Assagioli that often behind “goodness” is hidden a certain form of “weakness” of the spirit.

Among the potential “world changers”, the “people of good will” referred to by the founder of psychosynthesis, those who are actively engaged in a process of evolution of consciousness, in an *initiatory path*, deserve particular attention. An initiatory path is a cognitive practice in which the knowing subject, in order to know the truth, *must transform*. The hypothesis emerging from multiple perspectives and research themes, is that this group of people who are intent on working on the development of their own consciousness will be able to constitute the evolutionary vanguard of this anthropological turn in progress.

In the context of the contemporary transpersonal movement we are talking about the emerging group that the American sociologist Paul H. Ray has called “cultural creatives”.<sup>(1)</sup> It is to them that it is necessary to “give power”, and the intent of this article is to clarify some decisive elements in this regard.

Let’s start by remembering that the phenomenological observations (on the lived experience) of those who have this drive to inner work, almost always report that the beginning of an initiatory path passes through an *underlying dissatisfaction with the parameters of ordinary life*. This has been observed by many sources, and Roberto Assagioli himself has also spoken about it in his

*Principles and methods of therapeutic psychosynthesis*. A vivid image of this starting point is given by the direct testimony of Peter Ouspensky, who describes this experience by calling it *byt*, a Russian word that indicates the sense of a “mechanical, incisive, petrified routine”. Ouspensky began his search for the “miraculous” precisely by proceeding from this underlying dissatisfaction:

“Leaving Petersburg for my trip, I said I would go *in search of the miraculous*. The ‘miraculous’ is very difficult to define, but for me this word had an absolutely precise meaning. For a long time I had come to the conclusion that, to escape the labyrinth of contradictions in which we live, we needed a completely new way, different from everything we had known or followed up to that moment. Even then I had recognized as an undeniable fact that, beyond the thin film of false reality, there was another reality, from which, for some reason, something separated us. Was the ‘miraculous’ the penetration into that unknown reality... ».<sup>(2)</sup>

This background dissatisfaction has been called by the supporters of Viktor Frankl’s important work “existential emptiness”. But crossing the threshold of the *existential* dimension and venturing into a *transpersonal* perspective, we can conceive this emptiness as an “ontological nostalgia”: a *nostalgia of being*. One who has experience of this “ontological void” or “nostalgia of being” does not live so much in fear as in *anguish*. Anguish has many interpretative keys, but its distinctive character is that it is an experience that does not immediately refer to a specific object (as it does *fear*, for example). It is instead a general experience, without an object: in fact, it is not something defined, it is not a space-time “entity”. The *experience of being* is missing.

This leads us to a decisive evidence: that “the miraculous” so much wanted by Ouspensky is not to be sought in the world, but in *identity*. Miraculous is *the experience of the authentic identity of man*. In other words, the ‘letter’ written by the experience of anguish, if read deeply (is in a transpersonal key), communicates to us precisely *the loss, the forgetfulness, the diminution* of our authentic identity. In order to read this letter which is anguish, an individual thus has the opportunity to “re-enter into himself”, *to realize* that he has lost himself.



From this point of view the human evolutionary path, what Jung calls “*individuation process*”, is in effect a “*process of authentication*”: a path of freedom from our inauthenticity to the finding of lost authenticity. This is the *movement* of that hero’s journey in which a person “*becomes what he is*”, to use Nietzsche.

But this “*what is*”, this *authentic being* that we must “*become*”, must be well understood. In fact this passage has been and is subject to many, to too many misunderstandings. It is also a critical problem, of primary importance in the individual and collective transformation to which we are called. In fact, if it is true that real power is *spiritual*, that is, it comes from the true source of our being, true power is the *power of identity*. That is to say, to understand how to access the power that comes from our way of being authentic. In other words, power in the spiritual sense is a *function* of the authenticity of the person. And if, as Assagioli intuited, “the good men must become strong”, this implies that the good ones “*must become authentic*”.

Therefore, what is needed is a serious, precise, evidence-based work of a *phenomenology of authenticity* that can begin to show its movements, principles and decisive distinctions. Distinctions, principles and movements that can help this evolutionary vanguard to have “*direct access*” to the concrete possibility of being oneself, and to exercise one’s own *power of identity*. I speak of “*phenomenology*” because, in addition to being the method adopted by Assagioli in the study of will and other phenomena of consciousness, it is a kind of *first-person* knowledge rather than *third-person*. Its purpose is to afford us *existential access* to the experience of life “*as it is lived*”. Chris Argyris, professor emeritus at Harvard, refers to this kind of knowledge by calling it “*actionable research*”, that is, *applied knowledge*. The purpose of this article is precisely to share the basis of this phenomenology of authenticity, its prime elements.

The zero element, the necessary foundation to move in this direction, foresees the dissolution of some *illusions* related to authenticity. In other words, it is necessary to bring to light, and therefore to free ourselves of some notions and concepts proper to the common mentality, from the “*natural attitude*”.<sup>(3)</sup> According to this mentality, becoming oneself is something that “*becomes*”, that

“*is produced*” with a direct effort in that direction. But it is precisely the ordinary, egoic-centered consciousness which conceives the “*being*” in terms of “*having*”, “*doing*”, “*increasing*”, “*obtaining*”, and “*acquiring*”.

The notion of becoming authentic as a process in which we “*magnify*” or “*increase ourselves*” concerns the conceptual I, not the authentic Self.<sup>(4)</sup> The real human I, is indeed «*Immutable*», «*unchanging, equal to himself*». We could say, but this would deserve further clarification, that the vision of becoming authentic as an «*increase of oneself*” is ultimately a *will to compensate* for a more intimate perception of existential precariousness, lack of control, finitude, mortality.

On the contrary, if we admit the existence of a transpersonal Self, of a “*human I*” that is “*transcendent*” and “*transparent*”, that which pre-exists and is different from the multiple events that we live without reducing ourselves to any of these, then it becomes absurd to conceive of “*becoming authenticated*” as a process of growth, of quantitative increase. In other words, the “*real I*” of which Assagioli speaks is that “*autòs*” (in Greek, “*himself*”) contained in the word “*authentic*”. This is *the deepest level of human subjectivity*.

That *autòs*, unlike the phenomenic I, is by no means an “*object*” of our knowledge. Instead it is the pure subject, *the first real datum* of our existence. Unlike the phenomenic I, therefore, we cannot in any way “*do it*”, as it already pre-exists. It is the starting point that “*always is*” in any human existential experience. Assagioli rightly says that the Self has an “*ontological*” nature, that is, it transcends every phenomenology of the psyche, and concerns the underlying dimension of being.

We can better understand what we are trying to say by making use of the work of the great philosopher Duns Scotus, who spoke of “*haecceity*,” as of the presence of Being (the spirit) in the man. We can therefore grasp the nature of the real I: it is “*a surplus*” of the consciousness that always transcends the circumstance we are living in. That “*excess*”, that field of consciousness and freedom, is the nature of the real I, of the “*autòs*” of the word authenticity; it is the foundation of the experience of the miraculous. When we *identify* that dimension in ourselves the world of life immediately seems more “*real*”, more “*vivid*”, more “*true*”. This comes about because

we are looking at it from our *real foundation*, without filters or distortions foreign to our nature.

So if that “autòs” already “is”, if we cannot become it in the sense of increasing it, of producing it, becoming ourselves means reconnecting ourselves to the already existing *life's drive*. How should we therefore have to interpret the “process” to become authentic? Another element that we must be clear about consists in this awareness: one of the decisive discoveries of the phenomenology of authenticity is this: *we cannot realize authenticity directly, “by intentionem”, but only “per effectum”*. Here the language I use is analogous to what the great psychiatrist Viktor Frankl employed regarding the phenomenon of self-realization. Indeed, in a polemic with Maslow, Frankl made it clear that human self-realization is a process that can only really take place “per effectum”:

“If it is true that self-fulfillment and self-realization have a place in human life, they cannot be attained except ‘per effectum’, and not ‘per intentionem’. Only in so far as we give ourselves, we donate ourselves, we place ourselves at the disposal of the world, the tasks and the needs that are asked of us in our life [...] we will satisfy each other and we will realize ourselves. [...] Consequently, man is himself to the extent that he overcomes and forgets himself. [...] The fulfillment of oneself, the realization of one’s own possibilities could not therefore represent a purpose consciously sought by the man himself: only a man who has missed the true sense of his life will dream of his fulfilment not as an effect, but as a purpose itself“.<sup>(5)</sup>

In a similar way, authenticity is one of those phenomena of consciousness which - in addition to not being *conceived*, in a trans-personal perspective, as an “augmentation” - cannot even be *grasped, purported or directly claimed*. . On the contrary, any direct and deliberate effort in this sense is counter-productive and makes us inevitably find ourselves in the opposite position: a little like the one who *claims* to be humble. And it is precisely in this area that we must be extremely precise, lucid, clear. If the path to authenticity cannot be “per intentionem” but only “per effectum”, then the question is: “*By effect of what ?*” The understanding of this fundamental

*movement of the spirit* is from my point of view enlightened by a passage from a conversation between Roberto Assagioli and Diane Freund (American psychotherapist) dating back to 1973:

‘If the I is the reflection of the Higher Self, then I would be able to perceive myself and act in a higher way as I come into contact with my Higher Self and experience it. But you said, by way of example, that if I met Beato Angelico, as a person I may not even like him, that the best of him could most probably be found in his paintings. *Why does our personal life not necessarily reflect our best part?* I want my personal life to reflect all the beauty that is in me. You seem to live the ideals of which he writes’.

“You go to the heart of things,” Roberto answered with his witty little smile. ‘Why doesn’t our personal life reflect the best in us? Because there are so many things in the middle. Between the personal Self and the Higher Self there are all sorts of things - opaque, not transparent - that obstruct the light, or refract it. Every kind of obstacle. But we are here for this, to eliminate the obstacles; and this is a great joy ‘.

Here is precisely what our per effectum consists of. The way to authenticity is accomplished by the effect of liberation from what obstructs the channel between the authentic Self and the overt one . In other words, the way to authenticity passes through the *act of distinguishing* what obstructs the channel. With the word “distinguishing” here we mean something very precise: “The act of evoking, of calling into being, of naming a phenomenon through appropriate language”. In fact, those “opaque obstacles” of which Assagioli speaks are so much *stronger*, have so much more *grip* on our consciousness, are such decisive energies, the more indistinct they are.

As one of the twentieth century’s greatest psychiatrists, Ronald Laing, intuited, on the ontological level<sup>(6)</sup> there is a law according to which “*what we do not distinguish, determines us*”.

“The set of things we think and do is limited by what we fail to notice. And since we cannot notice what we fail to notice, we can do very little to change, until we notice how not to notice plasmas, thoughts and actions “.

Roberto Assagioli, fine observer of the psyche and endowed with great clinical sense, intuited and expressed the same principle on the correlated psychological plane with the law he theorized according to which “*what we identify with determines us*”<sup>(7)</sup>. He wrote: “We are dominated by everything by which our self identifies itself. We can dominate, direct and use everything from which we dis-identify”.<sup>(8)</sup>

These two intuitions correspond: they *touch* the same principle declined in two dimensions (of the being and of the psyche). This is because the act of *distinguishing* something immediately implies a *dis-identification* from it. In fact, bringing to light an “opaque obstacle”, naming it, calling it to being, means *being able to see it*. To be able to see it implies - to a certain extent - *to take a distance from it*. So it is precisely a portion of the real I, that autòs, which *can* accomplish this act of courage. The real I can distinguish a phenomenon because “its essential characteristic”, as Assagioli tells us, “is awareness”.<sup>(9)</sup>

Psychosynthesis is however a model strongly influenced by *pragmatism*. If we want to move all this into an applied life rule, however to be taken - as any indication - with the appropriate precautions, we can say this: *every single time we experience a decrease in the experience of being authentic, vital, expressed, corresponding to who we really are, there is an «in-authenticity» that we have not brought to light*. Even in-authenticity is a term that must be explained because it means something specific. It is a word that wants to represent the metaphorical definition of the “opaque obstacles” of Assagioli.

Why call it “in-authenticity”? For Assagioli, *semantics* was important because it is a way that can lead us to the *evidence* of the phenomena of consciousness. So let’s remember it again: the word “authentic” comes from the Latin *authenticus*, which in turn comes from the Greek *authenticos*, and is composed of two parts: *autòs* (himself) and *entòs* (interior). We refer therefore to the inner Self, to the real Self. As a result, with “in-authenticity” “we want to indicate all those phenomena which do not belong to us essentially, but which concern” the periphery of ourselves “or” the objects on the bright background of conscience “. These in-authenticities are

precisely the different opaque obstacles that do not allow light (the “vital sign”) to pass, to be identified by a *consciousness free to listen* and then formalized in the concrete of our historical existence. In-authenticity is a term that encompasses all those phenomena that, when not distinct, keep us at the periphery of our being. Assagioli makes this more explicit in the following passage: «[...] we generally live <outside> our true being; distracted by countless sensations, impressions, worries, memories of the past, plans for the future [...] unaware of what we are in reality ». <sup>(10)</sup>

But the decisive step is to understand that, *taken together*, these elements are combined and organized in what Kant called “the extraneous reason” in man: a series of impulses, intentions, motives, desires, images, ideas, conceptions, etc. that are not directly *ours*, coming from the intelligent energy of life, from the autòs. They come rather from instances<sup>(11)</sup> external to whom *we are*. Here too we note how psychosynthesis is rooted in the acquisitions of psychoanalysis, starting from the view of *discomfort* as the experience of a “strangeness” with which we have to deal, interrogate, integrate.

But at any moment and under any circumstances, every human being has the power to take the first step towards authenticity. It is the *first movement* of the spirit, from in-authenticity to authenticity, is a movement of distinction. As Albert Camus wrote: “The *first step* of the spirit is to distinguish the true from the false”<sup>(12)</sup>. The simple but radical act of willingness to distinguish the obstacle - the in-authenticity - which is impeding the *experience of being* in some form, is a real and true step towards authenticity. It is for a specific reason, self-evident, which we must be able to grasp and which we must have clear: *in the exact moment in which we distinguish what ‘we are not’, we are also distinguishing ‘what we are’*.

In fact, in the precise moment in which I *distinguish* a certain present in-authenticity (a thought, an intention, a motive, a judgment, part of me, desire, fear, expectation, etc.), *who am I?* In other words: *who is that I who can see it?* By distinguishing (calling to being) the in-authenticity, I distinguish (call to being) myself, a definite portion of the infinity of my real I. In other words,

to be able to carry out this act *I have to go and find* that I a priori that - thanks to its uniqueness, my “consciousness” - *can* observe it. Assagioli saw this movement of consciousness it clearly. We can understand that precisely with this passage:

“Another advantage is that the revelation [distinction] of the different roles, characteristics, etc. highlights, through contrast, the reality of the I, of the Self that observes them ‘from above’ so to speak. [...] one realizes that the Self that is observing cannot be identified with any of them, but it is something or someone different from each. This is a very important recognition that constitutes the beginning of future psychosynthesis ». <sup>(13)</sup>

But even here, if we want to pursue with precision and care a serious phenomenology of authenticity, we must make some clarifications. In fact, we do not want to *root* the attention on the in-authenticity or the opaque obstacle, because this - according to the psychological laws - would *feed* it. But we want to stay in the question of “which in-authenticity *is already present*, if we do not feel ourselves fully, alive, expressed”? We want to examine ourselves *enough* to be able to distinguish it, and therefore weaken it.

But above all, we want, *while* distinguishing it, to *notice* the emergence of the a priori I, which is reborn together with it. In other words, we want, by placing our attention, to *underline* the existence, the emergence, the presence of that “*living subject*” that has made this act. As Alberto Alberti has pointed out in some of his important writings and as Assagioli himself once taught him, *dis-identification is only a preliminary moment. The decisive moment (or movement) of self-consciousness is self-identification*. Doing this is the work of a few because it requires *courage*: the “courage to be” *in spite of* the in-authenticity discovered in us. <sup>(14)</sup>

From a psychosynthetic point of view, it requires an *act of will*. This is why during a recorded person-to-person conversation, Jim Garrison (President of the State of the World Forum, of the Gorbachev Foundation / USA and of Ubiquity University) told me:

«[...] And I go back to Assagioli. I mean, Assagioli’s power is his recognition that at the end ... *at the end of the day, in the end* ... your life is an act of will. You must,

at the end of the day, make choices. And these choices have consequences. *Every* choice has a consequence. And this was what made him great. The authentic life is, in the end, an act of will “<sup>(15)</sup>

What seems to have escaped most of the studies on authenticity is that its *actual access* goes through exercise of *the entire volitional function*. This includes the exercise of the “wise will,” which comes through the “indirect” unveiling of the in-authenticities. But also through the active exercise of one of its most important “qualities”: *daring*. In fact, *by practicing* all of this on ourselves, in the “laboratory” of our existential experience, we will discover something important: *the stronger the in-authenticity, the more courage, audacity, and capacity for daring are necessary to distinguish it*. As a consequence, we will discover that it is not possible to cheat in the world of consciousness: the exact measure of our *ability* to be authentic is not so much related to our *knowledge*, but to the inner strength of our *being*. That which some brilliant pioneers of human consciousness have discovered for themselves and have communicated to us will make it even clearer:

«Daring is to lose our balance momentarily - not daring is to lose ourselves. And daring in its highest sense is precisely to become aware of one’s own Self.” ( Søren Kierkegaard)

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- 2) Ouspensky Peter, *Frammenti di un insegnamento sconosciuto*, Astrolabio, Roma 1976
- 3) To use a term by Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, who thus intended to indicate the attitude of those who “do not personally investigate phenomena”, but who allow themselves to be carried away by the unexamined notions of the common mentality.
- 4) Assagioli places a central distinction, in psychosynthesis, between “I phenomenal” and “I real”: Therefore, admitted a unifying principle, a center active in psychic life, we must try to determine its nature and its powers as much as possible. [...] What we are aware of is only what can be called the phenomenal I, to which all the changing states of consciousness, thoughts, feelings, etc. refer. But this phenomenal I is only the manifestation of the real I, the permanent active principle, the true substance of our being”  
A unifying principle, a center active in psychic life, we must try to determine its nature and its powers as much as possible. [...] What we are aware of is only what can be called the phenomenal I, to which all the changing states of consciousness, thoughts, feelings, etc. refer. But this phenomenal I is only the manifestation of the real I, the permanent active principle, the true substance of our being. “ (Assagioli Roberto, *Psicosintesi: per l’armonia della vita*, Astrolabio, Roma 1993, page 75)
- 5) Frankl Viktor , *Alla ricerca di un significato della vita*, Mursia, Milano 1990
- 6) Ontology, as a general subject, deals with investigating the dimension of “being”, that is, the “nature” or the “fundamental essence” of a phenomenon. Here we are referring to the fact that when the “presence” of a phenomenon (“opaque obstacle”) is not brought to light, it is not unveiled, this *determines* our way of healing to the world, that is, our *horizon of sense*. As the Gospel of Thomas says: “If you bring to light what is within you, what you bring to the light will save you. If you will not bring to light what is inside of you, what you will not bring to light will destroy you.”
- 7) This was basically the great lesson of Freud: that the invisible (the unconscious, the unveiled) determines us, but which in his psychological system was limited to bringing consciousness. Assagioli sensed that a wider vision of health requires a subsequent passage: once the opaque obstacles are distinguished, it is necessary to specify the “life drive” of the healthy part of the psyche, of the transpersonal Self (or “Self-Life”, as Alberto Alberti calls it). In other words, once the field has been freed, it is necessary to identify its *will, direction, intention*.
- 8) Assagioli Roberto, *L’atto di volontà*, Astrolabio, Roma 1977.
- 9) Assagioli Roberto, *Principi e metodi della psicosintesi terapeutica*, Astrolabio, Roma 1973, p. 71.
- 10) Assagioli Roberto, *Principi e metodi della psicosintesi terapeutica*, op.cit.
- 11) The word “instance” was introduced by Freud for the first time in his work *The Interpretation of Dreams*. This term, which in legal language indicates the set of acts necessary to resort to a jurisprudence (an organ that has the competence and the power to apply laws), Freud used it to indicate the fundamental elements of the psyche. Elements not at all static and neutral, but ‘dynamic’, ‘active’ and - to use Assagioli - ‘living’.
- 12) Camus Albert, *Il mito di Sisifo*, Giunti, Milano 2017
- 13) Assagioli Roberto, *Principi e metodi della psicosintesi terapeutica*, op. cit.
- 14) Tillich Paul, *Il coraggio di esistere*, Astrolabio, Roma, 1968
- 15) The passage is taken from an unpublished interview that Jim Garrison gave me during an International Congress in which we participated as speakers: “Feeding The Soul”, organized by the Integral Transpersonal Institute and the European Transpersonal Association (EURO- TAS) in Milan in June 2015.



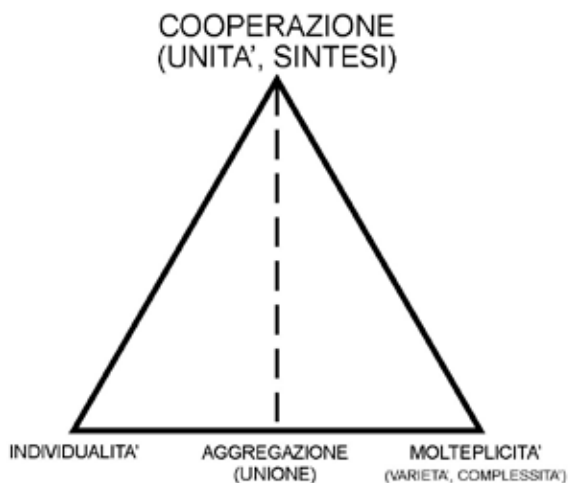
# COOPERATION, COMMUNICATION AND THE MAIEUTIC METHOD

Translation by Achille Cattaneo

*In the present exposition we recall first of all, the concept of cooperation according to a psychosynthetic interpretation of psychological type, and then move on to communication, of which cooperation is the foundation and finally to that which can be considered, with good reason, the finest expression of cooperative action: the maieutically oriented one.*

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To describe cooperation according to a psychosynthetic perspective we can use the following graphic diagram that is inspired by the well-known representation of the triangular equilibriums of R. Assagioli:

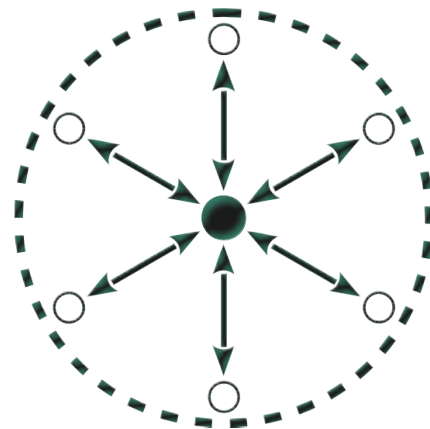


Cooperation can therefore be configured as an aggregation (union) at a higher level: that of integration, unity, synthesis.

Synthesis, as is well known, expresses a meaning and a potential that do not appear in the individual parts<sup>(1)</sup>; in

the case considered: individuality, multiplicity and not even in aggregation. This case of synthesis is a subjective / objective totality<sup>(2)</sup>.

In the next graphic diagram we see both a principle of unity and differentiation at work. It is important to underline, with R. Assagioli<sup>(3)</sup>, that cooperation recognizes and enhances the individual specificities - also very different and sometimes opposed - without losing sight of the sense of unity: aims, values and shared rules.



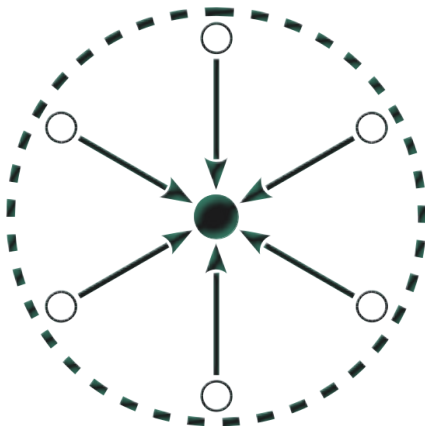
The two principles, therefore, are not excluded but coexist with different levels of expression, and this happens in all types of cooperation: between two friendly people, in the couple, in the family, in work groups and in groups formed by individuals more and more numerous. On a large scale, interactions become more complex, but if they are coherent with the cooperative principle the fundamental dynamic does not change.

In groups, cooperation can be expressed in various ways: more biased towards the center, especially if the leader who aggregates the group has centralizing characteristics or, worse still, narcissistic.

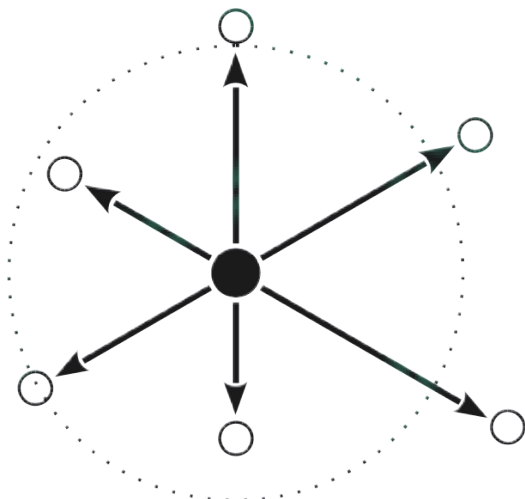
Thus, the coalition can regress according to one of the modalities described by W. Bion (1961) in his 'basic assumptions'<sup>(4)</sup>: that of the functioning of *dependence*, with the idealization of the leader, as a grandiose, self-confident individual on whom the individual members de-



pend, as it appears in the following diagram:



The leader and the individual partners, by losing the sense of unity, can also express the regressive mode of operation of the *fight / flight*, in which personalisms emerge, rivalry, de-legitimization of roles, combativeness towards enemies, real or presumed, external or internal to the group, and then splitting phenomena (which also include the so-called ‘attack on the leader’), until the onset of malignant pathological dynamics, such as the paranoid fundamentalism.



The scheme below briefly describes the centrifugal, separative thrusts, but also personal values and purposes (not shared):

Everything that contributes to the ‘setting’, including purposes, statutes, regulations, contributes to the democratic functioning of the coalition and therefore is a protective factor.

A possible side effect of these protective factors is their degeneration in *bureaucratisation*<sup>(6)</sup>: there is a drying up of human relationships and an emptying of meaning of the purposes founding the association.

It is on the principle of cooperation that *communication* is based today in the working groups of organizations that express high levels of competence, as in the health sector.

In the medical field, communication (literally: “common action”) is now studied, refined and applied in order to improve the benefits provided but also to reduce adverse events.

The hierarchical (paternalistic) method is dysfunctional and exposes those who apply it to greater risks, related to the uncertainty of the outcome of treatment. The old approaches, centered on the disease, involved a strict continuity between the diagnosis and the setting of the therapeutic treatment.

The new frontiers of medicine (centered on the patient<sup>(6)</sup>) foresee the comparison with experience, expectations and even the active contribution of the patient in providing news, not only with respect to the pathology of which he is the carrier and to the relative therapy but also to the transfer of responsibilities (who more than the patient, for example, is informed on which sick kidney it was decided to intervene surgically?).

Today it is also established that communication, in the health environment, has not only the function of gathering information and imparting it, but also of at the same time creating a relationship (i.e.a cooperation<sup>(7)</sup>). We are witnessing a paradigm shift: from the leadership of the paternalistic model, to the *partnership* of the one inspired by cooperation. According to this perspective, communication must meet the following requirements: be understandable, empathic, independent (that is honest,

not conditioned by interests external to the well-being of the patient), able to move in the sphere of uncertainty regarding the result of care - that should be chosen in a context of therapeutic alliance, respecting roles - without abolishing hope <sup>(8)</sup>.

Above all in public health we are witnessing a progressive and inexorable decline in treatment time, in an attempt to contain costs. Yet in a cooperative perspective it is the time of communication with the patient to establish the length of time of the treatment, especially in chronic and terminal diseases <sup>(9)</sup>.

The most refined expression of cooperative action is that maieutically oriented: a type of partnership in which it is possible to realize the *maieutic experience*.

The term goes back to the Socratic method: the art of helping the other to give birth to his ideas, points of view, motivations, volition, just like the midwife (mother of Socrates) with the woman in labor.

Salient features of this practice (if we want to cite only a few for brevity) we find, as well as in the philosophy of Socrates and Plato, in the Neoplatonic one and, more recently, in the existentialist one; in the pedagogy of Maria Montessori, in the humanistic psychology (mainly in C. Rogers) and in the transpersonal (R. Assagioli), but also in the motivational orientation of W.R. Miller and S. Rollnick <sup>(10)</sup>, as well as in certain philosophical and psychological declinations of the quantum physics of D. Bohm (see “groups of dialogue” he conducted, which arose under the stimulus of fruitful comparisons with J. Krishnamurti)<sup>(11) (12)</sup>.

All these Authors have the same style of approach to the growth of the human being, both individually and in groups and are based, in some ways, on what clearly and authoritatively enunciated by M. Montessori about children: trust, faith in the individual who *will be revealed* by means of a ‘task’ that stimulates his interest.

The Montessori approach to the education of children is outlined in three stages, summarized as follows:

1) the teacher (or more generally the educator) stands as guardian of the environment, which includes the care for the order and beauty of things;

- 2) the teacher exudes charm, elegance, smile, brightness and can also articulate a few words, as long as they light the interest, stimulate reflection and action, support self-esteem. This phase expresses itself more with the eyes and with the gestures, than with saying;
- 3) aroused interest, the Montessori teacher *withdraws* into the shadow and abstains absolutely from interfering, if not when called into question by the child <sup>(13)</sup>.

Now let’s see what the characteristics of the maieutic method applied to the groups are. It must be specified that it is an art, which cannot therefore be improvised, nor is it the result of simple common sense.

- Access to the group is spontaneous: *free* (while correct information starts from the beginning and can reinforce the process, the proselytism paralyzes it and can make it abort).
- The group or who represents it expresses *acceptance*: warm, but genuine, disinterested, non-possessive, however consisting of *refined curiosity*, interest for newcomers.
- The activity of the group is only *minimally* structured (to allow as much space as possible to spontaneous emergence of individual contributions), but coordinated by a facilitator, whose main function is *to favor, maintain and protect* the maieutic process. W. R. Miller and S. Rollnick compare the dynamics to that of the dance in pairs: one follows the rhythm of the resistances without challenging them. According to this metaphor the motivational approach, developed by the two Authors mentioned above, is a sophisticated and delicate form of guiding: it is “guiding, not directing”. Moreover, although it is based on collaboration, it has as its objective the autonomy of individuals, or their self-determination.
- The group is asked not to impose its own points of view, while leaving the freedom to express them, renouncing the competition of ideas and the need to defend one’s ego, as happens in disputes <sup>(14)</sup>.
- There is extreme clarity on the task of the coalition (aims, founding principles, etc.), rules and roles (statute, regulation, etc.).

This guarantees:

- 1) the protection of the exercise of *freedom of thought and action* in the context of civil dynamics: all must be able to express their ideas, but without prevarication;
- 2) the democratic functioning of the group (renewal of corporate offices, as per the Statute / Regulations) and, consequently, its survival over time. In any case, as we said, particular attention will be paid to the possible degeneration through bureaucratization.

The maieutics is the essence of *service*, as it appears with great emphasis in the Montessori practice: whoever practices it, at a certain point, escapes it (while remaining

in the background), acting as a catalyst for the maieutic process, without being obstructive with its own personalism. To those who fear the undermining of discipline in this kind of educational approach, M. Montessori replies that the discipline is obtained by giving *freedom*, that is the possibility of action previously denied. Provided that the freedom granted, adds who is writing, is not fueled by the sense of guilt of parents, teachers, etc. Always according to M. Montessori, disorder and violence are not an expression of man's will, but an unequivocal sign of suffering and violation <sup>(15)</sup>.

Also R. Assagioli stresses that the *relationship* between teacher and student is not only the basis and the meaning of ideal teaching, but that it is "a condition of freedom, which allows the student to show his true life, often in a joyful way and always with enthusiasm, with active participation, with intimate benefit" <sup>(16)</sup>.

Positive aspects of the maieutic method are both *individual and collective*. Coming to the first, we witness a 'flowering', a sort of a self-birth (maieutic precisely), which can also be seen as a finding (reunification with your own Self). The maieutic dimension involves a particular experience of *intimacy*, even in the aggregation: it is a good feeling with ourselves, among the others. Free from the need to impose or defend their ego, thought becomes intelligence, creative act, with the possibility of the emergence of genuine intuitions and proactive actions.

At the collective level (maieutically oriented cooperation) emerge common values, the joy of participation and a matured ability to reach shared decisions, expression of a subjective / objective totality: a type of collective consciousness that seems to transcend the particularities of individuals, while recognizing them, as already highlighted at the beginning of this article. This peculiar collective consciousness is not a common thought, but a global, non-separative consciousness; in one word: transpersonal. In ordinary conditions, characteristically, there is unfortunately little or no awareness. Such existential experience can therefore be framed in the phenomenology of the *collective Superconscious*. In terms of D. Bohm's quantum physics: a branch of the 'implied order' (the one that underlies the manifestation, called the 'explicit order').

According to the most famous theory of D. Bohm, 'holographic model', fragmentation is an illusion: each region of space and time contains in itself the total order of the universe (see *The Bhagavad Gītā*, VI, 29: "The Yogi <sup>(17)</sup> ... sees himself in all creatures and all creatures in himself. "Plotinus:" All things belong to the One and this One is all things, for a term is so connected to the other that it is impossible for one to remain separate from the other").

The *connection* to this particular state of *consciousness* requires a deconditioning from fear and the experience of competition, but also a less frenetic juxtaposition to life and, paradoxically less globalized (see the thought of J. Krishnamurti, fundamentally based on the importance attributed to the ability of observation, and to the awareness of the conditionings that are interposed to it and that increase the distance between 'observer' and 'observed'). <sup>(18)</sup>



In essence, a slowing down of thought processes is required (xx), the opposite of what we are witnessing today in our 'liquid' society: progressive and inexorable acceleration of the exchange of information and thought processes and, in cascade, also of human acting (compulsion replaces reflection).

We are witnessing an evident difficulty in metabolizing information and integrating it harmoniously, both in the brain and in the overall functioning of the person. There is therefore an urgent need for a change of direction in the direction of a greater human sustainability of communication - in terms of quality and quantity - both individually and collectively.

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## AT THE DINNER TABLE WITH ...?

*Translation by Donatella Randazzo*

In the last article we talked about eating habits, and the difficulties encountered in changing them long term. To investigate a little bit on the causes of such persistence, I suggested the use of the technique of the observer, knowing that for many of us, including seasoned psychosynthesists, food is a sort of Free Zone, a special time and place, devoid of any in-depth awareness. One of the reasons why this happens is due to the fact that for many of us, food can quickly satisfy the need for comfort which, even for a short time, can let us handle the pain or hardship at difficult times. Why renounce it? For this reason, self-observation while eating is an act of courage. It means entering an area whose effects are well known, not so the true causes which have given rise to our habits, i.e. the automatisms which make us choose the food we eat and behave at the table in ways of which we are not aware. Eating is such a central issue in our existence, arisen from the mix of different instincts, emotions, sentiments, family memories, figures of speech, traditions, beliefs, images, constraints, in very personal proportions: besides assuring the nutrients essential for living, eating is a dimension where a great deal more is involved.

For some, food is a sphere tightly connected to sensuality, eros and pleasure; for others it is just a means for survival – some aseptic eating for living – or even a tiresome, obligatory inconvenience; or, it can be the main purpose of their day, or an occasion to show that they can stay on top of what’s current. And what about the conditioning created by media means? Who was unable to sit at the dining table in the absence of a TV set, today is in good company with others who cannot even chew their food without checking the e-mail on the smartphone or letting friends on the social networks know, in real time, where, with whom and what they are eating. Some eat only biofood, acritically, or fruits and vegetable



farm to table (but the other way round) only because they contain miraculous micronutrients, whereas others trust only the products out of their back garden: the list is endless.

However, when these habits and behaviour do not derive from a sacrosanct right to eat quality food, be it local or exotic, but are dictated by needs arising from the emotional level, which thus transcend the physical composition of food, making changes is a much more demanding task. We are prisoners in a cage of automatisms, thus we must look for and find the key to break free.

Many people believe that, as they do not suffer from any of the well known dietary disorders such as bulimia, anorexia, binge-eating etc, everything is in order. Even though they feel some uncontrollable urge for food which is apparently harmless, or they have a hate/love relationship with food –not a true conflict, but a matter of incomprehension. These people, in particular, I have invited to have lunch with the observer to find out what really happens at the dinner table, hoping that the disclosure of new scenarios in the process of self-comprehension can induce them to make significant changes.

Has your observer managed to focus on the various characters in which you identify when you sit at the table? Whom have you recognized? I can propose a few “classical” ones: the **Dustbin** who cleans out any table, the chronically Miseryguts who does not like any dish, the **3-star Critic** who judges food either tasteless or too salty, the **Wimp** who knocks over glasses and bottles as in a bowling alley, **Snacky** who makes eight snacks a day, the **Runner** who sits down on the edge of his chair, ready to run off, the Slug who needs to have his plate and tablecloth removed, in order to stop chewing ... or who else?

Can you link these dinner companions to an I-child who used to act the same way, and trace it back to the sources of such behaviour?

I can give you a few suggestions: the Dustbin could have been fed by a mother who did not take into account his physiological needs, when he was not hungry; for

Wimp, the dining table could have been his only chance to avoid having to be “perfect” all the time; for the Dustbin, perhaps eating everything on the plate was a means to making his mother happy and thus being her wonderful child; the slow speed of the Slug could be his “power” to make the rest of the family wait for him to finish.

The unconscious reasons beyond these and other behaviours and habits related to the food sphere, often make us eat or starve only to satisfy the emotional level, but as a result we become less and less able to understand the physiological needs of our body, its hunger and satiety signs, thus giving rise to a painful gap between our two levels.

In this case, it is necessary that we do something. After the initial phase of learning, carried out by the observer, we must *lovingly* accept every content revealed; then act not by relying on harsh will, which can suddenly give in or make some of our parts turn against us (how can we blame them?), but by making a wise use of the will: a proactive attitude aimed at conquering new territories of the psyche, rather than at fighting the old habits.

Why not create a new subpersonality able to take care of our meals, re-establish contacts with our body, taking into account its true needs, learning again to discern between hunger due to a need for food and emotional hunger? And in the same way, at mealtimes, able to feel when it’s time to stop eating?

To conclude, I wish to give you another reason for starting this awakening work, by reminding you of the title of this column: *Food between Earth and Heaven*. If we nail our dining table to the earth, locating it in the lower part of our egg diagram, from that level it’s unlikely that higher qualities will be associated to our meal: thoughts and emotions will follow at the same level, and we will have missed the opportunity to eat from our special table “with a view”, placed on the terraces of our higher unconscious!

## LETTERS FROM THE DIRECTOR



After more than thirty years of publishing articles by Italian authors, of which only some have been translated into English, the Board of Directors of the Institute of Psychosynthesis, founded by Roberto Assagioli, has supported the request of Gordon Symons to invite the Community of World Psychosynthesis to propose articles in English. The articles will be evaluated by the Scientific Committee before their publication.

The referent for the collection of the papers is the same Gordon who over the last two years has expertly reviewed the translations of articles from Italian into English, thus making the magazine more accessible.

If you would like to send an article to be included in the next issues of Psychosynthesis, please forward it to the following address:

**[gordonlsymons@aol.com](mailto:gordonlsymons@aol.com) or [rivista@psicosintesi.it](mailto:rivista@psicosintesi.it)**



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- Organize events to spread psychosynthesis in the world
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