

# PSYCHOLOGY IV

*A Conference given by Silo at La Reja Park, Buenos Aires, May 17, 2006*

## Presentation

The first public presentation of Silo was not allowed in a conference hall due to the State of Siege that had been implanted by the military regime in that period in Argentina. Years later, in another of Silo's chats, this time in Buenos Aires in 1986, Edgardo Perez <sup>i</sup>, who presented him, referred to that 4th May 1969: "Silo spoke in the mountains, in front of a few people, held hostage by armed men. In any case, the CBS TV channel retransmitted the message to more than 250 TV channels around the planet.

This has been a constant in Silo's public presentations: repression, or attempts to hide him or both, and the projection of his message to everyone who were jumping over natural and human barriers to reach the most remote places. We hope that today, in our house, there is only massive diffusion.

The hostile circumstances that were indicated in that presentation, in very brief are:

In 1969, in Jujuy; in Cordoba and in Buenos Aires there was tear gas and arrests, but no conference.

In 1974, on the 15th August with a democratic government in Argentina, Silo attempted to speak in Cordoba and in Mar del Plata. There were 80 and 150 arrests respectively; on the 13th September of that year there was an attempt in the Casa Suiza in Buenos Aires. Again it ended up in arrests - this time 500 - there was no conference and Silo went to prison in Villa Devoto. We reiterate: in a democracy.

Then came the blowing up of a house in Mendoza in the same year, 6 months imprisonment of 11 comrades and the assassination of another 2, in La Plata on the 24th of July 1975. The meticulous report to which we have alluded noted: "The persecution achieved the sacking of hundreds of comrades from their jobs and the exile of others, in summary, their dispersion outside the country." In full democracy!

With the new military coup in 1976, a speaking tour by Silo in Europe and Asia was conceived of. One week before leaving he experienced an attempt on his life on the 12th of August 1981.

On returning, after talking in Madrid, Barcelona, Milan, Reykjavik, Copenhagen, Paris, Sri Lanka and Mumbai, Editorial Bruguera <sup>ii</sup>, invited Silo to speak in the 8th International Book Day in Buenos Aires on the 10th April 1982. But only 20 people were allowed into the place because, as was explained, "the floor was in a bad state".

In synthesis, the communication of his thought has been difficult - to say the least; his formal contact with people has been sabotaged; they have tried to intimidate "one or other" with prison, with assassination attempts and when none of this worked, this thinker was defamed, trying to minimise his contribution. "Why?" some ask themselves.

The response is complicated, but it is evident that the darkness that characterises the system is as deep as its fragility and any idea that opposes it is combated with the same vigour with which they spread such foolishness as "ideologies are dead", "the end of history has arrived". With even more force, these ideas are attacked when they are found rooted in people and are capable of generating below the surface, a multi-faceted international movement that pledges to change the individual as much as society.

On the occasion that caused us to remember that elaboration of the circumstances that surrounded the first of Silo's conferences, that man could finally speak "about religiosity in the present moment". We were once again in a democracy and the presenter said something that sounded menacing for some, but was prophetic; "another day I will speak about politics and, at any moment, about other issues".

This was the 6th June 1986, almost 20 years ago and so it was. In spite of systematic persecution, Silo spoke, explained and wrote with a simplicity that reveals his generosity and his love for humanity.

The richness of this thought and the diversity of the issues covered in conferences or books, is that of a human being for whom "nothing about the human is alien".

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<sup>i</sup> Presentation of the "Conference about religiosity in the present moment". Edgardo Pérez, Casa Suiza. Buenos Aires, 06/06/86

<sup>ii</sup> Luis Ammann, VIII International Book Day, Buenos Aires, 1982. Presentation of *The Inner Look*, Silo, Editorial Bruguera, España.

Also the variety of styles in the Spanish language with which Silo has produced his work is surprising in its versatility. There are books – like the *Inner Look*, for example, that began to circulate at the beginning of the seventies, where *the style and the content seem to escape the restricting categories of time and space* <sup>iii</sup>

Alternatively, the book *Letters to my friends: on social and personal crisis*, letters written and published between 1991 and 1993 anticipated the scenarios that the turn-of-the-century world had gone through and those that frame the beginning of the present century. This book is interwoven with the reality that it is part of, but the writer has the perspective of one who looks from another place. Silo goes in and out of our world and our time with the agility of a man who does not seem to be from this world or this time.

When we became involved with Silo's teachings in the sixties, we encountered an existential psychology and with a gigantic methodology, the phenomenology of Husserl.

The issues that Silo drafted then, with the care of one who teaches children to manage a complex tool, were "the pathways of suffering" <sup>iv</sup>, the ways to explore these pathways and the possibilities to overcome it.

It is interesting to remember these dates because they are the evidence that many of these contributions that are novel today were presented almost four decades ago. We wrote in 1979 <sup>v</sup>, referring to the seventies: "we learnt to value issues in psychology without precedents, such as how the function of the image carries charge; the structure of perception and representation; the importance of the internal senses in the production, translation and deformation of impulses; the characterisation and distinction between levels and states of consciousness; the action of the reverie nucleus in the forming behaviour; the action of protension in deferred response and of course, the contribution about the space and time of representation". In that moment they were unedited works and in the process of elaboration and, today, are collected in books such as *Contributions to Thought* and *Psychology Notes*; they also appear in the foundations of the *Guided Experiences*, they are ideas developed as techniques in *Self-liberation* and *as far as we know*, they will be re-considered today.

The issues that Silo will cover tonight belong to the field of psychology, from where it is possible to cover the explanation of religious feelings. All practice of contact with the transcendental, however simple it may be, is explained in this field. But it is worth clarifying that the psychophysical energy is not moved through study but rather through unprejudiced observation of simple practices. We say this, thinking, for example, in the "gift" that Silo <sup>vi</sup> gave us on the occasion of our meeting here in La Reja on the 7th May 2005.

In the book, *Complete Works volume II*, there the psychology notes are sequentially classified as Psychology I, II and III they contain compilations of conferences given in Corfu (Greece) in 1975 and in the Canary Islands (Spain) in 1976 and 1978.

The chat we are present at tonight will form part of the book *Psychology Notes*, with the denomination Psychology IV. It is a profound study that gives some keys to access widely searched for truths.

Let's get ready to listen, freeing our minds of impertinent expectations.

I leave you with Silo. Thank you.

Luis Ammann

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<sup>iii</sup> Luis Ammann, VIII International Book Day, Buenos Aires, 1982. Presentation of *The Inner Look*, Silo, Editorial Bruguera, España.

<sup>iv</sup> Luis Ammann, *Self-liberation*, Editorial ATE, Barcelona, 1980, prologue.

<sup>v</sup> Idem

<sup>vi</sup> Silo's words in La reja, 07/05/05. A brief practice emerges that became known as "the gift".

## 1. Impulses and the diversification of Impulses.

In Psychology III<sup>vii</sup> it was stated that the work of an impulse, in whatever circuit, ends up producing an internal register in the subject. One of the circuits deals with perception, representation, a renewed taking of the representation, and the internal sensation in general. Another circuit traces the route of the impulses that end up in those actions launched towards the external world-of which the subject also has internal sensation. This feedback of awareness is what allows one to learn through one's own actions, whether by improving on a previous action or by ruling out an error that has been committed. All of this was made clearer through the example of learning to use a keyboard.<sup>viii</sup>

Furthermore, every impulse whether it ends in the intrabody or the exterior of the body produces registers of different placements in the space of representation. This makes it possible to point out that the impulses of the intrabody locate themselves at the coenesthetic - tactile limit, towards the "inside" of the body, and that those impulses that terminate in actions in the external world are registered at the kinesthetic - tactile limit, towards the "outside". Whatever the direction of the impulse (which necessarily counts on a correlate of information or internal sensation) it will always modify the general state of the circuit. As regards the impulses' capacity for transformation we can consider two types: 1. those which we call "cathartic", capable of freeing tensions or of discharging psychophysical energy, and 2. those that we call "transferential", which permit the transfer of internal charges, the integration of contents and the expansion of the possibilities for development of the psychophysical energy. Every impulse, then, independently of its direction, has a predominantly cathartic or transferential capacity. Moreover, in every impulse there exists a quota of gratification or discomfort that permits the subjects to select their acts of consciousness and corporal actions.

The impulses "diversify" through various systems of feedback such as those that permit comparisons of the registers of perceptions with the registers of representations and with those that necessarily accompany "retentions" or memories of the same. Other kinds of diversifications exist that more or less voluntarily "focus" on perceptions and representations. These diversifications have been termed "apperceptions," that is to say, the selection and direction of the consciousness towards the sources of perception and also "evocations", that is to say, the selection and direction of the consciousness towards the sources of retention. The voluntary and involuntary direction and selection of the consciousness towards its different sources constitutes the function that has generically been referred to as "attention".

## 2. Consciousness, attention and the "I"

We term "consciousness," the apparatus that coordinates and structures the sensations, images and memories of the human psychism. Furthermore, it is not possible to locate the consciousness in a precise place in the central nervous system or at a certain cortical or subcortical point or depth. It is also not a matter of confusing specialized points of work, such as the "centers", with the functional structures that can be verified throughout the totality of the nervous system.

For greater expository clarity, we designate as "conscious phenomena" all that occurs in the different levels and states of vigil, semisleep and sleep, including those which are subliminal (i.e. those which occur at the limit of registers whether perceived, represented or remembered). Of course, when speaking of the "subliminal" we are not referring to some supposed "subconscious" or "unconscious".

Often the consciousness is confused with the "I," when in reality the latter doesn't have a corporeal base, as does what can be identified as the registering and coordinating "apparatus" of the human psychism. We previously stated that: "...This register of the consciousness own identity is given by the data of the senses, and the data of memory, plus a peculiar configuration that gives to the consciousness the illusion of permanence, in spite of the continual changes that it can verify within itself. *This illusory configuration of identity and permanence is the "I".*<sup>ix</sup> It is frequently seen in altered states of consciousness, that while the consciousness maintains itself in vigil, specific impulses that should arrive as registers are blocked, and the notion of the "I" undergoes an alteration or estrangement; the consciousness loses reversibility, critical sense, and at times the de-contextualized images take on a hallucinatory external "reality". In this situation,

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<sup>vii</sup> This refers to the explanations given in the Canary Islands in 1978 and which have been published as *Psychology III*, in *Notes on Psychology*. Silo. Collected Works Vol.II. USA. Latitude Press, 2006

<sup>viii</sup> Op.cit., *Catharsis, Transferences and Self-transferences*. Action in the world as transferential form.

<sup>ix</sup> Op. cit., *Consciousness and the I*.

the “I” is registered as located in the external limit-zones of the space of representation and at a certain “distance” from the habitual “I”. The subject can experience phenomena of registering and feeling that come from the external world although, rigorously speaking, these are not phenomena of perception but rather representation. These phenomena, where representation is substituted for perception and as such located within an “external space” (towards whose limit the “I” moves), we refer to as “projections”.

### **3. Spatiality and temporality of the phenomena of consciousness<sup>x</sup>**

In active vigil, the “I” locates itself in the more external zones of the space of representation, “lost” in the limits of external sense of touch, but if I have an apperception of something that I see, the register of the “I” shifts. In this moment I could say to myself: “From where I am I see an external object that I register within my body”. Even though I am connected with the external world through the senses there exists a division between spaces, and it is in the internal space that I locate the “I”. If I subsequently have an apperception of my breathing I might say to myself: “I experience within me the movement of my lungs. I am inside my body but I am not inside my lungs”. It is clear that I register a distance between the “I” and the lungs, not only because I register the “I” in the head which is far from the thoracic cage but because in all cases of internal perception (as may occur with a toothache or headache), these registers will always be at a “distance” from me as observer. But here we are not interested in this “distance” between the observer and the observed, rather the “distance” from the “I” towards the external world and from the “I” towards the internal world.

Certainly we could point out very subtle nuances in the variability of the “spatial” positions of the “I”, but here we are highlighting the diametrical locations of the “I” in each of the mentioned cases. In this description, we can also say that the “I” can be located in the interior of the space of representation but in the kinesthetic tactile limits that give the notion of the external world and inversely, in the coenesthetic tactile limits that give the notion of the internal world<sup>xi</sup>. In any case, we can use the image of a biconcave film (as the limit between worlds) that dilates or contracts, and in this way focuses or blurs the register of external or internal objects. In vigil, the attention is directed, more or less intentionally, towards the registers of the external or internal senses. This management of its direction is lost in semisleep, sleep or even in altered states of vigil since in all these levels and states reversibility is affected by phenomena and registers that are imposed on the consciousness. *It is very evident that not only memory, perception and representation take part in the constitution of the “I” but so does the position of the attention in the space of representation. Consequently, we are not speaking about a substantial “I” but rather an epiphenomena of the activity of the consciousness.*

This “I - attention” seems to carry out the function of coordinating the activities of the consciousness with one’s own body and with the world in general. The registers of the position and elapsing of *mental phenomena overlap in, and also become independent of, this mental coordination*. In this way, the metaphor of the “I” ends up taking on identity and “substantiality,” becoming independent of the structure of the functions of the consciousness.

On the other hand, the repeated registers and recognition of the action of attention goes being configured in the human being from very early on in the measure that the child arranges more or less voluntary directions towards the external world and the intrabody. Gradually, along with the management of the body and certain internal functions, the punctual presence is strengthened as is a copresence in which the register of one’s own “I” is constituted as concentrator and background of all mental activity. We are in the presence of the great illusion of the consciousness which we call “I”.

We should now consider the location of the “I” in the different levels of consciousness. In vigil the “I” occupies a central position given by the availability of the attention and reversibility. This varies considerably in semisleep, when the impulses that come from the external senses tend to become weakened or fluctuate between the external world and a generalized coenesthesia. It is during sleep with images that the “I” internalizes itself. Lastly, it is in vegetative sleep that the register of the “I” disappears<sup>xii</sup>. The transformations

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<sup>x</sup> Cf: *Space of Representation in Psychology II*. Silo. Collected Works Vol. 2

<sup>xi</sup> Cf: *Psychology of the Image, in Contributions to Thought*. Silo. Collected Works Vol. 1, Latitude Press 2002

<sup>xii</sup> Note from the editors: In “paradoxical sleep” or sleep with images, the register of the I “moves away from” the external world or becomes diluted in disjointed images until disappearing in a situation that only with great difficulty is under the control of the dreamer. As for profound vegetative sleep, electroencephalography shows a total absence of images. Neither is REM (rapid eye movement) detected, and this coincides with retrograde amnesia for the psychic events that occurred within this total forgetting of the “I”.

of the impulses in vigilic reveries appear in the sequences of free association with numerous allegorical, symbolic and signic translations that make up the special language of the images of the coenesthesia. Of course we are referring to the uncontrolled sequences of images typical of the associative pathways and not to the imaginary constructions that follow a, more or less, premeditated development,<sup>xiii</sup> nor are we referring to the translation of impulses channeled through the abstractive paths which also are manifested as symbolical and signic images. Impulses, transforming themselves in different levels also cause the register of the "I" to vary in depth or superficiality in the space of representation. To sketch this out we could point out that psychic phenomena are always registered not only between the "spatial" coordinates x and y but also in respect to z; "z" being the depth of the register in the space of representation. Of course the register of any phenomenon is experienced in the tridimensionality of the space of representation (according to greater externality or interiority with respect to the impulses' depth, vertical height, and horizontal lateral position)—something that can be verified through apperception or representing impulses originating from the external world, the intrabody or the memory.

Avoiding the complications of the descriptions proper to Phenomenology we should now consider some topics which it has exhaustively studied<sup>xiv</sup>. We say that in vigil *the fields of presence and copresence* allow us to locate phenomena within a temporal succession, establishing the relation of events from the present moment where I am located along with previous moments from which the *flow* of my consciousness comes as well as subsequent moments, to which this flow is directed. In any case, the present instant is the barrier of temporality and even though I cannot give an account of it because when I think about it I count only on the retention of what has happened in the dynamic of my consciousness, its apparent "fixity" permits me to go "back" or "forward" toward the phenomena that are no longer and those that are not yet. It is in the *temporal horizon* of the consciousness that all events are recorded. And in the restricted horizon that fixes the presence of *acts and objects* a field of copresence will always be acting in which everything will be connected.

This is different from what occurs in the elapsing of the physical world; events of consciousness do not respect chronological succession, rather they turn back, persist, become actualized, modified and futurized, altering the present instant. The "present instant" is structured by the intercrossing of the retention and the protention. For example: a painful event imagined in the future can act over the subject's present; diverting the tendency that has moved his body in the direction of a previously desired object. In this way, the laws that serve in the spatio-temporality of the physical world are considerably diverted in mental objects and acts. This independence of the psychism, through "deviation" of the physical laws, brings to mind the idea of "*clinamen*" which Epicurus presented in order to introduce freedom into a world dominated by mechanism.<sup>xv</sup>

Taking the structurality of the consciousness in relation to the "apparatuses" and the different pathways through which the impulse circulates as understood, we can consider this in its various transformations, as the basic "atom" of psychic activity. However, this atom does not present itself in isolation but rather in "impulse trains", in configurations that give rise to perception, memory and representation. In this way, the insertion of the psychic in external spatiality begins with the impulses which become protentions of kinesthetic images and move towards the exterior of the tridimensionality of the space of representation, moving the body. It is clear that the coenesthetic images and those corresponding to external senses act in an auxiliary mode (as "compounded signals") in all phenomena in which the selecting and regulating of motor direction and intensity are involved. Finally, it is in this flow of impulses relative to the time and space of the consciousness that the first events occur that will end up modifying the world.

At this point it would not be out of place to make a general reflection about the events in which the psychism acts from, and toward, its externality. To begin with, we observe that material objects are presented as spatiality to the "tactile" reception of the external senses which differentiates the corpuscule, the wave, the

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<sup>xiii</sup> cf. The 1989 conference on the Guided Experiences given in the Ateneo de Madrid in *Silo Speaks Book Presentation, Guided Experiences. Silo Collected Works Vol. 1. USA, Latitude Press 1999*

<sup>xiv</sup> Note from the editors: For a greater understanding of the apparatus cf. *Cartesian Meditations. Second Meditation. 19. Actuality and Potentiality of intentional life.* Husserl E. The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff. 1960. Also see: *Being and Time, division 2, IV Temporality and Everydayness.* As well as section 70 *The Temporality of the Spatiality that is Characteristic of "Dasein"*. M. Heidegger, New York. Harper & Row. 1962.

<sup>xv</sup> It seems that Epicurus defended Democritus' Theory according to which atoms in motion form the physical world. However, he added in response to an objection of Aristotle's, that the atoms suffer deviations, and inclinations, which permit their encounters. The doctrine pertaining to the idea of the "clinamen", doesn't seem to have been fully formulated until three hundred years after Epicurus. cf: Lucretius *De Rerum Natura*, II, 289-93.

molecule, pressure, temperature, etc. And we end up saying that these “impressions”, or impulses external to the psychism, put into motion a system of interpretation and response that could not operate if it wasn't for an internal space.

We are affirming, in the broadest possible way, that by variation of impulses between “spaces”, the psychism is penetrated by, and penetrates, the world. We are not speaking of closed circuits between stimulus and response but rather of an open and growing system that grasps and acts through accumulation and temporal protention. On the other hand, *this “opening” between “spaces” does not occur through crossing the barriers of a monad<sup>xvi</sup> but rather because the consciousness from its origin is constituted from, in, and for, the world.*

#### 4. Structures of Consciousness.

The different ways of being a human being in the world<sup>xvii</sup>, the various circumstances of experience and doing, correspond to complete structurings of consciousness. Thus: the “unhappy consciousness”, the “anguished consciousness”, the “emotional consciousness”, the “disgusted consciousness”, the “nauseated consciousness”, the “inspired consciousness”, are prominent cases that have been well described.<sup>xviii</sup> It is pertinent to note here that such descriptions can apply to the personal, the groupal and the social. For example, to describe a structure of consciousness of panic one should begin from the collective situation, as is recognized in the (legendary and historic) origins of the word “panic” that designates a special state of consciousness. With the passage of time the word “panic” has come to be used with increasing frequency to explain an alteration of individual consciousness.<sup>xix</sup>

However, the previously cited cases can be understood individually or as an assemblage (in consideration of the intersubjectivity constitutive of the consciousness). Variations in these global structures always occur and will occur in the concurrent phenomena as is the case of the “I”. Thus, in various states of consciousness in full vigil we register the location of the “I” in different depths of the space of representation.

To understand the foregoing, we must appeal to the differences between levels and states of consciousness. The classical levels of vigil, semisleep, deep paradoxical sleep and deep vegetative sleep, do not present difficulties of comprehension. But in each one of those levels we have the possibility of recognizing different positions of the psychic phenomena. Taking some extreme examples we say that when the “I” maintains sensory contact with the external world but is lost among its representations or evocations, or if it is aware of itself without significant interest in its actions in the world, we are in the presence of a *vigilic consciousness in the state of absorption*. The body acts externally in a sort of “irreality” that on being deepened can end up in disconnection and immobility. It is a matter of the “I” slipping towards a constant presence of registers of evocation, representation or tactile coenesthetic perception and therefore the distance between the “I” and the external object is “increased”.

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<sup>xvi</sup> **Note from the editors:** Since Pythagoras the *monad* has been conceived as the primary or fundamental unit from which numbers are derived. Through the years, the idea of the monad underwent important changes until, in the Renaissance and with Giordano Bruno's *Of Monads*, the constitutive atoms of reality are living and animated. In the XVIII Century Leibniz in his *Principles of Nature*, characterizes the monads as “atoms” without beginning or end that combine without interpenetrating and which possess their own force. Contemporaneously, Kant in his *Physical Monadology* describes the monad as an indivisible point, as opposed to the space that is infinitely divisible.

<sup>xvii</sup> **We understand “world” as the synthesis of internal-external world.**

<sup>xviii</sup> **Editor's Note:** In his *Phenomenology of the Spirit* Hegel refers to “alienation” as the “unhappy consciousness” which is registered as consciousness tearing at itself so it is found separated from, and dispossessed of, the reality to which it belongs. In *The Concept of Dread*, Kierkegaard studied the “anguished consciousness” which manifests with regards to its object that is “nothingness”. Many “philosophers of existence” draw on the phenomenological method to describe the acts and objects of consciousness' synthesis. Sartre in his *Outline of a Theory of Emotions* describes “emotional consciousness” and Kolnai in *On Disgust* describes the “consciousness of disgust”.

<sup>xix</sup> **Editor's Note:** Pan was a beneficent, pre-Hellenic divinity of the shepherds, fields and flocks. In one legend he appears during the battle of Marathon sowing “terror and panic” among the Persians and helping the Athenians who, starting at that moment, spread his worship throughout Greece. The adjective “panic” refers to the divinity in general, but “panic” is also used to denote the collective and contagious state of consciousness, that indicates an imminent danger. At present Psychiatry has coined the term “panic syndrome”, weakening the initial collective meaning.

In the opposite case the “I” lost in the external world displaces itself towards the tactile kinesthetic registers with neither criticism nor reversibility towards the acts being carried out. Here we are dealing with a case of *vigilic consciousness in a state of alteration* as can occur in what are called “violent emotions”. In this case, what is decisive is the importance with which the external object is charged, shortening the distance between the “I” and the perceived object.

#### **a. Structures, states and non-habitual cases.**

We call those behaviors that present abnormalities with respect to the individual or group parameters under consideration, “non-habitual”. It is clear that if the population of a country, or a human group, goes mad we are not going to cease considering these to be cases of “non-habitual” behaviors just because of the number of representatives. In any case, that human collective should be compared with stable situations in which it has lived and where reversibility, the critical sense and control of its acts, has predictable characteristics. On the other hand there are “non-habitual” cases that are fleeting and others that seem more rooted or even unfold as time passes. It is not our interest to typify those social conducts from the point of view of the law, the economy, or of psychiatry. Perhaps anthropology or history could provide us with more motives for reflection on these cases.....

If our interest in “non-habitual” behaviors carries us to the field of the personal, or at the most to that of the immediate interpersonal, the criteria of reversibility, critical sense and control of one’s own acts will continue being valid in relation to that personal or interpersonal history. What was mentioned earlier is still applicable in regards to those fleeting “non-habitual” cases, both those that seem established as well as those which will unfold in their abnormality as time passes. Therefore we carry our study of the “non-habitual” out of the territory of pathology to focus it within our Psychology, in two large groups of states and cases; those that we call respectively, “perturbed consciousness” and “inspired consciousness”

#### **b. “Perturbed consciousness”.**

There exist diametric positions of the “I”: between altered states that range from everyday activity to violent emotion and between states of absorption that range from reflective calm to the disconnection of the external world. There are also altered states in which the representations are externalized as projections in such a way that they are fed back to the consciousness as “perceptions” originating in the external world. There are other states of absorption, in which the perception of the external world is internalized-introjected.

We have read and listened to well researched accounts and reports of individuals who suffered hallucinations while in difficult situations in high mountains, in polar solitudes, in deserts and at sea. The physical state of fatigue, anoxia and thirst; the psychic state of abandonment in the monotony of silence and solitude; the extreme thermal environmental conditions, these are elements that can cause cases of hallucinatory alterations or, more frequently, cases of specific illusory alterations.

On the other hand, on the side of introjected absorption, the external sensation arrives to the consciousness but the corresponding representation operates disconnectedly from the general perceptual context, feeding back to the consciousness which interprets and registers the phenomenon as “meaningful” interiority, as a representation which appears “to direct itself” to the interior of the subject in a direct fashion. For example: the colored lights of the traffic signals in a big city suddenly begin to “send” mysterious codes and clues to the eyes of an anxious pedestrian who, starting from this moment, considers themselves as the only person capable of “receiving” and understanding the significance of the messages.

*Projected altered states, as well as the introjected states of absorption, correspond to the transitory or permanent perturbation of vigilic consciousness which we have mentioned here as cases of diametric placement in the location of the “I”. Furthermore, we should also mention the states of alteration and absorption in the level of sleep with images, and semisleep.*

In Psychology III we reviewed numerous cases of transitory perturbations of the consciousness<sup>xx</sup>. We mentioned the situation of a person who projects their internal representations and is left very suggestible to them, in a similar fashion to what occurs in full sleep when one receives the suggestions of oneiric images. This refers to hallucinations which also occur in states of intense fever; chemical action (gases, drugs, and

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<sup>xx</sup> **Psychology III. “The system of representation in states of altered consciousness”**

alcohol); mechanical action (spinning, forced breathing, pressure on arteries); by suppression of the external senses (isolation chamber) and by the suppression of internal senses (cosmonauts in zero gravity).<sup>xxi</sup>

We should also consider accidental perturbations in daily life. These manifest in sudden changes of mood, such as fits of rage and explosions of enthusiasm, which in greater or lesser measure permit us to experience the displacement of the "I" towards the periphery at the same time that reversibility fails and the state becomes increasingly altered. We can observe the contrary, when in the face of sudden danger the subject contracts or flees, trying to put distance between themselves and the threatening object. In any case, the displacement of the "I" is inward. In this same vein we can confirm certain curious infantile behaviors. In fact, children often use toy monsters to "resist" or "fight off" other monsters that are watching or drawing close in the night. And, when that technology does not work there always remains the recourse of hiding under the sheets; hiding the body in the face of horrifying threats. It is clear in these cases that the "I" becomes absorbed and introjected.

### **c. "Inspired consciousness".**

The inspired consciousness is a global structure capable of achieving immediate intuitions of reality. On the other hand, it is well suited to organize ensembles of experience and to prioritize expressions which are usually transmitted through Philosophy, Science, Art and the Mystic.

To assist with our development we could ask and answer in the manner of school children: Is inspired consciousness a state of absorption or alteration? Is inspired consciousness a perturbed state, a rupture of normalcy, an extreme introjection, or an extreme projection? Doubtless inspired consciousness is more than a state, it is a global structure that passes through different states and that can manifest in different levels. Furthermore, the inspired consciousness perturbs the operation of habitual consciousness and breaks the mechanics of the levels. Finally, it is more than an extreme introjection or an extreme projection since it makes use of either of these depending on its purpose. This last point is made evident when the inspired consciousness responds to a present intention or, in some cases, when it responds to an intention that is not present but that acts copresently.

In philosophy importance is given neither to inspiring dreams nor flashes of inspiration, but rather to direct intuition as applied by some thinkers in order to apprehend immediate realities of thought without intermediation of deductive or discursive thought. This does not refer to "intuitionist" currents in logic or mathematics but to thinkers who give priority to direct intuition as in the case of Plato's Ideas, of Descartes' clear and distinct ideas which leave aside the deceptions of the senses, and of Husserl with his descriptions of Noesis, and "suspension of judgment" (epoché).<sup>xxii</sup>

From the history of the science we can salvage examples of flashes of inspiration that permitted important advances. The best-known, though dubious, case is that of Newton's famous "falling apple".<sup>xxiii</sup> If this indeed happened, we should recognize that the sudden inspiration was brought about by a slow but intense search oriented toward the cosmic system and the gravity of bodies. By way of examples, we could also keep in mind another case, that of the chemist Kekulé<sup>xxiv</sup> who one night dreamt of several intertwined snakes which inspired him to develop notions in organic chemistry. Doubtless, it was his constant preoccupation with formulating the linkage among substances that continued to work even at the level of paradoxical sleep, taking the pathway of allegorical representation.

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<sup>xxi</sup> **TN. Unlike in common English usage, in Spanish the term 'cosmonaut' does not imply that the space travelers are of any specific national origin.**

<sup>xxii</sup> **Plato and Aristotle knew of the differences between intuitive and discursive thought; Plato giving priority to the former. For Plato the Ideas of the Good and the Beautiful are given by direct contemplation and are real, while good things and beautiful things derive from these Ideas and do not possess the same immediate reality. We recognize important contributions in Descartes' thought which thinks about itself without intermediation and in Husserl's direct contact with the noesis, the acts of thinking, and with the noemas, the objects linked intentionally with the acts of thinking.**

<sup>xxiii</sup> **Isaac Newton, 1666 Woolsthorpe, U.K.**

<sup>xxiv</sup> **In 1865 at Bonn, Germany Augustus Kekulé established the theory of the tetravalency of carbon and the hexagonal formula of benzene.**

In Art there are many examples of inspiring dreams; as in the case of Mary Shelley<sup>xxv</sup> who declared before friends, that she felt an "...empty incapacity of invention that is the greatest misfortune for an author", but that night she saw in her dreams the horrible being that was to become the inspiration of her novel "Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus". Something similar occurred with the dream of R. L. Stevenson, which set in motion his fantasy story "The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"<sup>xxvi</sup> Certainly in the field of the arts the vigilic inspiration of writers and poets are the best known cases. Nevertheless, we know of inspirations, in other media, such as, painters like Kandinsky<sup>xxvii</sup>, who in "Concerning the Spiritual in Art", described the inner need that expresses itself in artistic work as inspiration. Literary and plastic artists, musicians, dancers and actors have all tried to connect to non-habitual mental and physical environments seeking inspiration. The various artistic styles which respond to epochal conditions are not simply fashions or ways to generate, capture, or interpret the artistic work, but rather ways of "preparing oneself" to receive and to give sensory impacts. This "disposition" modulates the individual or collective sensibility and is, therefore, the one pre-dialogical<sup>xxviii</sup> that permits us to establish communication esthetics.

We find a vast field of inspiration in the Mystic. We must point out that when we speak of the "mystic" in general we are considering the psychic phenomena of the "experience of the sacred" in its various depths and expressions. There exists a copious literature that speaks of the dreams<sup>xxix</sup>, visions in semisleep,<sup>xxx</sup> and the vigilic intuitions<sup>xxxi</sup> of those persons who are references for religions, sects and mystical groups. There are also numerous abnormal states and *extraordinary cases of experiences of the sacred that can be classified as Ecstasy, that is mental situations in which the subjects remain suspended—absorbed, dazzled within themselves; as Rapture, uncontrollable motor and emotional agitation in which the subjects feel transported, carried out of themselves to other mental landscapes, to other times and spaces; and finally, as "Recognition" in which subjects believe that they comprehend everything in a single moment.* In this point we are considering the inspired consciousness in its experience of the sacred which varies in the way it faces these extraordinary phenomena, and by extension those mental operations have been attributed even to the rapture of the poet or the musician, cases in which "the sacred" may not be present.

We have mentioned the structures of consciousness that we call "inspired consciousness" and we have demonstrated their presence in the vast regions of philosophy, science, art and the mystic. But inspired consciousness acts frequently in everyday life; in intuitions, vigilic inspirations, semisleep and paradoxical sleep. "Hunches," falling in love, the sudden comprehension of complex situations and the instantaneous resolution of problems that troubled the subject for a long time are examples of inspiration in daily life. These cases do not guarantee correctness, truth, or the coincidence of the phenomenon with respect to its object, but the registers of "certainty" that accompany them are of great importance.

#### ***d. Accidental phenomena and desired phenomena.***

The consciousness can structure itself in different forms, varying through the action of specific stimulus (internal or external), or through the action of complex situations that work in an undesired way, an

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<sup>xxv</sup> Mary Godwin. This history is taken from the notes which Polidori wrote in his diary on June 18, 1816 in the Villa Diodati on the shore of Lake Lemman, Switzerland.

<sup>xxvi</sup> R.L. Balfour. Samoan Islands, 1886.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Vasili Kandinsky in Moscow, 1911.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Silo Speaks in Collect Work Vol 1, Conference "On the Conditions of Dialogue", presented at the Academy of Sciences in Moscow 1999.

<sup>xxix</sup> IV Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. "When the human spirit returned to repose, he retains with him the materials of the world in which is contained all things, and so creates and destroys its own glory and irradiation, so that the spirit glows with its own light".

<sup>xxx</sup> The Bible, Daniel X:7 New Revised Standard Version: "I, Daniel, alone saw the vision; the people who were with me did not see the vision, though a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled and hid themselves."

<sup>xxxi</sup> The Avesta. Gathas. Yasna XLV ,2-3. " I will proclaim this first teaching to the World. This teaching that the Omniscient Ahura Mazda revealed to me. I will speak of the two first Spirits of the world, of which the kind one said thus to the wicked one: There is nothing that our thoughts, our commandments, our intelligence, our beliefs, our works, our consciousness, or our souls agree on".

accidental way. The consciousness is "taken"<sup>xxxii</sup> in situations where reversibility and self-criticism are practically annulled. In the case that concerns us, "inspiration" bursts into mechanisms and levels, sometimes acting in a less obvious way as a "background" of the consciousness.

Furthermore, anguish, nausea, disgust and other configurations can appear suddenly or maintain themselves as more or less prolonged mental backgrounds. For example: when I accidentally turn over a rock and discover a roiling mass of small insects that might swarm towards me or sting my hand, I experience revulsion towards this formless life that assaults me. I also register a suppressed aversion when I perceive something sticky, damp and warm advancing towards me. But this immediate rejection goes beyond the simple motor reflex response to danger since it commits me viscerally causing a rejection that can end in the reflex of nausea, retching, excessive salivation, and in the extraordinary register that the distance between me and the object, or between myself and the disgusting situation, has "shortened". This shortening of space in the representation brings the object into a type of existence that allows it to "touch me" or to "get inside of me," provoking retching as a ritual expulsion from my intrabody. The "closeness" referred to is as unreal as the corresponding reflex retching. Consequently, the relation between the disgusting object and the retching response takes on its own characteristics which are outside of the real objects involved. They are converted into a ritual in which the object and the act form a particular structure, the structure of disgust. This accidental configuration of consciousness also occurs when facing a morally or aesthetically repugnant object, as in the case of a novel plagued by naiveté, plays on words and lukewarm, saccharine sentimentality, infused with a diffuse vitality. All of this ends up provoking in me a visceral defense that averts a profound "invasion" of my body. These structures of consciousness compromise my unity, affecting not only ideas, emotions, and motor reactions, but my somatic totality.

I believe that it would be opportune to make a small digression at this point. It is possible to consider advanced configurations of consciousness in which all types of violence provoke repugnance with the corresponding somatic correlates. The establishment in society of such a structuring of non-violent consciousness would be a profound cultural conquest. This would go beyond ideas or emotions which in present societies are only weakly manifested, to begin forming part of the psychosomatic and psychosocial framework of the human being.

Returning to our theme: We have recognized structures of consciousness that configure themselves accidentally. We also observe that there occur configurations that respond to desires, or to the plans of those who "put" themselves in a particular mental situation in order to cause the phenomenon to arise. Of course, as with the desire for artistic inspiration or the desire to fall in love, such things function at times, and at other times they do not. The inspired consciousness, or better still, the consciousness prepared to achieve inspiration appears, with various and suggestive examples, in philosophy, science, art, and also in everyday life. Nevertheless, it is especially in the mystic that the search for inspiration has given rise to psychological practices and systems that have had, and continue to have, an unequalled level of development.

We recognize the techniques of "trance"<sup>xxxiii</sup> as belonging to the archeology of mystical inspiration. So it is that we find trance in the most ancient forms of magic and religion. People have relied on potions<sup>xxxiv</sup> and the inhalation of fumes and vapors to provoke it.<sup>xxxv</sup> Other techniques that are more elaborate in the sense of allowing the subject to control and progress in their mystical experience have been refined over a long period of time. Ritual dances, repetitive ceremonies, fasts, prayers, exercises of concentration and meditation have all undergone considerable evolution.

#### ***e. Displacement of the I. Suspension of the I.***

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<sup>xxxii</sup> Understanding "taken" as being neither directed or controlled by the subject.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> In official psychology trance is considered as; "a state of dissociation of the consciousness characterized by the suspension of all voluntary movement and the existence of certain automatic activities." *Diccionario Enciclopédico de la Psique. B.Szekely. Ed.Claridad. Buenos Aires 1975.*

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Soma (for the Indians) and Haoma (for the Iranians), are the most ancient intoxicating drinks. In the Vedic Hymns 730 (2), we read: "You are the singer, you are the poet, you are the sweet juice born of the plant. In the intoxication you are the giver of all good."

<sup>xxxv</sup> In Delphi the priestess of Apollo (pythia or pythoness) sat on a tripod located by a fissure in a rock from which rose an intoxicating vapor and she commenced to prophesize with incoherent words. In the preceding days the pythia had been immersed in fasting and chewing on Laurel leaves.

The Sybil of Cumae, not wishing to be taken by the terrible inspiration, despaired and twisted about shouting: "Already he comes, already the god comes!". And, almost effortlessly the god Apollo descends from his sacred wood to the deep cave, where he possesses the propheticess.<sup>xxxvi</sup> In this case as well as in other cultures, entrance into trance occurs through internalization of the "I" and by an emotional exaltation in which is copresent the image of a god, of a force, or of a spirit that takes over and supplants the human personality. In cases of trance, the subject is placed at the disposition of an inspiration that permits them to grasp realities, and exercise powers unknown in everyday life<sup>xxxvii</sup>. Nevertheless, we often read how the subject resists and even fights with the spirit, or god trying to resist the rapture in convulsions that make one recall epilepsy, but that is part of a ritual that affirms the power of the entity that bends the normal will.<sup>xxxviii</sup>.

In Central America, the Haitian Voodoo cult<sup>xxxix</sup> allows us to understand techniques of trance realized through dances aided by the use of fish toxin based potions.<sup>xl</sup> In Brazil, the Macumba<sup>xli</sup> illustrate other variants in the mystic of trance attained through dance aided by use of an alcoholic beverage and tobacco.

Not all cases of trance are as colorful as those mentioned. Some Indian techniques such as those utilizing "yantras," complex geometric figures, allow one to arrive to trance through the interiorization of progressively smaller triangles, which on occasion end in a central point. Also in the techniques that use "mantras" the subject goes increasingly deeper until arriving at absorption, through the repetition of a profound sound. Many Western practitioners do not have success with visual and auditory contemplations because they are not prepared emotionally and limit themselves to repeating those figures or sounds without internalizing them with the emotional or devotional force required for the coenesthetic representation to accompany the narrowing of the attention. These exercises are repeated as many times as necessary until the practitioners experience the replacement of their personalities and the inspiration is fully experienced.

The displacement of the "I" and its substitution by other entities can be verified in the cults mentioned earlier as well as in the most recent Spiritist currents. In these the "medium" in trance is taken by a spiritual entity which substitutes for the habitual personality. Something similar occurs in hypnotic trance when the subject deeply interiorizes the suggestions of the operator raising the representation of the voice to the "place" normally occupied by the habitual "I". Of course to be "taken" by the operator the subject must have a receptive state of "faith" and follow the instructions received without harboring doubts.<sup>xlii</sup> This point demonstrates an important characteristic of the consciousness. We are saying that while realizing a vigilic and attentive operation there appear reveries that are at times unnoticed, or which end up diverting the direction of the mental acts that are being carried out. The field of copresence is always acting even though the objects present to consciousness take the attentional focus. The great quantity of automatic acts carried out in vigil demonstrates the capacity of the consciousness to carry out different works simultaneously. Certainly, dissociation can reach a pathological degree but it can also manifest with force in almost all the phenomena of inspiration. On the other hand, the displacement of the "I" cannot be complete in the spirit

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<sup>xxxvi</sup> Virgil's fantastic description of the story of Cumae surely counts on more than enough information of the procedure used by the Sybils throughout Greek and Roman history. In any case, in Book VI of the Aeneid the Sybil says: "He is here, the god is here! And as she spoke these words at the entrance to the cave, her countenance changed and lost color. She tossed her hair; panting and breathless, her chest swollen, full of sacred furor, she seemed taller, her voice does not resound like that of the other mortals as the god's presence drew nearer."

<sup>xxxvii</sup> *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, M. Eliade, Princeton University Press, 1964. Among other matters the author surveys the distinct forms of shamanic trance in Central and Northern Asia; in Tibet and China; among the ancient Indoeuropeans; in North and South America; in South East Asia and Oceania.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> The ancients called epilepsy the "sacred disease". In the convulsions of this illness they believed they saw a struggle in which the subjects defended themselves from the alteration which was upon them. The gods announced their arrival through the "aura" they sent in advance to the subject. It was supposed that after the "attack" the subject remained inspired to prophesize. Not in vain is it claimed that Alexander, Caesar and even Napoleon suffered from the "sacred disease" because, after all, they were men of combat.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Originating in Togo and Benin

<sup>xl</sup> *De la mort a la vie: essai sur le phenomène de la zombification en Haiti* R. Toussaint. Ed. lfe. Ontario. 1993.

<sup>xli</sup> Originating from the Yoruba people of Togo, Benin and Nigeria, but also combining influences from Senegal and West Africa in general.

<sup>xlii</sup> It is clear that from the "animal magnetism" of Mesmer and Pueysegur up to modern hypnosis which began with J. Braid, it has been a matter of the elimination of totally unnecessary paraphernalia.

trance or hypnosis. This is verified in what is called “automatic writing” which is carried out without faltering even though the attention of the subject is focused in conversation or other activities. Frequently, we find this dissociation in “cryptography” in which the hand draws while the subject is deeply involved in a telephone conversation.

Advancing towards absorption we could end up at a point in which the automatisms are left behind and where we are no longer dealing with a question of displacements or replacements of the “I”. We have at hand the example given by the practice of the “prayer of the heart” as carried out by the Orthodox monks of Mount Athos.<sup>xliii</sup> The recommendations given by Evagrio Pontico<sup>xliv</sup> turn out to be most adequate in order to avoid representations (at least those of the external senses): “Do not imagine the divinity in you when you pray, nor let your intelligence accept the impression of any form whatever; maintain immaterial and you will understand.” In broad strokes the prayer functions in this way: the practitioner in silent retreat concentrates on the heart, takes a short phrase and gently draws the phrase, along with the air, down to the heart, finishing the inhalation and “putting pressure” so they go deeper inward. Later, the air is exhaled very smoothly, without losing the attention in the heart. The monks repeated this practice many times a day until some indicators of progress such as “illumination” (of the space of representation) appeared. For the sake of precision we should acknowledge the passage through a state of trance in some moment of the repetitions of those prayers. The passage through trance is not very different than that produced in the works with yantras or mantras, but in the practice of the “prayer of the heart” the intent is not to be “taken” by entities that replace one’s own personality, rather the practitioner ends up surpassing the trance and “suspending” the activity of their “I”.

In this sense, in the practices of Yoga one can pass through different types and levels of trance, but we should keep in mind what Patanjali<sup>xlv</sup> says in Book I Sutra II: “The yogi aspires to the liberation from the disruptions of the mind”. This system of practices goes in the direction of trance, disassociation, and the surpassing of the habitual “I”. In advanced absorption the “suspension of the “I”, of which we have sufficient indicators, is produced in full vigil and outside of any trance. It is evident that even from the beginning of their practice the subject is oriented toward the disappearance of the “noises” of consciousness dampening the external perceptions, representations, memories and expectations. Some practices of yoga<sup>xlvi</sup> allow the mind to be quieted and to place the “I” in state of suspension for a brief period.

#### **f. Access to the profound levels.**

Doubtless the substitution of the “I” by a force, a spirit, a god, or the personality of a sorcerer or hypnotist, is something present in history. As we have seen the suspending of the “I” while avoiding any substitution as in some types of yoga and some advanced mystical practices is also something known though not so present. So then, if someone could suspend and then cause the “I” to disappear, they would lose structural control of the temporality and spatiality of their mental processes. They would be in a situation previous to that in which they learned to take their first baby steps. They would not be able to communicate to themselves nor coordinate the mechanisms of consciousness; they would not be able to appeal to memory; they would not be able to relate to the world and they would not be able to advance in their learning. We would not be in the presence simply of an “I” dissociated in some aspects, as occurs in certain mental conditions; rather we would find ourselves with someone in a state that would seem like vegetative sleep. It follows that these notions of “abolishing the “I” or “abolishing the ego” in everyday life are not possible. Nevertheless, it is possible to arrive at the mental situation of abolishing the “I”, not in everyday life but in determined conditions that start off from the suspension of the “I”.

Entrance to the profound states occurs from the suspension of the “I”. From that suspension, significant registers of “lucid consciousness” and comprehension of one’s own mental limitations are produced, which constitutes a great advance. Regarding this transit one should keep in mind some inescapable conditions: 1.

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<sup>xliii</sup> **The tradition of the “prayer of the heart” began in the XIVth C. at Mount Athos, Greece. It expanded out of the monasteries with the publication in 1782 of the Philokalia of the Greek monk Nicodemus The Hagiorite. This was published in Russian a little later by Paisij Velitchkovsky.**

<sup>xliv</sup> **Evagrio Pontico, of the “Desert Fathers” wrote his apothegms in the IVth C. He is considered one of the precursors of Mount Athos.**

<sup>xlv</sup> **The *Aphorism of Yoga or Yoga Sutra* compiled by Patanjali in the 2nd Century is the first book of Yoga. It conserves unabridged 195 short and masterly sentences.**

<sup>xlvi</sup> **M. Eliade’s *Técnicas del Yoga* and also *Yoga Immortality and Freedom*.**

that the practitioner has his or her Purpose clear-what they desire to achieve as the final objective of this work; 2. that they count on sufficient psychophysical energy to maintain their attention absorbed and concentrated on the suspension of the "I" and 3. that they can continue without interruption the continuous deepening of the state of suspension until the temporal and spatial references disappear.

With respect to the Purpose, it should be considered as the direction of the whole process, even though it does not occupy the attentional focus. We are saying that the Purpose must be "recorded" with sufficient emotional charge so that it is able to operate copresently while the attention is busy with the suspension of the "I" and in the subsequent steps. This preparation conditions all of the subsequent work. As for the psychophysical energy necessary to maintain the attention in an interesting level of concentration, the main impulse stems from the interest that forms part of the Purpose. On verifying a lack of potency and permanence, one should review the preparation of the Purpose. What is required is a consciousness cleared of fatigue and with a certain minimal education in the reduction of the attentional focus onto a single object. Continuing in the deepening of the suspension until achieving the register of "emptiness" signifies that nothing should appear as a representation, or as a register of internal sensations. There should not, and cannot be a register of this mental situation. And the return from the mental situation of suspension to habitual vigil is produced by impulses that reveal the position and the discomforts of the body.

We can not say anything about this "void". The recovery of inspiring meanings, of the deep meanings that are beyond the mechanisms and the configurations of consciousness, are carried out by my "I" when it returns to its normal vigilic work. We are speaking of a type of perception, different from the ones we know, of "translations" of deep impulses, which arrive from my intrabody during deep sleep, or of impulses that arrive to my consciousness at the moment of "return" to the normal vigil. We cannot speak of that world because we do not have registers during the absence of the "I"; as Plato mentioned in his myths, we have only "reminiscences" of that world.