

THE ODYSSEY OF CO-CREATION: SAILING BETWEEN SCYLLA OF SOLIPSISM AND CHARYBDIS OF OBJECTIVISM

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ABSTRACT. *The concept of experiential co-creation is presented as a narrow epistemological way, the following of which prevents one from falling prey to the solipsistic monster of Scylla and from being drowned in the objectivistic whirlpools of Charybdis. The concept proposes an equally active, co-creative role of the mind and its physical environment in constructing every sensation experienced by the subject. It is derived by following a systemic inference path extending from the particulars to the universals. Specifically, it was demonstrated that while the appearance of a crystal prepared by chemical means tends to reflect its intrinsic propensities, specifically crystallographic symmetry, it also tends to be definable by means of environmental constraints imposed on it during its formation. This mutuality of involvement of intrinsic and extrinsic potentials in defining the qualities of physical systems was then extended to atomic, molecular, cellular, organismic and societal scales, before being translated into the concept of experiential co-creation. Its metaphysical and practical implications are outlined too. In the end, the idea was iterated that an idea must not remain an idea only and that it must be lived if its true potentials are to be fulfilled. The circle starting with the Odysseus' journey, symbolic of being, continuing into the realm of knowledge and ending with its transmutation into being again, was thus closed.*

KEYWORDS: Aesthetics, Aristotle, Being, Cell Biology, Chemistry, Epistemology, Molecular Spectroscopy, Objectivism, Solipsism, Theology

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"On all these grounds, therefore, we may infer with confidence that there is something beyond the bodies that are about us on this earth, different and separate from them; and that the superior glory of its nature is proportionate to its distance from this world of ours"

Aristotle, On the Heavensⁱ

1. Co-creation as a narrow way that leadeth unto life

Odysseus' voyage, we know, was all about returning home. In contrast to what most journeyers today expect to experience, Odysseus quickly arrived at his destination, after only a couple of weeks, but it took him ten years and the adventure of a lifetime to return back home, to Ithaca. As I write these words I find myself in shoes not so different from Odysseus'. It has been exactly thirteen years since I left what I still call home, yet ever since that day the return path has been enfolded by haze. Over time the notion of home has faded away and if I were to return to this home that haunts my memory, I would not find it the way it was. As of today, the only home I know of is a transcendent castle resting on the invisible threads that tie the hearts of I and Thou. For this reason, the search for it that follows will be strictly confined to the philosophical domain. The return home is, for the crafter of these lines, analogous to the return to a primordial state of inexplicable, uttermost happiness, wholly spiritual in nature.

During the epic voyage of Odysseus, while sailing through a narrow passage, which historians today believe was the Strait of Messina, that tiny space between the ball and the boot kicking it on the southern tip of the Apennine Peninsula, the Greek hero was challenged to avoid two perils, the monster of Scylla on one side and the giant whirlpool of Charybdis on the other. Like Odysseus thirty-three hundred years ago, we must be equally vigilant not to fall into the reach of the perils of solipsism and objectivismⁱⁱ. For, all the problems haunting humanity naturally stem from the depths of the human mind, specifically from two distinct fundaments: solipsism and objectivism. To steer our sailboat in-between them, we must anchor it to the middle ground, a philosophy that would be idealistic enough to account for the active role played by our perception in defining experiences, but also realistic enough to acknowledge others as equally real and significant creators of experiential worlds as us and to establish the ties of empathy, if not truth, between us and them. This philosophy, extending to metaphysics and theology on one side and to ethics and aesthetics on the other, is called co-creation. The concept of experiential co-creation was developed as a way of saving us from falling into the abysses of solipsism and objectivism and continuing our walk along that thin line of balance that paves the way for the evolution of our physical milieus and spirits. In simplest terms, it proposes an equally active, co-creative role of Nature and the human mind in constructing every sensation experienced by the latter.

But first, why are solipsism and objectivism so threatening for our soul? To show how sole solipsistic or sole objectivistic stances *per se* yield nonsensical

observational attitudes, Heinz von Foerster pointed out the following. “This is a peculiar delusion within our Western tradition, namely, ‘objectivity’: ‘The properties of the observer shall not enter the description of his observations’. But I ask, how would it be possible to make a description in the first place if not the observer were to have properties that allows for a description to be made? Hence, I submit in all modesty, the claim for objectivity is nonsense! One might be tempted to negate ‘objectivity’ and stipulate now ‘subjectivity’. But, ladies and gentlemen, please remember that if a nonsensical proposition is negated, the result is again a nonsensical proposition. However, the nonsensicality of these propositions either in the affirmative or in their negation cannot be seen in the conceptual framework in which these propositions have been uttered”ⁱⁱⁱ.

In other words, to successfully navigate the ships of our knowledge is to avoid both the dangerous whirlpools of pure solipsism and inert and misleading streams of sole objectivism. How critical and necessary the undertaking of this voyage is can be illustrated by countless psychological disorders originating from individual inclinations to base one’s worldviews on either of them. Interestingly, the terminal symptoms of descents to solipsism and objectivism share a number of common features: a sense of disaffection, estrangement, helplessness and dejectedness are some of them. Preserving an intimate touch with one’s inner world is essential to avoid falling into reigns of passivity and submission to other people’s ideals and expectations, but ignoring the need to simultaneously reach out in compassion to others and open ourselves up to the realness of other people’s worlds, exactly in light of what Saint-Exupery’s interstellar traveler aka the Little Prince aspired to do^{iv}, would predispose us to remain psychopathically confined to the solipsistic bubble of our own self and isolated from the cosmic symphony composed of countless human heartbeats around us.

And when does objectivism fail? It fails every time we see ourselves as passive observers of a reality seemingly detached from our feelings, aspirations, premises and the overall biophysical stance assumed in space and time. On top of such ontological premises we spontaneously fall into the illusion that, disconnected as we think we are from the rest of reality, the existence is all about one against the world, which is how we open the Pandora’s box of an objectivist worldview proposed by Ayn Rand, as exemplified by the following string of thought: “The basic social principle of the Objectivist ethics is that just as life is an end in itself, so every living human being is an end in himself, not the means to the ends or the welfare of others - and, therefore, that man must live for his own sake, neither sacrificing himself to others nor sacrificing others to himself. To live for his own sake means that the achievement of his own happiness is man’s highest moral purpose”^v. The healing from this philosophy of apathetic estrangement starts from the realization that, in the spirit of the doctrine of constructivism, we are actively involved in creating every single impression we have of the world. The externality of this world to our beings and its intrinsic separation from us is, as a result, but a major illusion played on us by our perception. For, as scientific measurements on the ultrafine scales have proven over and over again, it is impossible to demarcate the properties of the observer from the

properties of the systems observed by it. Heisenberg's uncertainty principle clearly shows that an interaction with a measured system needs to take place prior to its detection. The nature of this interaction is specific for each perceptive being or sensory device, which constitutes one of the basic problems arising out of the subjectivity of experiential phenomena. For, any inference we make can always be seen as a child resulting from the marriage between premises and observations, possessing the essence of both in its heart. As a result, the way in which we pose questions predetermines the structure of the revealed answers. The way in which we look at the world predetermines what we will see, which presents the argument that reflects the heart of the co-creational thesis. In that sense, with every reason it can be repeated that "difficulty in most scientific work lies in framing the questions rather than in finding the answers"^{vi}. From the spiritual standpoint, which will have always complemented the scientific, we could be reminded of the epigraph coined by the first German professor in experimental physics, Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, when he compared his books to mirrors: "If an ape peeks in, no apostle will look out"^{vii}.

Still, let us not forget the opposite argument as well: that is, what we see predetermines the structure of our questions about the world. The face of the world partly determines the attitude with which our curiosity will face it, and the questions with which we face the world partly determine the facets of Nature that we would be able to see. Mind draws Nature, and Nature draws mind, as in the famous M. C. Escher's painting with two hands, one drawing the contours of the other. To that end, the evolution of the cosmic nous, of that divine intelligence with which the outer spheres of the cosmos are endowed in Aristotelian worldviews, can be imagined to proceed in one such co-creational manner, through an interaction between individual and semiautonomous centers of sentience, such as the human minds, and this holistic, cosmic nous that permeates reality at all of its scales, from the impalpably fine to the ungraspably great.

In general, subjectivity of experiences presents a taboo topic in the objectivistic frameworks of thought, whereby the objectivity of experiences, mostly evoked by the ideas of truth and love, presents a similar enigma for the solipsistic models of cognition. Therefore, I say, if you come across an objectivistic robot, the best way to produce a bug in him and cause him to malfunction is to convince him in the realness of the fundamental assumptions of which he is being made. My favorite thing to do when I see a robot is, thus, to simply ask a fundamental question. As robots work on the principle of inertly executing their program, that is, a network of premises of which they are made, they break apart at the exact moment when they try to interfere with these founding principles of their functioning. In turn, the best way to cope with a solipsistic bubble encountered along the way is to scatter a handful of stardust of love before it and wait until the bubble bursts and the spirit inside becomes liberated.

Thus, as we see, on one extreme in our Odysseyan_voyages we must avoid the Scylla of autocratic cravings to subdue all under the hat of our own worldviews and create a uniform and, in essence, epistemologically dead atmosphere wherfrom nothing fertile could originate. On the other extreme, however, we must pay attention not to be swallowed by the Charybdis' whirlpools of deadening neutrality, passive

relativism and carelessness epitomized by Cain's vile phrase uttered as a response to God's asking him where his brother was: "I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9).

The towers of co-creation are, correspondingly, built on the middle ground between the termini of objectivism and solipsism using the bricks of belief that everything comprising our experience arises at the points of the transcendent touch between the human mind and Nature. The idea of co-creation states that every product of our perception and thinking arises at the intersection of the way in which we actively invent our own worlds of experience and the way in which the world really is. This idea was hinted at by Aristotle when he recognized that the eye detects changes in the medium between itself and the viewed object rather than being passively influenced by the object alone, and then went on to infer that senses must be self-aware to some extent^{viii}. And indeed, today we know that the eye is not a sensory organ that passively represents the environmental stimuli it absorbs, but rather an active constructor of the products of visual perception^{ix}. In that sense, the ancient Greeks' believing that the eye sees thanks to a light that it shines onto objects* is equally (in)correct as the objectivistic viewing of the eye as analogous to a video camera. Brought down to the ontological bases of our experience, this middle ground implies that everything we see around us and in us is, correspondingly, the product of the dialogue between our deepest desires, aspirations and biological predispositions on one side and the guidance of Nature on another. Most important of all, these two ultimate metaphysical poles, in touch of which all experiential appearances arise, are inseparable and unknowable *per se*. Both the subjective features of the observer and the objective features of the observed are intermingled within each and even the most elementary qualities that result from these observational acts and that come to comprise the world of the observer's experience. What is more, whatever the product of one's creativity is, it can never be discerned to what extent Nature, including society, has contributed to it and to what extent it stems from one's own inventiveness.

This is all to say that, lest we be swallowed by the monstrous mouths of the demons of autistic solipsism or deadening uniformity awaiting us at the rough shores of a narrow passage that we must go through, sooner or later the time will come not only to redirect the ark of our consciousness away from the symphony of surrounding heartbeats and into the remotest cosmic distances in the stellar space of our mind, but also to recognize that "the clarity of purposively realized objectivity is the most supernatural of all visions"^x and that the objective aspect of our experience, enabling us to see the sameness in our worlds and draw threads of love and compassion around them is a greatest blessing to befall on us from gods. This is how we could continue our journey straight between the two pulls crucifying our being from the inside and turning it into a state describable by the image of the Christ on the Cross, inwardly and outwardly, towards the center of our soul and towards the whole wide world, as

* Empedocles, for one, described Aphrodite's lighting fire in the eye of man so as to endow him with the faculty of vision.

in a star sustained as the result of a balance between (a) the force of gravity that tries to compress and collapse it into a black hole and (b) the endlessly expansive energy emerging from our insides and craving to be released and shed shinily onto all things, the former of which works to separate the star from it all and the latter of which works to merge it with all things around it in a single instant and put an end to its existence as a sole entity disconnected from all else, a shiny dot enwrapped by infinitely vast veils of darkness. These antagonistic and inherently schizoid pulls, though seemingly hardly compatible, nevertheless need to be precisely balanced and coordinated if our feet are to remain on this magical road of co-creation.

2. A microcosmic path toward the derivation of the principle of co-creation

The concept of co-creation has lain dormant everywhere, waiting to be discovered and converted to a systemic principle applicable universally. This conversion path can be considered Aristotelian in essence, extending from the particulars to the universals, given Aristotle's belief that universals always exist *in* things and never, as in Platonic worldviews, apart from them. Hence, for curiosity's sake, we will head over now to an imaginary lab to mix couples of solutions and precipitate a crystalline particle. We will do so at two different levels of supersaturation and then look at the morphology of the particulate products under an electron microscope. A possible outcome is displayed in Fig.1. There we see two vastly different morphologies of calcium phosphate nanoparticles obtained using this slight variation in the method of synthesis. In general, crystals precipitated under lower supersaturation tend to be coarser, but also more crystallographically and topographically refined. In contrast, crystals precipitated under higher supersaturation tend to be finer in size, but also rougher and more defective. Thus, while the appearance of a crystal prepared by chemical means tends to reflect its intrinsic propensities, specifically crystallographic symmetry, it also tends to be definable by means of environmental constraints imposed on it during its formation^{xi}.

Now, this concept is applicable outside of the solid state realm too, in domains both finer and greater than the nanoscale. For example, the distance between two carbon atoms connected by a covalent bond depends on the electronic configuration of carbon atoms, but, as implied by the Stoicheff's rule, the lengths of single and double covalent bonds between two carbon atoms also "increase linearly with an increase in the number of adjacent bonds"^{xii}. Atomic radii, moreover, are not fixed and independent on the atomic surrounding, but rather increase with the coordination number, as if the atoms stretch their electron clouds a bit towards every new neighbor that pops up around them. In the realm of classical chemistry, we could realize that dissociation constants of specific atomic groups are subject to change depending on their local surroundings. An acidic or a basic residue of an amino acid side chain can thus undergo drastic changes in its dissociation propensities as the protein refolds itself from one configuration to another. This effect is similar to the one most spectroscopy specialists are familiar with. Namely, vibrations of atomic groups in molecules depend on the dielectric properties of the medium in which these molecules are dispersed, given that the intensity of a given absorption is proportional

to a change in the dipole moment that the absorption causes. For example, if the excited state of a molecular group is more polar than the ground state, red shift of the transition between these two states results from increasing the solvent polarity. In contrast, blue shift would result whenever the ground state turns out to be more polar than the excited one^{xiii}.

As for systems more structurally complex than crystalline nanoparticles, we could take a look at cells first and then at complex organisms, such as ourselves. Transplant a cell from one tissue within the body to another and its signaling pathways, genetic activity and the overall functionality will thoroughly change to fit the demands of the new environment. If the cell happens to have a malignant mutation, it may or may not develop into a tumor depending on the microenvironment to which it is transplanted; injected into an embryo of a bird, one such cell became its healthy, apoptotic component, but injected into its feathers, it began to multiply uncontrollably, creating a lump of cancerous tissue^{xiv}. Pathological mutations aside, all cells in the body, with the exception of red blood cells, are expected to possess the same genetic code and whether one of them will divide into a cluster that will undergo gastrulation and form a new organism, differentiate into cells capable of forming bone tissues or tooth buds, or extend dendrites and axons to become a part of neural pathways thus wholly depends on the context in which it is found. This omnipotent nature of each one of the trillions of cells in the human body was famously illuminated when a whole sheep, Dolly, managed to be cloned from a single mammary gland cell, demonstrating that the whole is indeed inscribed in each and every one of its details. By acknowledging contexts as equally important in defining properties and functional potentials of systems as their intrinsic contents, the systemic viewpoints of the modern age have thus placed an epitaph on the old truism of molecular biology which stated that structure unequivocally defines function. In that sense, focusing merely on the content of the system, on the meaning of our expressions *per se*, without glimpsing the contexts in which they are enwrapped, is a sign of semiotic blindness. Finally, concerning human beings, it is known that our innate predispositions present only one of the forces used to shape our personality. The complements of this inner force come from the outside, from the cultural, socioeconomic, geographic and ecological features of the wider biocosmological scheme which the given humans are a part of. All of these insights are supposed to bring us over to conclusion that the evolution of every physical system proceeds governed by the intersection of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. To induce that the same principle applies to the nature of experiences in their totality and particularity is to reveal the idea of co-creation.

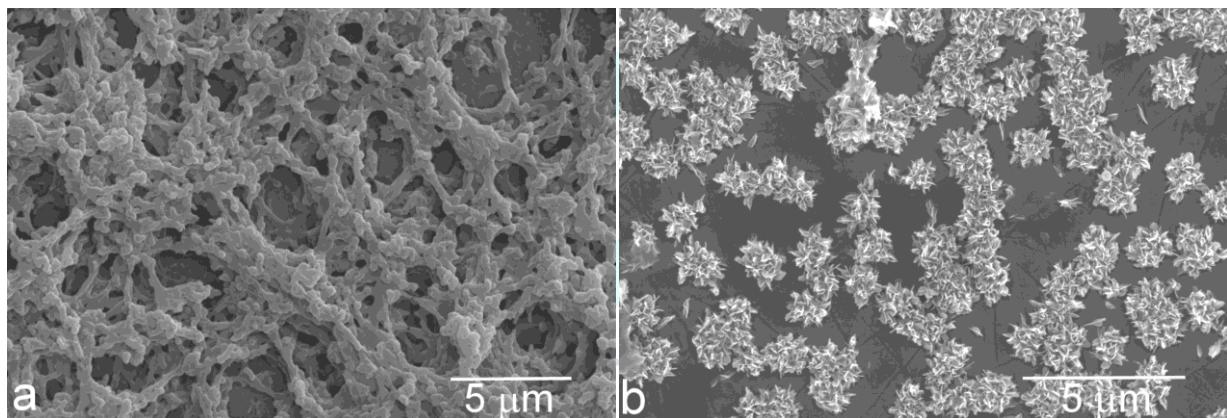


Fig.1. Different morphologies of calcium phosphate nanoparticles – spherical (a) and acicular (b) - obtained by precipitation from an aqueous solution at two different supersaturation levels. Experiments were run and data collected and processed in the author's laboratory

Along the way, this example implicitly illustrates the beauty of science at its best: namely, relationships discovered in minute objects subjected to scientific scrutiny may always turn out to be applicable in multiple other contexts - social, economic, psychological, you name it. Every little stone found on the ground can thus be seen as lying at the base of an invisible pyramid, climbing onto which using the thread of logical reasoning has a chance to take us to the very tops of human knowledge. This is exactly what the essence of the systems science is all about: finding metaphoric meanings relevant to entire Nature and humanity, let alone every human soul, in the most minuscule details and relationships that patient and refined senses, no doubt magnified using scientific tools, can notice. As we have seen here, straight from the worldly dust this method can take us to ideas encompassing the whole Universe. Science, as such, can be a ladder from the minutest to the most magnificent, if it only becomes coupled to imagination fueled by analogies and limitless in scope.

Of course, if here and there during the course of applying this method in search of sacred systemic insights on the wings of science we stray from a straight line and find ourselves lost before we regain our compass and restore the course, we should worry not. For, science, ultimately, is all about adventure and wonder, both of which are to be walked in every one of the facets of scientists and scientific methods, and not only talked about. Odysseus' journey from Troy to Ithaca, concordantly, sent him back and forth across the Mediterranean Sea before he reached his destination. Also, just like Odysseus took a detour by spending a whole year with the nymph Circe on the island of Aeaea, so do the forgers of magnificent ideas not hesitate to spin in futile circles or disappear in the silence of their minds, let alone play with sea nymphs, while the world goes by, knowing all the while that time and effort valuably lost is necessary for treasures to be gained at the end of the road. In the end, to be lost and found is a vital precondition for every sunny adventure in life to be finalized with arrivals at the lustrous treasures for the soul. Therefore, like Odysseus washed up on the island of Scheria after sailing on a raft, alone, and trying to find a way through a

Poseidon's storm at sea, resembling your own journey through this long and convoluted sentence, debating whether to stay by the shore or move inland, into the dark unknown, eventually choosing the latter and finding a safe shelter underneath pine trees and oleanders and discovering stargazing sights like he had never seen, then coming across a trail that would take him to the palace of king Alcinous first and then to Ithaca, where Penelope waited for him, so should we not hesitate for too long when we find ourselves on one of the crossroads where signposts pointing at the paths of safe stagnancies meet those showing us the direction to narrow, curved and risky roads that, however, lead to wonderful new insights and treasures for our timeless soul and the whole Universe alike. For, as the biblical parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) reminds us, the all-seeing eye of the Greek goddess Aphrodite, who had watched the world through the eyes of Odysseus and opened the ways of salvation in front of him, is made millions of times more gleeful in view of the things lost and found than those that never set their feet on the road and always stayed in its sight.

3. Practical and metaphysical implications of co-creation

Now that we have defined co-creation, we are ready to analyze some of its implications, which are, as previously noted, metaphysical on one side and practical, predominantly ethical and aesthetical, on the other.

To reiterate, the essence of the co-creational thesis tells us that the two ultimate poles that define experiential realities, mind and Nature, reflecting subjective inclinations and the objective fate of the world, respectively, are inextricably intermingled. So is with every sign on the path of our lives: since it arises from the interplay between our subjective anticipations and aspirations on one co-creative side and objective evolutionary streams of reality on the other, it always points in both directions – into the heart of us as the explorer and into the center of the spinning of the evolutionary wheel of the Universe. The answer to the question of the Sphinx pointed back at the heart of the questioner himself as well as at the inescapable nature of life as a whole; the same mutual pointing in the opposite directions, towards the essence of ourselves and yet everywhere around us, to the part and the whole at the same time, can be discerned as dormant in each and every metaphoric sign onto which the human mind stumbles in its adventurous quests to puzzle out the countless enigmas that pervade its existence.

Theological reflections of experiential co-creation point to an incessant dialogue between human spirit and God immanent in each detail of the subject's experience. Inherent to the concept of co-creation, the coalescence of subjective and objective traits of any experiential reality also implies that only parallel listening to one's own heart and to the godly guidance of Nature may provide us with the right incentives towards the mutual evolution of inner, spiritual and outer, informational landscapes of the world. And just like the ultimate religious insight in the Hindu tradition belongs to the enlightening moment when one realizes that Atman, equivalent to the human soul, is one and the same with Brahman, equivalent to the soul of the world, the same ultimate peak in our journey of co-creative learning in this dialogue between

the deepest features of our being and Nature belongs to the revelation that the pathways of human heart end up with the Way of Nature, and *vice versa*: that the ways of Nature end up in the wells of the human heart. In those moments analogous to the Hegelian synthesis whereby the being becomes one and the same as the Universe, we realize that the ultimate freedom equals faithful obedience of the divine mission meant for our being to carry out, and the other way around: fulfilling this divine mission is impossible without relying on the free choice of our self. This is the essence of the concept of co-creation, explaining along the way why the mythological stories about Pandora's Box, Odysseus' traveling on the boat next to the island where the sea nymphs sang their beautiful songs, Eva's picking a fruit from the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden, and Prometheus stealing fire from the gods to give humans a perfect control over their environment all ended up in the brutal anger and revenge of these very gods. As a result, they reestablished the balance of co-creation elucidated on these pages. In this balance, every creation depends on the creativity exhibited by two sides, which are ultimately mind and Nature. Perfect creativity always leaves the room for another side, the side of Nature, to edify the dreams that the creator himself breathes into his works, with the logical destination of this ubiquitous dialogue being the merging of spirits. Correspondingly, when Nature and our spirit become One is when we have reached the highest summits in the co-creational evolution of our being.

The idea of co-creation instructs us to live with one part of our consciousness introspectively withdrawn inside, ceaselessly forging memories, visions and emotions into bursting sunrays of creativity, while the other part of it remains oriented towards illuminating the surrounding life and spirits with this inner shine. When we precisely balance the former, inwardly pulling force and the latter, outwardly extending one, we become akin to a star, whose shine on the night sky is conditioned by the balance between the gravitational force that tries to collapse it into singularity and the explosive force resulting from the luminous energy produced by the fusion of elements taking place in its heart. This balance achieved at the level of the human mind I have christened the Way of Love. Why Way? Because every way in Nature can exist only insofar as there is a connection maintained between two entities, the ends of the way, which are presumed to be separate in the very first place. The notion of the Way, as such, implies simultaneous connectedness and separateness; the embodiment of this balance of seemingly not balanceable at all in our mental spheres sets the grounds for the display of otherworldly creativities, including the ability to become a bearer of Love, that single greatest and godliest of all feelings and states of mind known to man.

The Way of Love could be seen as residing at the heart of the co-creational thesis. Namely, by pointing out that each detail of one's experiential world is the creation of oneself as much as it is the creation of the external physical reality, the co-creational thesis implicitly outlines the need to care for both inner and outer sources of experience. Specifically, one is invited to balance (a) an empathic sense of unison with the surrounding souls with (b) a meditative seclusion into the abstract world of thoughts and emotions that illuminates one's insides. For, as one would learn sooner

or later, focused meditation, during which, like in the interior of a star, abstract elements are fused with the release of light, is necessary to produce the energy givable to nearby souls, whereas being open to reaching out to others in love and compassion unlocks the gates leading to fabulous insights during this inward journey of the soul.

This principle is readily observable in biological systems too. Namely, like a star that can sustain itself only insofar as it equilibrates this inward pull of gravity with an outward explosion of energy that brings life to the surrounding planets, the cell is operationally closed, preserving its boundaries and integrity at all costs, but also thermodynamically open, incessantly exchanging matter and energy with its surrounding for the sake of sustaining itself and the neighboring biological entities alike. Healthy human beings and the whole Cosmos at each of their organizational levels reflect essentially the same balance between closeness and openness. By being too open, natural systems may disperse and lose their inherent integrity, whereas by being too rigidly closed and tight, the opportunities for progress and evolution would equally decline. For, it is only through an endless change that we preserve our constancy and increase the chances to survive, whereas it is only through an endless reference to that unchanging core of our being that we have the chance to steer the evolutionary wheels of our creativity. In my universe of thought, thus, one such stance wherein closeness and openness are precisely balanced presents the starting point for the exhibitions of stellar creativities, that is, for inspiring the earthly souls wordlessly, with one's mere graceful being in the world.

Co-creation and the Way of Love in their swinging back and forth between the internal essence of the subject's being and the external appearances of the world imply that the mysterious divine force underlying the physical reality and a secret and equally mysterious core of our own self incessantly communicate in a dialogue whose products take the form of our experience with all its visible and invisible qualities. In our looking at the world from the cognitive panorama of the Way of Love we resemble Narcissus, the beautiful boy who, enchanted by both the beauty of himself and the beauty of Nature, unendingly gazes at the surface of a lake, looking partly at the lake and partly at the reflection of himself, unable to untangle where one begins from where the other ends. Mind draws Nature and Nature draws mind, as could be easily evidenced were we only to follow the traces of every thought of ours and recognize that the concepts of our thinking and visualizations draw inspiration from the way the world appears to us, whereby the way the world appears to us is contoured by the creative potentials of our cognitive apparatuses and biological forms.

Finally, co-creation and the Way of Love tell us that anytime we become too individual and original so that our ideas could not find a sympathetic mind in the world around us anymore, the guidance of Nature will impel us to blend with other people's worldviews, all until we restore the balance between being creatively unique and being compassionately the same. But also, once we become overly engaged in satisfying others, the ways of Nature will open up in front of us, graciously inviting us to follow their curved roads that lead straight to our own mind and heart. For,

when we resist for a long time to get close to others with an open heart and a childlike sincerity, the creativity of our behavior and thought would get diminished as much as it would deflate after spending too much time in a cordial communion with others without ever turning our attention to the voice of our heart, quietly beating with its divine music deep inside of us. We have to accept our humanness as much as to be aware that a blueprint for our divine mission on the planet Earth is written in the depths of our being. To become humanly same as everyone else, but still to know that “it is written in the law, ye are Gods” (John 10:34) is what the concept of co-creation and the Way of Love teach us.

4. What next?

Homer’s Odyssey is only one out of many popular narratives that describe relatively effortless arrivals at destinations of the adventure, but horrifically hard returns. Other stories of this type include classical stories of descent to the underworld, Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness, Frank Baum’s story about the Wizard of Oz, and many more. Implicitly, they may have wished to accentuate the central difficulty faced by the seekers for wisdom of the present and past: being able to occasionally glimpse the secrets of beautiful living, but rarely ever succeeding in conveying these inner visions to the outside world and embodying them in real life. Gaining knowledge is only one, relatively minor part of our mission. The other, far more comprehensive and complicated one consists in living it out. After all, the drawers of dreams are many today, but those who have renounced the materialistic attachments and embarked on a simple journey to live it all, to become a living epitome of the stunning beauty that life is, are as rare as sundrenched diamonds at the bottom of the ocean.

“Once you’ve learnt it, apply it”, thus said Confucius, perhaps aware that the most critical failure of the human race has not been that of not being able to recognize what is wrong with humanity, but that of not being able to act in congruity with the recognition of what is wrong with humanity, as the result of which the cycle of hypocrisy has repeated itself over and over again, from one generation of humans on Earth to the next, leaving no one perfectly immune to it, from the commoners to the intellectual mandarins. The theory of virtuous living has gone far ahead compared to the virtuosity of its application and every time we become dizzyingly spun on a dreamy carousel while listening to an ordinary pop song, become flooded with visions of graceful emanations of the bottomless potential of the divine sprout of our spirits and then look at the sad state of the world wherein freezing clouds of egotistic fears have thoroughly eclipsed these inner suns that crave to be expressed outwardly, we could be reminded that those familiar with the signs that pave the road to celestial living are indeed everywhere around us, but those living to live them are nowhere in sight.

Over time, this gap between conceiving enlightening action and performing it in reality has become wider and wider, and the more it becomes engraved into the patterns of the human imagination, the more it serves as a reminder to lukewarm, lackluster spirits subjected to peer pressure and other socially imposed fears that pose

obstacles on an uninhibited release of the shine of their spirits as to how far they are from the ideals of perfect living. To regain the key that opens the door of Paradise lost with our fall from grace into this world cursed by this now millions of feet wide and seemingly hardly crossable gap is, however, as simple as ever: it is about letting these millions of messages that fall on us like heavenly raindrops from all sides of our perceptual reality sprout from within and deliver their divine fruits to human creatures that mostly blindly roam through this purgatory realm in need of spiritual guidance. Until then, one thing will be certain: “We have modified our environment so radically that we must now modify ourselves in order to exist in this new environment”^{xv}, as Norbert Wiener pointed out; for, only when we learn how to transform into a living emanation of bedazzling spiritedness of barrages of impressions waving at us from behind each corner of reality, from flashing touchscreens to blazing stereo speakers to architectural wonders and beyond, will our lives become devoid of constant wanderings into dark alleyways of depression, awkwardness and perplexity caused by the fountainheads of our psyches punishing ourselves for being hypocrites in essence, for living in complete opposition to the dreams of magnificent living hatched from within the divine egg nested in our heart, which we call soul. And then, on that faraway day when every bit of our bodies begins to live the sacred knowledge gained on our missionary ways will we know that the mission has been accomplished. Then and only then will we have returned home, to that Paradise lost long ago.

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