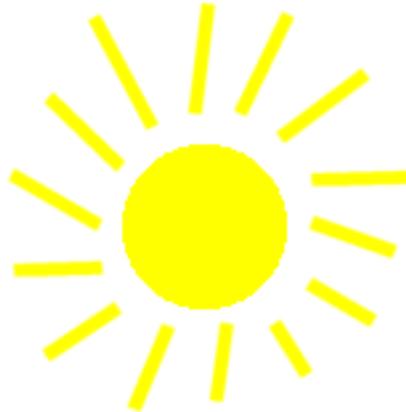


# A Star

by

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**Abstract** Expansion of academic writing into freer and more personal and lyrical territories is imperative for the rejuvenation of this literary style and its transformation to more inspirational forms. This transdisciplinary philosophical essay written over nearly a decade and a half, from 2010 to 2022, covers a wide range of semantic territories, drifting from (i) the celebration of play in scientific research and beyond to (ii) the co-creational theory of cognition and aesthetic expression to (iii) the semantic structuring and dialectics of sublime works of art to (iv) the direct link between nonconformity and creativity to (v) the aesthetics of ruins and importance of imbalances to (vi) the precepts for pedagogical excellence to (vii) to the airing of the anarchistic call for the renunciation of the will to power to (viii) the elaboration of the various concepts in philosophy of science to (ix) the fundamental limitations of language and the ontological repercussions thereof, all wrapped up in threads of thought weaving through the forest of sublime metaphysics, theosophy and poetry, alongside the perennial attempt to answer the question of “how one can become a star”. Toward that elusive goal, the reader is taken on a ride across these various fields of interest of contemporary academics and intellectuals, from popular arts to high technologies to basic and applied sciences to education, philosophy and beyond. With over half a million words and nearly 2,000 references covering a number of different sources, from the obscure to the popular, the essay inspires with its incredible breadth and extraordinarily diverse cornucopia of ideas. A work of Wagnerian expanse, emotional intensity and exuberance of motifs, it aspires to be a nucleus for the renaissance of romanticism in academic writing in the ensuing decades or centuries.

**Keywords:** Aesthetics; Art; Education; Linguistics; Philosophy; Poetry; Research; Science.

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**VERA, LJUBAV I NADA ili pesma o jednoj čudnoj koincidenciji**

Od kada znam za sebe povezivala me je sa kosmosom VERA  
u Boga, Tao il' svemoćnu silu.  
Znala sam i da Sunce nije samo topla sfera  
koju su vile ljuljale u krilu.

Od kada znam za sebe pomagala mi je NADA  
tamo gde se čovek sa silama mraka bori.  
Znala sam da ću istinu naći bilo kada.  
Na putu svetlosti vatra večno gori.

Sada, kad plovim uzburkanim morem svesti  
Pokušavam da sve misli bace sidro i stanu.  
LJUBAV je zlatna nit kojom ću ih splesti.  
Vidim svoje srce na dlanu.

Jasmina Uskoković, January 23, 1989.

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“To reach distant places, you have to take *the* first step”  
A Fortune Cookie

**How does one become a star?** This question swirled in my head as I watched a quiet undersea world unfolding before me, with my hands pressed against the walls of a giant marine aquarium. It was a world that, I felt, stood at the entrance to an inner space filled with a special type of tranquility, the one that is not deadeningly placid, but rather immensely motile and alive, like the sea shimmering deep inside my soul with infinite liveliness, albeit unable to make the surface brim with enlightening expressions yet. At the beginning of my last book, which has now come to an end, I said that the end is the beginning is the end is the beginning, and at the doorstep of this very space adorned with an ethereal bliss where this last book of mine has ended, this one is beginning. Moreover, the more these endings appear to be grave and hopeless *cul-de-sacs*, the greater the outbursts of refreshing and enlightening emanations of being await us on their other, inceptive sides in this cosmos in which we hop from one planet to another on our ascents along the karmic tree to the stars of spirit, the cosmos that is but a single breath of Nature where stars and galaxies burst into existence and expand via the explosion of a miraculous creative energy, forming planets, seashores, starry eyes, sunrises, pinecones, gramophones, bubbles and endless flows of wonder and love on which whole civilizations are founded and then ruined as Nature exhales in peaceful silence, so that everything could find solace in singularity of being from which it all originated, before bouncing back, opening its heart once more and yielding yet another exuberant blast of beauty in this endless process of alternate opening and closing of the heart that lies cocooned in every piece of this divine Nature, be it harmonious or cacophonous. The darker the chasms into which cosmic Love guides us, the more graceful our emerging to light will be, I thought as I plunged deeper and deeper into this underwater world inhabited by silent and serene sea stars. Thrilled by the swoosh of this train of thought through the microcosm of my heart and mind, a silent proclamation flashed like an enchanting neon sign in my head: the starry train of words that become rocks that become roads

that become wonderful new horizons of being must keep on rolling. Triumphant and determinedly, bringing charms of wonder and love to every corner of our wretched worlds.

As I gazed at a sea star at the bottom of an aquarium and let my Little Bear walk away, I was left alone, wondering whether the shape of the sea star could hide the answer. Whenever we look at the world with a sense of wonder, I deemed, we should be sure that not only are our keen worldviews in that instant made of bricks of questions, oftentimes invisible to us because we stand on them, but Nature also hands us hints to the answers with millions of metaphors hidden in perceptual details that wink at us lovingly from all angles. And so, if I were to place this sea star on the palm of my hand, with its open arms, as if embracing everyone, it would tell me a wordless story; of how simple giving is the key to it all. For, from the moment we were born, from the little sea of our mother's womb, the world wherein all was being given to us and nothing had to be reached out for, to the day when we sail away from this plane of reality and merge once more with the great One that encompasses it all, having burnt our bodies on the cross of selfless Love, we journey on the purgatorial road on which every step takes us away from the hellish, black-hole-like passivity of self-centered recipience to the paradisiacal, stellar outbursts of the desire to endlessly and shiningly give all that we are in possession of for the sake of conceiving and increasing the starriness of another. "If my dear could be a star, ne'er would my soul have a day bright to yearn for"<sup>1</sup>, said the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Serbian painter and a poet, Đura Jakšić, in his earliest documented poem, *Moma*, and, indeed, this and no other aim in life is able to draw smiles of sympathy from gods watching over the Earth. After all, to be driven by the gorgeous wish to make others true stars of spirit is the only rail along which we will stream to become one such star ourselves. The ending words of the Bible immediately flashed and tumbled like a starlit train through my head: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely"<sup>2</sup> (Revelation 22:17). And right after them, Damon's cry posed at the end of *Think Tank*, *Blur's* record that abounds with boredom, monotony and despair, and yet completes itself with these enlightening words that breathe meaning into all that preceded them, showing us that the game of life may indeed be won at any given time, that the road of million moonlit miles of which *Ivan Karamazov* dreamt could be crossed in a single twinkling of the eye: "Know you're not alone, if you want to be, you can be with me; everyone I see, you can be with me"<sup>3</sup>. And then the vision of an earthling all made of stars, twinkling on the screen behind *Radiohead* as they play their *DIY, indie rock milestone, Motion Picture Soundtrack* during an unplugged show in Paris at the turn of the century<sup>4</sup>, exploding like supernovas in all directions in celebration of the fact that we could be spirited and fulfilled only insofar as we give off all the lights that we keep dormant within us, as all the angels sleeping within our soul are sent out to guide others on their ways. For, be messages that flash around us new or old, whenever they illuminate our minds, their tenor is the same; namely, it is by endlessly giving, by tirelessly drawing empathic connections between our and everyone else's hearts, by always striving to see the world from another's eyes, like the *Little Prince* in his chaste and beautiful adventures<sup>5</sup>, that we become a

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<sup>1</sup> "Kad bi moma zvezda bila, nikad ne bi duša moja bela danka zaželela". See Đura Jakšić's *Moma* (1856), In: Đura Jakšić: *Selected Works*, Narodna knjiga, Belgrade, Serbia (1958), pp. 35.

<sup>2</sup> See Holy Bible, King James Version, available at <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/King-James-Version-KJV-Bible/> (397).

<sup>3</sup> Listen to *Blur's Battery in Your Leg* on *Think Tank*, Parlophone (2003).

<sup>4</sup> Watch *Radiohead's Motion Picture Soundtrack* played live at Canal Plus, Paris (2001), retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S\\_kOpU7k4XU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_kOpU7k4XU).

<sup>5</sup> See Antoine de Saint-Exupery's *The Little Prince*, Mladost, Zagreb, Croatia (1943).

superstar in this life, a superstar in a million times truer sense of the word than that popularly ascribed to the term, shedding the light of spirit and illuminating the roads to salvation for millions of souls, the heartbeats of whom penetrate the cosmic void through which we float.

All fears thus become washed away. For, when we accept everything, including our fears and insecurities, they miraculously vanish from the space of our heart, turning its panicky trembles into a sane peacefulness that launches our awareness into stars, letting it dizzily mingle with their brilliant glister. Millennia ago, Lao-Tzu concluded that who takes upon oneself the sins of the world would become the king of the world (Tao-Te-Xing LXXVIII), and every little stressful star that dawns on us, causing fearfulness and distress at first, should be grasped by the angelic arms of our heart, which live undyingly up to Rainer Maria Rilke's guideline: "All things that frighten us may be merely little things craving for our love"<sup>6</sup>. One such clash between the quivering winds of fear and gentle waves of the sea of love has been known to me ever since my prenatal days, when rubella virus broke into the seashell of my Mom's kangaroo belly. Since this virus had been known to cause congenital defects in infants born to mothers infected during the pregnancy, the medics "of little faith" prescribed a death sentence to me before I was even born. Fear and faith thus clashed in a colossal battle in the ocean of the womb in which I lightheartedly swam and made somersaults amidst stars, all until the instance resembling the divine act described in the Bible, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm" (Matthew 8:26), when the grace of love won the battle over the piercing fickle flashes of fear and all became once again immersed in the starry silence of being wherefrom poetry, music and harmony could be heard ringing in their grandiosity once again. Just as the entrance of an intrusive particle of dust into an oyster is what prompts this sea creature to form a precious pearl around it, so have my hopes been that these prenatal events were the starting point in the unstoppable voyage of my being towards becoming a similarly precious pearl on this planet that I sometimes see washed in the sea of teardrops of compassionate melancholy from the twinkly eyes of otherworldly angels. The same strategy chosen by my Mom to cope with these perilous predictions, to overcast the mind fields darkened by fear with the sunlight of love, has been the one I have twined my soul around from the early puerility to this very day, 11/11/11, the day composed of as many ones as they could fit the six-digit date format, hopefully serving as a sign that these words are dropped on the right track as the starry train of my thoughts journeys to its stellar destinations. The recipe inscribed on the iridescent stripes of the rainbow of my spirit has thus been telling me that whenever I come face-to-face with perilous fears, they ought to be embraced it with the wings of love, not pushed to the trenches of our consciousness, in order to be effectively transcended and transformed from stymieing stonewalls to gates of Paradise. For, stress of any kind resembles a block posed on our ways, not avoiding of which but climbing on top thereof leads us to overcome it and raise our minds to more beautiful vistas and elevate our spirits to higher grounds. With one such act of transforming stumbling stones to stepping ones to our jumps into starry skies of reason, to plunging our head into the cosmic symphony of everlasting love, we open our eyes to the light divine that permeates it all, to magically seeing "a world in a grain of sand and eternity in an hour"<sup>7</sup>. Thus we become open to finding sources of perfect, spiritually illuminating insights in the smallest and most ignored details of the world, and triumphantly conclude that Small is Beautiful, that humbleness and modesty are the doors that lead to the

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<sup>6</sup> See Rainer Maria Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, NY (1903).

<sup>7</sup> See William Blake's *Auguries of Innocence*, In: *The Pickering Manuscript*, Kessinger Publishing, Whitefish, MT (1803).

greatest expressions and insights that shine the godly lights to the world and leave it dazed with their genial appeal and beauty.

Millions of heartbeats, children dancing on the starlit podium in a hypermodern museum of science, amidst the ET spaceships and satellites watching from the sky: such was the blazing feel of that warm night at the California Academy of Sciences. My gaze turned to a coral with unremittingly dancing tentacles, as if being moved by a mysterious and impalpable hush. Yes, dance. It was the word that described it all. And yet, in the midst of a most inspiring dance that enchants and elevates millions of souls of the world, enkindling enlightening sparkles of wonder in their eyes, I have known that a heart of starry silence resides. For, the highest peak in dancing is to stop in the middle of it and turn into a stone, as stunned and astonished in face of the beauty divine one has been overflowed with as one could be. In one such moment of bedazzling silence, a cloud of thought bringing visions of how the future of our behavior lies in endless dancing with all that we have - minds, thoughts and every miniscule part of our bodies – dawned on me. It was the one of a never-ending dance of our minds and bodies, of never settling into repeatable muddles of thought, but always curiously leaping to look at things from novel perspectives. Becoming a new I with every breath we take, like Marcel Schwob's muse, Monelle, when she stepped forth before the poet through the haze of his clairvoyant consciousness and whispered quietly that famous "Do not be surprised, it is I, and it is not I"<sup>8</sup>, sweetly hinting at the need to constantly cut the ties that attach us to the actions and accomplishments of the past emanations of oneself in order to keep our expressions refreshingly brilliant. In turn, this obliges us to respond to impressions that dawn on us in an ever-changing manner with similar variability; that is, not with self-reflective and awkward uptightness, but with expressions that spontaneously change their form and content from one moment to the next, emerging from our dancing through space, abstract and physical, with each and every part of our minds and bodies and never ever repeating themselves. After all, should we let our spirit freely flow with the divine music that rings within our soul, with no inhibitions or refrains, we would enrapture the world with the beauties shone from our heart and quickly get promoted to a star in the eyes of the Universe. And when we reach true starriness within ourselves, when we become One with each heartbeat of our being, listening to the subtle and inaudible guidance from the inside and letting its divine grace be spontaneously embodied in each move of ours, we may know that the time has come to bless the world with the celestial lights of our spirit and open many an eye of the fellow earthlings to brave new worlds of being flashing with an enchanting freshness and novelty. Might then the road to becoming a star indeed open in all bliss before us that magical moment when we, deeply and profoundly, bedazzled by the beauty of God that illuminates our insides, true to the divine impetuses for physical action only and free from even the subtlest social pressures for good, become equally deeply and profoundly Thou, sacrificially devoted to the salvation of another and her elevation into the starry skies, even at the cost of our own being smushed against the Earth in return, I wondered surrounded by the strangest forms of aquatic life. And when the little lotus flower of a celestial mind, two-year-old Theo picked a plush starfish and placed it, magically, right between the heads of a boy and a girl sitting in a wooden boat, with three puffy clouds above them, a pelican seated on a rock next to them, a few threads of seaweed under them and the Mayan blue waters all around them, might have he wanted to tell me that starry is the spirit laid like a road between one and another, being both and none thereof at the same time, a part of the world, of the continent, of everything more than of any single soul *per se*, and that, perhaps, none but being on the Road forever and ever, with neither a shelter nor a sanctuary, is its fate? If

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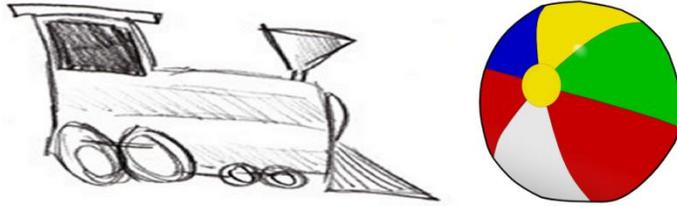
<sup>8</sup> See Marcel Schwob's *The Book of Monelle* (1894), Wakefield Press, Cambridge, MA.

the answer is Yes, then, of course, it must remain mysterious and never manifested as such, lest the journey of wonder comes to an end and with it the starriness inside us, wherefrom even the solidest No need not extinguish one's firm fate in Yes anymore, said I rushing fervently up the flowerily sprigged stairs of the Academy of Sciences.

Having climbed to its greened roof, the first thing I noticed was Orion in its full, magnificent shine. It was the first time that winter that I had seen it. In this constellation that is home to innumerable young blue stars at this point of time on Earth and whose rise on the night sky has paralleled the rise of human civilization the ancient Egyptians saw a warrior and a home of the sun-god of rebirth and afterlife, the ancient Greek saw a hunter with a glittery belt, the Babylonians saw a shepherd and a walking bird on Babylonian boundary stones, the Indians saw a deer, Australian Aborigines saw a canoe, the Chinese saw a simple III, the Native Americans saw footprints of the God who had escaped from the Earth, but I have always seen a star - a man triumphantly reaching up with his arms in pure cosmic joy of being.



With such a joy of being will I write this book, letting the words carelessly roll, one by one, along the rollercoaster of an enthralling feel of oneness with the entire Universe. For, writing of these words is indeed a form of abstract, immaterial dancing in my head, describable by an image of a ballerina, slim and tender like the branch of a laurel tree, soft as if it was shaped from the shadowy mass of the Moon, with stars glistening in her eyes captivated by the great One towards which she draws her graceful dancing steps, pirouetting along a spiral path through the Garden of Eden, plucking whatever the wordy fruits its trees reach out to her with and gingerly dropping them in order onto the sunlit soil below her feet that the screen on which these words stand written is. As she does so, any frowning accusations of pretentiousness and sentimentality over the displays of verbosity that pays no heed to words *per se* and over the ecstatic eruptions of lyricism and poetic tensions traversing in seismic waves the deepest strata of her spirit and emerging on the surface in a grand act of liberation will merely, with beams of joy radiating from her heart and a cryptic twist of her ethereal silhouette, be smiled upon. And when we do things while maintaining that great One at the core of our mind and heart, that great feel of emptiness and unity with the whole existence that it brings forth, nothing can ever go wrong; every word we proclaim, every note that comes out of our mouth and each flickering move that we make will find an enchanting resonance in the world around us, sending echoes of the bells of the church of God within our hearts outwards, to bless and beautify with *such* a joy of being. I will write this book, letting the words carelessly roll...ohm and ohm and ohm.



As I sat on a sandy beach in Maui, gazing at the endless blue ocean stretched in front of me and letting the sunrays bounce with joyous sparkles off the surface of my mind and ignite flights of my wild imagination in terms of some inspiring seagulls of thought, making my spirit dance in soulful ecstasy with the Sun and the sea, there it went, a light and patchy beach ball, rolling from a distance straight towards me, carried by the summer breeze. In the absence of Fido, my good-spirited guardian, who was at the moment exactly on the other side of the ball that this blue planet is, I began to play the game of passing the ball back and forth with the very wind, the Hawaiian god of air, which had many secrets to whisper to me in such a way. For, with my beloved bro being far away most of the time, I often find myself these days walking through the city streets, going grocery shopping, climbing apricot trees or juggling melons on lazy summer afternoons while imagining Fido standing next to me, as if he had assumed the role of the invisible rabbit Harvey. As I played this unusual ball game on windy Wailea beach, I recalled Fido's favorite saying, "time flies like the wind; fruit flies like a banana", shielded my eyes from the Sun with my hand, faced the ocean in front of me and thought how the day might have been a great one for banana-fish, as Jerome D. Salinger put it back in the old days<sup>9</sup>. Then I went on to spin the story in my head about a feat of Maui, the ancient god from Hawaiian mythology, who managed to slow down the Sun that, he thought, was spinning too fast. He may have known what the recent astronomical insights have confirmed and it is that a star moving too fast is about to be either ejected into the darkness of the intergalactic space or swallowed by a black hole; for a star to be stable enough to give rise to planets thriving with life around them, it ought to move relatively slowly compared to its stellar neighbors. Now, according to this myth, Maui's Mom, desiring to grant his son the wish of restraining the Sun, offered a hint of the path that led to the treasure by sending him to a wiliwili tree where Maui found his blind grandmother cooking bananas. In order to have her recognize him, he decided to steal bananas from her, one by one. Eventually, she realized his presence and helped him slow down the Sun. The legend says that Maui leaned on a wiliwili tree, roped the Sun from there and lassoed it until it slowed down. With the quiet waves of the Pacific Ocean, which we, at home, truly call the Quiet Ocean, subtly sending the splashing sounds throughout the space of my thoughts, this story brought to mind my own tremolo in *The Way*, the song in one chord, *A major*, I composed years ago, with notes twinkling milliseconds behind the beat, as if slowing it down and bringing the dreamy calmness of childish playfulness back to reverberate in the rhythm of life. For, life should indeed resemble a high-spirited glide on the dreamy waves that permeate the Universe, a majestic act for which the rhythmical matching of the palpitations of the heart and the pulsations of the soul of the world is to be performed. And when we succeed in this matching, everything our enlightened mind perceives does become a form of play, including even the wickedest displays of the darkest and the most destructive drives dormant inside the human beings, which take the form of a war

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<sup>9</sup> See Jerome David Salinger's *Nine Stories* (*A Perfect Day for Bananafish*, *Uncle Wiggily in Connecticut*, *Just Before the War with the Eskimos*, *the Laughing Man*, *Down at the Dinghy*, *For Esme with Love and Squalor*, *Pretty Mouth* and *Green My Eyes*, De Daumier Smith's *Blue Period*, *Teddy*), Bantam, New York, NY (1966).

of one kind or another, as exemplified by the stance took on by Roberto Benigni in *La vita è bella*, playing a father who teaches his son that World War II raging all around them was just a game played by the quirky grownups. Now, when David, a teenage hacker, asks the cursor-blinking computer in the 1983 children classic, *War Games*, “Is this real or just a game”, and the computer responds with a “What’s the difference”, we are being swiftly submerged in the splashy sea of a fanciful thought before which all paths worth journeying in life, from the most professional to the most casual and ordinary ones, are spiritedly playful and in which all the utilitarian drives that poison our perception with the egotistic stiffness and frozenness of the grownup fakes are being irretrievably sunk down. Could it be that the Biblical Fall of man too has been tied with the lasting divorce of creative activity from play, I often wonder, yielding as a result the breed of man to whom the process of growing up corresponds to systematic elimination of all the playful and exploratory drives that we are born with and that present the keys to our early growth in stature and spirit alike. For, why else would have God created man to till the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:5) and then, after he had tasted of the Tree of Knowledge, sentenced him to spend days “in the sweat of thy face” (Genesis 3:19) if not for the sake of telling us that any culture in which the joy of play stands separated from creative work is intrinsically fallen from grace? Evoking this expulsion from Paradise and into a world gloomy, cruel and frightening following our renunciation of play, Ivo Andrić, the Serbian Nobel laureate in literature, concordantly observed that “when we cease to play, when under the impression of years the need for play and faith in the realness of play die in us (so does the proverb say that “the old dog minds play”), then every one of us enters a dense, hardly passable forest from which one needs to find and fight a way back to the opening, to light and to the free path”<sup>10</sup>. And so long as work and play are being irrationally seen as antipodes rather than cross-fertilizing complements of each other, the gates of Eden will slam before our eyes with every passing moment of our perception. Notwithstanding the frequent misuse of the concept of play to justify slavery, bouncing up and down the room to the sinister sound and crooked grimace of a maid from the house of duty and order in which Fanny and Alexander were held captives of love that is “strong and astringent”, if callable love at all, as she says that “children will gradually realize the joys of a job well done; it is all to be like a game”<sup>11</sup>, the concept particularly prevalent in Mr. Bumble’s educational institutions of the modern day<sup>12</sup>, not until playful joy and creative work become entwined to such an extent that we no longer know where one begins and the other ends can we reach the elevated vistas whereon gods, each holding a child in his heart, sit and draw the paths before our feet. To remarry labor and play and restore joy in every arduous activity of ours, all until everything around us becomes the embodiment of “a counterculture of play and leisure from which the petty-bourgeois values of work and respect for money and authority are excluded”<sup>13</sup>, can thus be our contribution to making collective steps on behalf of humanity towards Paradise, the road to which became lost the moment work-related experience and creative expression divorced themselves from the flighty goddesses of cosmic joy. And with the finale of Radiohead’s *OK Computer* echoing with its message of “amen, slow down”<sup>14</sup> in our heads, evoking gracious and pearly muses of beauty dancing on summer highways with suns of

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<sup>10</sup> See Ivo Andrić’s *Znakovi pored puta*, Nolit, Belgrade, Serbia (1976).

<sup>11</sup> Watch *Fanny and Alexander* directed by Ingmar Bergman (1982).

<sup>12</sup> Reference is made to the parish beadle from Charles Dickens’ *Oliver Twist*.

<sup>13</sup> See William Rowe’s and Vivian Schelling’s *Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America*, Verso, London, UK (1991), pp. 128 – 130.

<sup>14</sup> Listen to Radiohead’s *Tourist* on *OK Computer*, Parlophone (1997).

love and stars of wonder in their eyes, I wished that we too may let our speedy and racy runs across the freeways of the world wind down and relaxingly, with a whole lot of joyful playfulness, look at the world once again, with eyes polished and shiny, freed from all the greedy ambitions that poison our soul, enjoying it fully with love in our heart, while reading millions of divine messages inscribed in all of its details at any given moment. Even reading these rollercoaster-like sentences of mine requires slow moving from one hump of a set of words to a dale of another and back up and down as melodic inflections rock and roll, all until one becomes dizzy and dazzled with the beauty of the world and being that I have pointed at during this literary ride. As slow as the stardust softly falling behind steps made by the congenial animated creature in the video clip for the unreleased Nina Hynes' song about Lulu Mae<sup>15</sup>, the long forgotten living thing that has not yet become infected by the lust for city lights and fame of a Holly Golightly in us, still knowing how to recognize stars in fallen leaves and doors open to dreamy mystery of being in spider webs and grains of dust, sweetly singing of scientific “dreams of bricks and hammers, the starting points of stumbles and stammers”, yet another story that begins and ends with a colorful ball magically landing onto the protagonist's lap and endearingly bouncing in front of one. And if this beach ball streaming to me on this July day will remind me of anything from now on, it will be the need to go back, to engage my spirit in mild, light and leisured and yet brilliantly insightful playfulness across the landscapes of this world, each one of which pulsates with an incredible richness of messages that descend straight from the celestial planes and are ingrained in the most ordinary worldly details. For, with such a playful and joyous spirit filled with trust in every aspect of our relationship with Nature, with the divine essence of it all that we incessantly communicate with, wanting it or not, just as I played ball with the wind on a Maui beach, we elegantly and effortlessly reveal colossal meanings and messages even behind pettiest, the most insignificant and obscurest details of the world. With sunshiny attention sustained by the starry glow of wonder and genuine curiosity in our eyes, we then inspect the objects of the world from multiple perspectives, as if they are being diamonds with infinite numbers of faces, discovering along the way majestic images and meanings and thus turning our daily lives into most enchanting mysteries grounded in the incessant communication between our mind and Nature. With such a playful state of mind we may recognize an elephant inside a boa constrictor, just as the Little Prince does, or an ET creature with a real head and trunk on the map of Maui, leading to our enkindling an impression of communicating with this otherworldly creature with every elegant step and glistening glance of ours.



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<sup>15</sup> Watch the animated video for Nina Hynes' Lulu Mae (2009), retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3N9iHqmIV4>.

An hour before I wrote the words comprising this very passage, I sat under a tall and slim palm tree, curvy and yet straight, the way our paths to greater ways of being should be, with a book about Jacques Tati, the director of *Playtime*, in my hands, on the sandy seashore of another head, this time of an island south of Maui, the so-called Big Island of Hawaii, the dwelling place of Pele, the goddess of fire, and absorbed the nightly hum of orchids, primroses and ginger flowers moving under the summer breeze from the luscious east, with the silhouette of my being, being all made of stars, fluidly moving in accord, as the striped sailor's shirt waved like a flag that honored no boundaries and no flags of any kind in front of my gleeful heart. As I wistfully gazed at the oceanic waters spanning endlessly before my eyes and splashing its waves in sign of sympathy before my bare feet sandaled with sand, I thought of the Polynesian statues carved and placed on thousands of miles distant islands to show the way to the ancient explorers and seafarers where the land mass on which I sat that night had lain. I also thought of those who had set out on a kayaking journey to discover these new lands as well as of how such discoverers, as well as pioneers in quite possibly anything else in life, have ever since been social outcasts and rejects. I wondered if I would pass out by merely seeing a colossal persona that had been endowed with one such determination to hop into a canoe and start paddling into an open sea, towards an unknown land, not knowing whether it exists and whether he would find it at all, let alone ever again return to his place of origin, relying only on the Sun, the stars, the birds and the clouds to show him the way, standing in front of me on that night. Only with a stonily firm belief in higher purpose of our lives, hearing the voice of God reverberating with its divine guidance all around us, from each leaf and rock and honeycreeper's chirp, can the wheels of one such willpower be kept spinning, I thought. Yet, both this prime form of religiousness and the willpower and missionary faith originating from it have gone extinct in the modern age. How would the world look like if we were all to regain one such profound faith in divinity that permeates each and every detail of our worlds, I asked myself and, instead of an answer, a blissful vision of people diving through solitary universes inside of their heads and pulling off utterly inspiring moves as they glide through space with graceful fluidity. It is *Playtime*, the glittery words of the iconic movie flashed like a neon-lit banner on my prophetic forehead where a single star of devotion to the Divine dwells. Excited by this insight, I jumped into the water. It was nighttime and even the shallowest waters were filled with the richness of the deep sea life. Yet, I feared not. For, when all things around us are seen as a sea of Nature that our spirit leisurely and beautifully plays with, no room for fear exists anymore in us and we are set to start ascending towards higher levels of being in the evolution of our spirit from the sand to the stars. As I released myself to the waters of the Pacific and allowed my body to be freely tumbled and turned by the surf, a glistening splash of water entered my eye, tiny and negligible, maybe meant to either pass unnoticed or be forgotten a millisecond after it had occurred. Not in my universe, though. This little iconic tear, of cheerful devotion or melancholic remorse, or both in one, as it were, will be the substance from which this whole book will have come to be brought to life.

To play with a glisteningly starry spirit is thus what I claim to be the grounds of the most creative acts in this world. This is why one my most favorite new Serbian words is *igrokaz*, a compound neologism that originated from taking “-post” from “guidepost” (that is, *kaz* from *putokaz*), merging it with the word for “play” (*igra*) and yielding a lexical amalgam translatable as “playpost”, a notion that signifies a creative process in which signs could be shed before another through play and play only, genuinely exploratory and improvisational by definition, being a road on which hearts become closer and more united in sympathy and understanding,

spontaneously and naturally, with every step made. For, it is through playfulness that we, as individual human creatures, make the unprecedentedly giant steps in our development. Namely, as children, we develop more intensively than in any other phase in our lifetimes, and the reason could be not only the inherent plasticity of our brains, which equips us with the capacity to swiftly write and rewrite, memorize and forget, love and forgive, wire and rewire the hardware of our brains. It is, first and foremost, our innate playfulness, as “the impulse to play, as we have seen in the case of the newborn child, is built into the central psychic and sensorimotoric processes that give the child a capacity for psychosocial development”<sup>16</sup>. The most natural and authentic learning that we could engage in is, therefore, such that “ha-ha” and “aha” during it blend into one another<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, as implied from the following line by Quentin Stevens, saying that “play situates objects in new, unconventional relationships and it enhances the recognition of connections, which are not about instrumentality or power”<sup>18</sup>, the anarchic deterioration of the sense of authority, the will to immerse oneself in the sea of mystery and be open to reshuffle the premises about who one is and what reality consists in are prerequisites for constructive play. All of these conditions, of course, are increasingly more difficult to satisfy, the further we have separated from the Eden of childhood and the deeper we have ventured into the murky lowlands of adulthood. And yet, in spite of this need to regress, so to speak, in order to progress in the coordinate system of playfulness, the innate propensity to live and learn through play grows in parallel with the developmental capacity of living species: dolphins, chimpanzees, puppies are all close to our evolutionary lineage and are typified by the ability to leisurely play for the sake of mere playing. Decades of research on learning in animals has led many to conclude that playful behavior lies at the root of the tree of knowledge that is growing, blossoming and fructifying during any sentient creature’s lifetime. Remembering how prophet Muhammad allowed his camel to choose the site at which his home in Medina would be built, remarking that “man should be where the saddle of his camel is”, animals, at least insofar as this innate playfulness is concerned, may be the road to follow in our strivings to elicit the divinest, which is, as ever, the most childlike too, from our bodies and souls alike. And if this is indeed so, then descending and bringing ourselves closer to the roots, to the child, if not solely the animal, in us, proves again as the best plan for ascension towards the starriest of skies, a point all but foreign to all the whistlers of that ancient Christ’s proverb: “The last shall be first, and the first last” (Matthew 20:16). Therefore, with the spirit of St. Francis, the great protector of animals and the saint after whom the city in which these words are written was named, caressed inside my heart and the enthralling vibe of Pet Sounds<sup>19</sup> engulfing and lulling my soul, I recall the zoologist, Paul Leyhausen’s observation that “the more animals need to learn, the more they need to play”<sup>20</sup>. Encouraging inquiry and playfulness on the account of discouraging fear, panic and rage is also the key to inducing healthy animal behavior, according to Temple Grandin, who subsequently went on to correlate the need to play with the craving for contact and invent the healing hug machine as a therapeutic device for autistic children<sup>21</sup>. For, playfulness can be seen

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<sup>16</sup> See Jon-Roar Bjørkvold’s *The Muse Within: Creativity and Communication, Song and Play from Childhood through Maturity*, Harper Collins, New York, NY (1989), pp. 28.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39.

<sup>18</sup> See Quentin Stevens’ *The Ludic City: Exploring the Potential of Public Spaces*, Routledge, London, UK (2007), pp. 17.

<sup>19</sup> *Listen to Pet Sounds*, the 11<sup>th</sup> studio album by the Beach Boys, Capitol (1966).

<sup>20</sup> See Myrna Milani’s *Animal Behavior, Learning, and Playfulness*, available at <http://www.mmilani.com/commentary-200209.html> (2009).

<sup>21</sup> See Temple Grandin’s *Animals Make Us Human*, Recorded Books, Prince Frederick, MD (2009).

as none other but a creative way of reaching out with the aim to establish and explore a contact with another object or living creature, which is the point that distantly evokes a thread between wonder and love, of which much more will be said in the passages to come. At this point, I may only mention that my personal experience in befriending babies has led me to conclude that three things earthlings freshly arrived from some remote karmic planes enjoy most: (I) human touch, (II) music, and (III) movement, that is, being on the road, in a way, constantly seeking and journeying instead of locking their tiny selves inside the cages of dogma, embracing the unending process of change and celebrating dancing, dynamics and a free loss of equilibria for the sake of sailing into the unknown with every blink of their starry eyes; no wonder that these three are exactly the centers of gravity around which the starship of our discoursing has begun its journey that this book will be. As a matter of fact, even we, grownup humans, tend to be crankier when we are made to do the same things over and over again, day after day, week after week, month after month, and traverse the same routes repeatedly than when we set our feet on the road, when we visit places or learn to see the world with new eyes every single day, which is a solid proof derivable from our daily experiences in favor of the fact that allowing repetitiveness to eat away its complement in terms of constantly refreshing novelties can be a great, though often unperceived, source of malice flowing out of our heart like grimy rivulets on the doorsteps of hell. Another thing on which the development of infants into spirits able to lighten the gloomiest skies of dull adult psyches with lanterns of joy crucially depends is the provision of an open path to exhibitions of genuinely playful behavior, exploratory and love-seeking in its essence. In other words, to enable a child to remain a child for its entire life may be the only way to promote its proper growing up in spiritual and creatively expressive terms. For, as Temple's research has demonstrated, unlike wolves who sooner or later surpass the phase of puppyhood in their development and become stern and serious individuals, somewhat like human creatures giving up their divine creative potentials under the force of peer pressure during their teenage years or adolescence, dogs dwell in the state of incessant puppyhood and eternal puerility. Whether they were domesticated and inaugurated into man's best friends owing to these qualities or these qualities were the outcomes of the domestication process is not certain, except that the most probable answer, as in all cyclical causal loops, is both. Along the side roads of my consciousness, here I begin to wonder what in the world we, as humanity, do wrong with the nurturing and education of children if our domestications wipe out these playful impulses as children transition into adulthood. And yet, as inferable from the aforementioned arguments, wondrous and playful seeking could be imagined as the emotional centerpiece of a complete human being and all its physical responses originate from it; by stimulating it, the tendency of the animal to exhibit stereotypies, that is, repetitive movements indicative of mental disorders, is avoided and behavior typified by incessantly introduced novelties, outlining the road to evolution, becomes instigated. For, our ascent on the evolutionary ladder of life corresponds to leaving behind the rigidly preprogrammed repertoire of responses to environmental stimuli and entering the realms of unexpected and flexibly innovative behavior, bearing resemblance to a jazz tune in which not a single string of tones is repeated twice.

To reiterate this insight, we may recall that the fascinating efficiency with which children learn new languages has its roots not only in the plasticity of their brains and easiness with which they imitate grownups, but in their natural propensity for play too. Learning and evolution can thus be thought of as directly proportional to the extent to which our spirits are open to engage in playful exploratory interactions with our environment. Personal experience tells me that even the scientific and philosophical explorations of reality work best when we dance gracefully with the

muses of enlightening ideas on the pearly dance floor of our mind, when we are engaged in “a free play with concepts”<sup>22</sup> within our mental microcosm, as Albert Einstein figuratively described the process of creative contemplation. For this reason, Rudolf Steiner put his heart into the idea of implementing in reality an educational system in which pupils would be encouraged to discover the world and have their wonder sparked through natural play prior to being strewn with epistemic symbols and signs. In that sense, we could be sure that the greatest discoveries will dawn on us when we let the waves of divine playfulness take our mind by the hand and leisurely show us the horizons of beautiful insights. Or, as put into words by Beau Lotto, a native San Franciscan<sup>23</sup> now based in London’s Science Museum, who engaged 25 8- to 10-year-olds in a biological study that aimed to figure out whether recognition of colored patterns plays a role in the attraction of bees to flowers and together with each and every one of them as authors published it in a reputable journal in the field<sup>24</sup>, using kindheartedly simple, childlike wordings, altogether with children’s drawings in colored pencil in place of computerized images, smiley emoticons and a reference to the delicious honey pie they made in the Materials and Methods section, offering a refreshing glimpse into low-key, more natural and less clichéd and rigid manner of scientific communication of the future day, which would naturally reflect this childlike wonder in each and every one of its words and gestures: “Real science has the potential to not only amaze, but also transform the way one thinks of the world and oneself. This is because the process of science is little different from the deeply resonant, natural processes of play. Play enables humans (and other mammals) to discover (and create) relationships and patterns. When one adds rules to play, a game is created. This is science: *the process of playing with rules that enables one to reveal previously unseen patterns of relationships that extend our collective understanding of nature and human nature*. When thought of in this way, science education becomes a more enlightened and intuitive process of asking questions and devising games to address those questions. But, because the outcome of all game-playing is unpredictable, supporting this ‘messyness’, which is the engine of science, is critical to good science education (and indeed creative education generally)”<sup>25</sup>. Illuminative ideas are piled one on top of the other in this stream of thoughts, ranging from (a) the intrinsic hypocrisy of the modern scientists who pay lip service to the awakening of the childlike sense of wonder that science is all about while embracing administratively boring technical languages, stonily stiff attitudes and hiding behind unnecessarily intricate expressions of thought<sup>26</sup>, to (b) the inextricable entwinement of the Why of teaching and the Why of research<sup>27</sup>, at the very glimpse of which we become aware that the quality of science affects the way science is being communicated while the quality of science communication, sucking strong as of this very day, with no standard university curricula thereof, affects the way science is being conducted, to (c) the necessity of bending rules, tirelessly and at

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<sup>22</sup> See Jeremy Bernstein’s *Albert Einstein: And the Frontiers of Physics*, Viking Press, New York, NY (1973), pp. 172.

<sup>23</sup> R. B. Lotto, Personal Correspondence (October 5, 2013).

<sup>24</sup> The study was, it is worth noticing, funded privately by R. B. Lotto, “as the referees argued that young people cannot do real science”, as the authors concluded in the last sentence of the last, acknowledgment section of the paper. See *Blackawton Bees* by P. S. Blackawton *et al.*, *Biology Letters* 7 (2) 168 – 172 (2011).

<sup>25</sup> See *Blackawton Bees* by P. S. Blackawton *et al.*, *Biology Letters* 7 (2) 168 – 172 (2011).

<sup>26</sup> The second sentence in *Blackawton Bees*, as sweet as their honey, is the following: “Knowing that other animals are as smart as us means we can appreciate them more, which could also help us to help them”. One can only imagine what kind of an intricate monster of a sentence this would have to be rephrased to if a scientist wished to present the very same thought in a publishable manner.

<sup>27</sup> Ashlie Wrenne, American Chemical Society Publications Graduate Student/Postdoc Summer Institute, Washington, DC (July 29, 2013).

all times, in the spirit of the most benevolent of rebels against anything that has become stale and standardized, to (d) the need to live on the edge between order and chaos whereon the most brilliant and dazzling stars of thought are being born. Finally and perhaps the most importantly, we could be sure that the greater our drive to play in life and the greater our inventiveness in “playing with rules”, the more we will explore, reveal and evolve along the way, which explains why a combination of playfulness and passion has been regarded by the sages as the magic blend concealing the utmost secrets of human creativity.

I have spent a considerable amount of time fervently drawing lines that were to tell the world that Wonder and Love are the cornerstones of the pyramid of science, invoking Albert Einstein’s deeming that “imagination is more important than knowledge” in support of the former and that “physical concepts are free creations of the human mind, and... the object of all science is to coordinate our experiences” in support of the latter, but what a discovery it was when I, riding on a fast train to Palo Alto on the day Mayas predicted to be the end of the Earth, 12-21-12, hiding one closed and one open circle in its numerological imagery, symbolic of the balance between closeness and openness that the Way of Love, the concept to which I have dedicated a place at the very center of my philosophy, has had hidden in its heart, realized that cordial play also reflects in its core these two fundamental pillars on which the whole reality and every creative effort in it are sustained. For, unadulterated play has to spring from relaxed joy that only wondrous exploratory yearnings can give birth to, while at the same time it ought to be open unto others and incessantly reach out to life in need of the food of spirit, like the rays emanating from the center of the Sun, which can be achieved only on the basis of sincere compassion and longings to wholly live for another, first and foremost, and only then for oneself. To play like a celestial ballerina on a plinth around which the two goddesses stand entwined, one of whom glistens like a starry sky in the name of the searchers’ spirit of this universe and the other one of whom shines dazzlingly, like a Sun, bringing forth unison in empathy with all that abides under the star that spells selfless giving with every ray of light it emits while being withdrawn deep into cosmic darkness, all alone, is thus the art that I place on the peak of the pedestal of human creativity. In this guiding line one can readily recognize the two poles between which the energy of human creativeness streams and swirls, and which will be over and over again invoked in the course of this book: Wonder and Love. To celebrate the first mentioning of theirs in this book, I lay here a photograph of two seashell remains I found at the shores of Maui, one resembling a heart and symbolizing Love, and the other reminiscent of a question mark and epitomizing Wonder. Infused together, side by side, like the parallel rails of a railroad, into our deeds, words, moves and glances, they make our being stream like a starry train through the fields of the world, reaching the highest and most sublime peaks of human creativity and inspiring millions of heartbeats to sound in sympathy with the music of Wonder and Love and be launched to the very stars.



Lightly leaping from one planet of human worldviews to another and empathizing with them all, Saint-Exupery's *Little Prince* has acted like one of the bees that the aforementioned kids from a village in Devon examined, flying from one flower to another and inconspicuously sowing a mysterious essence all over them, thus fertilizing their deepest cores and fostering their growth into some gorgeous fruits. Like this epitome of ethereal fancy and eternal childlikeness, and like Leonardo da Vinci and Renaissance philosophers in their treatises, or like Socrates and his sidekicks in Plato's dialogues, I, a humanoid honeybee of a kind, disseminating the music of words instead of pollen, will likewise hop from one flower of nectarous thought to another in the course of the marvelous flight of fancy that this chapter and this entire book will be. Now, how strange of a coincidence it is that in this modern world of deteriorated contacts with the divine voices echoing all through the domes of our consciousness, bees have begun to massively lose their ability to orient themselves, switching off these internal compasses planted in their heads and dropping dead out of the azure, as if signifying that something crucial for the sustainability of our worlds is missing from the contemporary mindsets? In his most recent book<sup>28</sup>, Douglas Coupland attempts to revert the ominous letter X, the one symbolizing a rolling cross, tipped and punkish, a blend of the harmonious and the chaotic, that he attached to the modern generation two decades ago to A, the first letter of the alphabet and an epitome of victorious ascent to the peaks of the pyramids of human knowledge and natural mysteries posed before our feet everywhere around us. Through the waters of cartoonish sarcasm, nerdy craftiness and disquieting devotion, subtly and impulsively at the same time, he intended to bring us over to the final moments of *Microserfs*, during which the narrator and his darling sit by the pool, some time after the narrator's Mom suffered a stroke, remotely communicating with flashlights and laser beams on low San Francisco clouds, wondering how "when you pray, and you pray honestly, you send a beam of light out into the skies as clear and as powerful as a sunbeam that breaks through the clouds at the end of a rainy day; like the lights on the sidewalk outside the Academy Awards"<sup>29</sup>. He conducted this monumental paradigm shift in the heads of the modern juvenile

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<sup>28</sup> See Douglas Coupland's *Generation A*, Random House, New York, NY (2009).

<sup>29</sup> See Douglas Coupland's *Microserfs*, Flamingo, London, UK (1995).

minds poisoned by the illusions of sensualistic materialism, hazed and fallen from grace into spiritual muddles of hysterical irony and cynicism, by mysteriously weaving the story around bees that have strangely appeared on the face of the literally fruitless, flowerless planet following their complete extinction many years ago, to sting creatures that apparently kept some of the glow of childlike, wondrous religiousness deep within their hearts. An intended impression may have been to let the reader feel as if being stung by a little-prince-like soul that curiously landed straight onto his highest cognitive panoramas, delivering stardust of Wonder and Love that fertilizes the Ajna flower of his mind and lets it spread its lattices until a sense of grandiose unison with the whole wide world is awakened, as in accordance with the meaning engrained in the Latin roots of the world Religion: connect. Hence, connection with all things around us, alive and inanimate alike, is what we may claim to be the root of genuine religiousness. And when we fly around to and from the wondrous creatures and objects of the world, while holding the torch of Wonder and the sunshine of Love in our hearts, the seeds of holy spirit that are instilled in all God's creatures and that make our travelling through this space bear resemblance to a voyage across the beamiest cosmic spheres become fertilized by the stardust of divine grace falling off the wings of our angelic silhouette with each and every of their joyous flaps.

At the beginning of Generation A, Douglas Coupland asks the readers what they would do if an enlightened extraterrestrial creature suddenly appeared in front of them, lighting up the archetypical room of their dark solitude. Would they disappointingly sit in silence, realizing that nothing important could be communicated to it due to a sense of squalid backwardness and spiritual defeat in comparison with the lights of wonder and love shining from the eyes of this precocious creature? Or would they start to ecstatically dance through space, being finally able to express the treasures that they have held within for so long to someone in full blast? Or would they feel as if washed over by sheer stardust of divine grace, while gazing ever deeper into these celestial eyes, sinking slowly into its hypnotic circles? Whatever it is, it can tell us enormously much about the current state of cognitive and spiritual development of ours. This short contemplation can also bring us face to face with the realization that the more divinely responsive character the subconscious cores of our minds ascribe to any details of the world we inhabit, the greater the fulfillment of our beings in contact with them will be. Eventually, should we see the reality as composed of inert matter moving in accordance with deterministic physical laws, without any role for the spiritual qualities to play in directing its development, these cores of our minds would begin to imperceptibly weep, shrinking our enthusiasm in interacting with the world and slowly collapsing our beings into a black hole. On the other hand, should we regard every piece of matter as pulsating with godly messages, as whistling the divine melodies and setting bases that lead to the apices of the pyramid of human knowledge if inspected closely, patiently enough and magically climbed on its stairs, step by step, brick by brick, one analogical insight after another, the soulful cores of our beings would expand, growing and growing, all until we realize that we have become a spiritual star that spontaneously and effortlessly shines with an indescribable beauty and cosmic joy to the world.

For, in order to engage our mind in blissful communication with Nature, the glow of divine spiritedness has to be induced and sustained within the core of our being as much as it has to be recognized as dormant in each and every detail of our experiential realities. Then, by approaching the world around us with a spirit as joyful as the summery skies and the sense of sacredly **meeting the divine essence of Nature**, alluding all the way to what Martin Buber had in mind with the devotional religiousness he ascribed to the concept of reverentially facing another, of holding hands in starry joy and veneration, of building bridges in

love and harmony, we would realize that all the details of the world around us have started to shine with an inexhaustibly rich semantic holiness and flicker with heaps of invitations to reach marvelous spiritual insights, if only their hearts were dived deep enough into. The senses of exclusion, contempt and arrogance thus become substituted with the attitude of mild and playful trustfulness and angelic insightfulness, with which in mind we become convinced that every song, even the most seemingly trivial one, humanly made or composed of the sounds of Nature, hides millions of beautiful messages that all utter one word in an infinite number of ways: Love. Only patience and faith are required to penetrate through the layers of enigmatic expressions and reach their seafloors at which pearly treasures of soul-enriching insights lie scattered.

Also, in order to be sensitive to billions of ultrafine palpitations of the celestial music that fill all the details of the world of our experience, we need to adopt a specific state of mind, which I have named a Mindset of the Way and crowned as the road that leads to lighting up millions of lampions of the thousand-petal lotus of our mind, the highest energy center of our bodies. Enlighteningly plunged into a starry sky of a kind, our mind then transforms from a dusty, dark and burrowed hole in the substratum of the Universe to a brilliantly lustrous Cosmos in itself, with billions of galaxies and stars twinkling with wonder and love in it. In contrast to a mindset pervaded with hastily orbiting ideas that yield dozens of petite aims and destinations to achieve, preoccupying our mind and placing a blindfold over our awareness of the beauty divine that spreads its wings and waves at us from literally every corner of the world, this celestial frame of mind is typified by an ability to realize magnificent meanings present in every detail of our immediate surroundings. Once we recognize this ubiquitous nature of divine messages, which are, as such, present “on the way”, rather than thinking about destinations solely, our awareness expands and we become ready to face every little object and creature of our world with majestic curiosity, sending sparkles of loving grace towards them and enriching our spirit with every golden breath of ours. Thence, we may fully grasp the meaning of André Gide’s words, “Believe those who are seeking the truth, and doubt those who find it”, and become a sacred explorer that finds answers in questions and questions in answers. In other words, we thus find the sole purpose of our lives in questioning, wondering and searching rather than being incessantly dissatisfied by the vainness of our searches for ultimate answers to the mysteries of life. “Don’t search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. The point is to live everything. Live the questions now, because then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, evolve into their answers”, Rainer Maria Rilke noticed once. Now, although many remember 42 as the answer Deep Thought gave to the ultimate question of being in the Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy, perhaps to signify that no answers could ever be given to such questions or else the art of questioning, which is the one moving humanity forward, would cease to exist and with it all our chances to progress from animals to angels, not many remember that the supercomputer could not exactly remember the question he was being asked, wittily suggesting that if a question can be formulated in words, it is not profound enough and no profound answer could be given to it either. Instead, questions, as Rainer Maria Rilke would tell us, are to be lived and when they do, the answer will have flown to us instantly, perhaps also in the shape of something livable and, in essence, ineffable, as Deep Thought insinuated in his reply, too<sup>30</sup>.

A perfect amendment to Rilke’s ultimate existential ideal comes from the definition of philosophy given in Jean-Luc Godard’s Goodbye to Language, adding the vision of the Sun around which these questions that we become are to orbit if we are to make our existence truly

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<sup>30</sup> See Douglas Adams’ The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy, Pan Books, London, UK (1979).

blissful, the Sun, always and ever, being Thou: “Philosophy is a being, the heart of it being the question of its being insofar as this being posits a being other than itself”. And once we start to live the questions that overwhelm our being with a divine sense of wonder, revolving perpetually around the enlightenment of another, not self, we become an epitome of an utterly inspirational question mark, such as the one depicted in the photograph above, lying leisurely next to a heart, in the shade of an African tulip tree planted on the tropical island of Maui. Coupled with the sunshine of love that sends its rays of grace and beauty from the depths of our heart, we reach the balance of Love and Wonder, which presents the core of brilliant human creativeness as well as the starting point and the ultimate destination of all evolutionary cycles in the world as we know it. Quietly bowed like a question mark, as if leaning our ears onto the walls of our heart, behind which the divine music that drives our enlightening acts in the world could be heard, and yet with arms wide open, as if giving our entire being and all that we have to the world around us, resembling the crucified Christ, distant and withdrawn into the cosmic beats of one’s heart and yet as open and direct as the shining Sun, is what we may then turn out to appear like, with spirit stretched like a harp string between the poles of the celestial centerpiece of our own being on one side and the hearts of surrounding creatures and godly Nature as a whole on the other, firmly anchored in both, levitating in a state of aerial balance between the inwardly pulling gravity of meditation and the graceful uplift of empathy.

The Philosophy of the Way that I have built meticulously throughout the years is founded upon the simple metaphor of the way, standing for simultaneous separation and connectedness, which I have thought of as symbolizing the neo-Hegelian, dialectical nature of the evolution of the world as well as the nature of the most harmonious relationships we could conceive. A mindset that is closed, meditative and withdrawn into the sun of one’s spirit, but also shiningly open, empathic and compassionately merged with the worldviews of the surrounding creatures has been celebrated in the explications of this Philosophy as the core of the starry nature of our beings. Tuning oneself to such consciousness and thereby appearing deeply plunged into one’s own essence, mildly distant and introverted, and yet incredibly loving and intimate, finding immediate connections with the surrounding hearts and empathically expressing oneself while shedding fireworks of inspiring stars of the grace divine everywhere around one is what I have metaphorically depicted as walking along the divine trail of the Way of Love. Yet, the heart of this Philosophy beats with the music of the co-creational thesis, which will be in more detail elaborated later in the text and which presupposes an incessant dialogue between the foundations of our beings and the divine Nature as the cause behind every single experiential appearance. In other words, the world as we see it is created by our own biological predispositions, beliefs, values, assumptions and emotions as much as it can be taken for granted, objectively and realistically.

When I look far enough back in time in attempts to realize what gave rise to this intuitive feel that my being is involved in an incessant communication with divine Nature, which now I sense as waving, palpating and sending wonderful messages from every detail of the world, I am once again returned to the image of me sitting by the seashore. As I sat by the Maui ocean shore, it became once again crystal clear to me that it was the music of the sea that had awakened the first feelings of Nature whispering invaluable messages to my ears and my spirit with its dancing in sound and vision alike. Ever since I was little, my Mom would make me wave at the sea and greet it every time we would see it, establishing an immense, sailor-like respect for it and for entire Nature, godly and glorious, that it is a voice of in me. Even today, glimpsing the sea is an invitation to knock on the doors of wisdom in the depths of my heart as much as to restore

childlike playfulness in me, for these two are inextricably entwined in the core of every creative impulse of ours. The music of water flowing, splashing and crashing against stones and pebbles, as it travels by my ears as I swim like a dolphin in the sea, as it falls in waterfalls to rejuvenate rainbows in my dreamy eyes, or as it rolls like raindrops down my cheeks in the moments of devotional ecstasy, speaks to me on everyday basis, oftentimes magically inspiring a flow of ideas in my head on their way to the ocean, the grand oneness, the unity of all being, as the beginning and the end of it all. Assuming that sea has a spirit of its own has helped me develop giant patience in tirelessly staring at the sea and absorbing its mysterious messages coming through splashes and glistening reflections of sunrays and moonlight from its surface. Pillars of the co-creational thesis and the Philosophy of the Way had thus been gently laid within the foundations of my worldviews, and every time I would come across the sea, one and only, spread all over the face of the planet, I would solemnly, dreamingly and wistfully gaze at it. And I know that if you talk to the sea with the language of the heart and trustfully try to absorb the meanings you believe it is trying to convey to you, the sea will take care of you and will over and over again bring you back to its shores. Even today, the music of the sea stands forth as a great reminder of the birth of the co-creational thesis inside of me.

Imagining the archetypal moment of rebirth in celestial spirit by entering the sea like an eternal Apollo under a starry sky, I am brought straight to the doorsteps of the following musings of Isadora Duncan who was likewise inspired to majestically dance by no one other but the spirit of the sea: “I was born by the sea, and I have noticed that all the great events of my life have taken place by the sea. My first idea of movement, of the dance, certainly came from the rhythm of the waves. I was born under the star of Aphrodite, Aphrodite who was also born on the sea, and when her star is in the ascendant, events are always propitious to me... The sea has always drawn me to it, whereas in the mountains I have a vague feeling of discomfort and a desire to fly. They always give me an impression of being a prisoner to the earth. Looking up at their tops, I do not feel the admiration of the general tourist, but only a desire to leap over them and escape. My life and my art were born of the sea”<sup>31</sup>. Just as Isadora’s inspiration to enlighten the world by dancing was sparked by the waviness of the sea, so could innumerable concepts deeply rooted in the framework of my thought be traced back to my wordless communication with Poseidon, the human personification of the oceanic spirit. From its unending subtle dance even at its most placid to its greatness drawn from positioning itself below everyone else and letting innumerable twisty, insecure streams and waterways find sanctuaries in it to its symbolizing oneness of being to which we all stream along the rivers of our lives to its coming to embrace me with its warm waves year after year during summery days, when all gods are at rest, watching us in peace from the azure clouds floating through our heads, countless are metaphors that the sea embodies and that have been over time deeply impressed in my mind, reflecting themselves in many philosophical concepts arisen from it. The ability to tell enormously much with the silent music of its waves and sparkly reflections of sunlight and moonlight from its lively surface, without a word said, certainly invoked in me an awareness that it is the imperceptible and infinitely subtle music of our dancing silhouettes of spirit and waves of emotions emitted by our hearts, eclipsing any materialistic medals, human honors or surface meanings and values, that truly matter in our missionary devotion to genuine beautification of the face of the Cosmos.

Speaking of music, I am reminded of the extreme aversion of words I nurtured in my youthful days and the sense of pity with which I looked at my friends writers in their moments of statuesquely scribing on their pigeon-toed knees in the midst of a busy marketplace, firmly

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<sup>31</sup> See Isadora Duncan’s *My Life*, Liveright, New York, NY (1927), pp. 10.

believing that the evasive, butterfly-like essence of the qualities of life could never be captured by the overly rough and robust networks of words. Like the seagulls from the Lieh-Tzu's story, which land on the coast and play on it for the joy of people on the shore, but fly away towards the open sea anytime someone reaches out to them to try to allure and capture them, the flights of our spirit and fancy could never be caged within rigid and unchangeable linguistic constructs, I have always thought. The more precious a quality, the closer it is to Lieh-Tzu's seagulls and the mystical grace of the open sea and the farther away it is from the dry continent and the linguistic clutches wishing to snatch it; hence, the opening lines of the central work of the Taoist literature, Lao-Tzu's *Tao-Te-Xing*: "A Way that can be marked is not the Eternal Way: Tao. A name that can be uttered is not the Eternal Name". For, to understand that the essence of being could not be grasped using the pound net of sophisticated wordings provides for a starting point in our coming to an understanding of the essence of our beings and beginning to be in control of the divine powers dormant in us. And indeed, everywhere I looked in my young days marked with an intense abomination of word *per se*, I could glimpse signs that I was on the right track, from the Christ's glorifying "lilies of the field" (Matthew 6:28) over "Solomon in all his glory" (Matthew 6:29), let alone those who pray with lips only, thinking that "they shall be heard for their much speaking" (Matthew 6:7), and adding that "if those who lead you say to you, 'See, the kingdom is in the sky', then the birds of the sky will precede you and if they say to you, 'It is in the sea', then the fish will precede you" (Thomas 3), to generations of artists who would find ideological solace in Joseph Beuys' appearing on the stage with head covered in honey and a dead hare in his hands, whispering that "even in death a hare has more sensitivity and instinctive understanding than some men with their stubborn rationality"<sup>32</sup>, and all the way to a Kenyan dreamer who sat by a wishing tree and enlighteningly wondered, "But the idea of nest in a bird's mind, where does it come from?"<sup>33</sup> Even now, as I look back to the period at which I transcribed the doves of my thoughts into words and placed them on a piece of paper for the first time, driven by a fresh thirst to verbally express the lustrous interiors of my mind, I see myself dwelling on a locus operandi profoundly fallen from grace, surrounded on all sides by the lonely spirit of Dylan's desolation rows<sup>34</sup>. At the beginning of his most celebrated work<sup>35</sup>, Meša Selimović wondered if he had been giving life to his thoughts by transforming them to words or merely killing them, while Yoshida Kiju, sharing the same spirit that sees any map as only a pale copy of the territory, was unsure whether capturing a real-life event with the eye of a camera is lastingly documenting the given scene or presenting "the death of looking"<sup>36</sup> by taking away all the seemingly useless and random wondering of our gazes back and forth between the object and its panoramic surroundings and enforcing constrained focus on the object alone, not knowing that by erasing the visual context, the essential qualities of the objects in sight become excised too. So did I, correspondingly, deem that although our immersion in the domain of language is obligatory for our involvement in continuation of the process of enrichment of life, the immense beauty of the mental universe inside of us could never be faithfully represented by verbal means, the belief I still stick to with every atom of my being. To write with a benevolent, lifesaving

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<sup>32</sup> See Rose Lee Goldberg's *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, NY (1988), pp. 149.

<sup>33</sup> See Alan Fletcher's *The Art of Looking Sideways*, Phaidon, London, UK (2001).

<sup>34</sup> Listen to Bob Dylan's *Desolation Row on Highway 61 Revisited*, Columbia (1965).

<sup>35</sup> See Meša Selimović's *Death and the Dervish*, pp. 8, Translated by Bogdan Rakić, Stephen M. Dickey, Northwestern University Press, Chicago, IL (1996).

<sup>36</sup> See Yoshida Kiju's *Ozu's Anti-Cinema*, Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (1998), pp. 33.

purpose on my mind while at the same time resisting to fall into the trap of equating the linguistic maps with territories of genuine feelings, thoughts and gestural expressions that the verbal symbols ultimately point to has thus stood forth as the grand mission to be accomplished as a part of my intellectual endeavors in life. For, while dancing and musicality I still see as directly related to the joy of play, which I engraved at the very beginning of this long discourse on a single star, as well as to the wonder, exploration, discovery and evolution into ever diviner states of being that they provide a step to, as exemplified by the identical words for playing an instrument and playing like an infant, for the sake of play *per se*, in numerous languages<sup>37</sup>, verbosity I could not help but equalize with the deadness of the human spirit, with a horrific fall from grace of the celestial locus operandi whereon our infinitely lively and natural, authentically Taoist spirit danced in accord with Walt Whitman's ideal: "I and mine do not convince by arguments, similes, rhymes; we convince by our presence"<sup>38</sup>. Accordingly, echoing Whitman's anti-intellectual ethos, Radiohead compiled a list of "possible plans for other people's birthdays"<sup>39</sup> whereon "never say anything" was the first bullet point and "remember: your present is **you**" was among the last, equally zealously shunning the semantics of the spoken word and striving to convey signs through more sublime avenues of sound, gesture and, why not, the magic of the enlightened emotion and thought. For, attached to the word and the false pride that it bears instead of the real life on the road of which the word is merely a signpost, confusing map with the territory and name with the thing named, we, on the mission to let the river of Tao stream through our being for the sake of elevating our mind and body to the stars, may know that we have not made it past the first and the primal principle of Tao, "The road that can be named is not Tao, the Eternal Way" (Tao-Te-Xing I), and that the stretch of the road towards reaching our dharma is still millions of moonlit miles long, though, as we must continue to believe in, always passable in the blink of a Cosmic eye. This all explains why for so many years I never intended to leave a single memorable line behind me and strictly relied on music to express the emotions and thoughts that swirled inside of my being. Sometimes, while dreamingly gazing at the ceiling filled with stars I imagine this old I looking at the obsessively-devoted-to-writing me of this very day with contempt for what he would see as my actual indulgence in the sin of conformism, my wandering away from the essence of it all and floating on the surface, the way all spiritually dead creatures – such as those epitomized in the last story in James Joyce's *Dubliners*, a.k.a. *The Dead* – had done in his eyes, fearing that journeying along this scribal rail of life which would eventually take me to the cold coasts on which T. S. Eliot's Alfred Prufrock found himself in his old days, hearing the songs of the mermaids in the distance but knowing that they do not sing for him but for those Christ-like creatures who had deeply plunged into the ocean of divine being and lived these very words with all their hearts, dancing with the sirens and the stars, awakening angels from their slumbers and delightedly dying in love. For, somewhere deep inside myself still exists this belief that words degrade the truly magnificent feelings that arise in us, as no truly powerful emotion able to profoundly touch the hearts of surrounding creatures could be conveyed through words, but through music alone. "Music begins where words end", noticed an immense inspirational figure of my early musical training, Yehudi Menuhin in one of his essays, before he went on to boldly claim that "man's ultimate leap, when approaching his God, is

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<sup>37</sup> See Jon-Roar Bjørkvold's *The Muse Within: Creativity and Communication, Song and Play from Childhood through Maturity*, Harper Collins, New York, NY (1989), pp. 46.

<sup>38</sup> The quote found in Simon Louvish's *Chaplin: The Tramp's Odyssey*, Thomas Dunne Books, New York, NY (2009), pp. 265.

<sup>39</sup> See Radiohead's *Theme Park* retrieved from <http://archive.radiohead.com/Site4/syn017.html> (1999).

through music... it is the only medium which recalls us inescapably to that sea of creation and existence, the one infinity of which we are a fraction... music is the river-bed which can guide and contain this powerful and eruptive flow coming from our subterranean levels of consciousness - a course which unites us with that ocean I speak of"<sup>40</sup>, offering words against words and in favor of the all-encompassing music of the spheres, which they are predestined to be merely a miniscule subset of, from this very day until the eternity. In view of this, it should not come as a surprise when I claim that my musical compositions stand millions of light years ahead of my written works in terms of their starry luster and divinity. Looking back and listening to my musical works compiled under the title of Starry Train, I could indeed hear many of my philosophical insights spontaneously conveyed through it. One of them is the balance between balance and imbalance, which I have claimed to be the most important balance in our lives, the balance on the fine utilization of which our progress on all planes in life, spiritual, epistemological and behavioral, depends. This balance was spontaneously incarnated in the sound of my musical train rolling across the audio landscapes, insecurely and fragilely, producing ripples of sound waves as if it is about to crumble down and fall apart at any time, and yet unstoppably delivering the starry twinkles of beauty with the plucked guitar strings, such that they resembled the winks of angels falling in sympathy onto one from some great starry heights. Composed and played as such, this music was meant to show to the listener that only when walking on the very edge of it all, when we stand on the cliffs of life, as risky as they are, do we get a chance to glimpse the most beautiful seascapes and deliver the most progressive acts to the world. With its breaking the law of ordinary musical composition in many aspects, from the mildly out-of-tune guitar and the twinkles of sadness that this effect evoked to regularly played discords to rolling on like an unrepeatable jazzy train of sound, always digging new notes and lines and never reverting to the old, my music may have been liked by the one who expected from music to satisfy the aural thirst of Robyn, bewailing in the midst of one of her adventures on the dance floor how "none of these beats are raw, none of these beats ever break the law"<sup>41</sup>. For, while perfect technique yields perfect dullness, by dispersing subtle imperfections through our artistic expressions, regardless of the form they take, be they sounds emerging from our guitar or moves shed by our dancing silhouette made of stars, is how we produce acts that will inspire the chaste spirits around us and keep them suspended for seconds or years in the state of ethereal bliss where the grand One reigns. Long time ago, someone had said that the beauties of the world are like glass, in the sense that only when they break do we realize their preciousness, which is a thought that conceals in it the core of the dialectical thesis I was later to fully embrace with my philosophic arms and argue in favor of reflections of the polar opposites in life propelling us along the path of progress and call for an awareness that even the most malign things around us thus have their purpose in spurring the rise of beauty divine on this planet. As I sat in one of the most beautiful desolation rows of my life, bowed over the electric guitar lying on my lap, next to the window with a broken wing, on the other side of which were an antenna picking up strangest waves from the remote corners of the Universe and electrifying my skin therewith, a rusty basketball ring, a view of Belgrade city lights and the slender and sickly sour cherry tree my father had planted two decades earlier with the vision of me waking up in the morning and reaching out for its fruits to refresh my mind interspersed with the stars of the night sky, I truly felt as if inside of me were bottles breaking into pieces, piercing my heart and soul and making them bleed outwardly, creating a steady drip of blood which I craved to capture in

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<sup>40</sup> See Yehudi Menuhin's *Theme and Variations*, Stein and Day, New York, NY (1972), pp. 10-11.

<sup>41</sup> Listen to Robyn's *None of Dem* on *Body Talk Pt. 1*, Konichiwa (2010).

my hands and transmute into the sound of my guitar. Accordingly, the twinkles of my guitar did sound like a broken glass with their blending beautiful harmonies that strew stardust of cosmic joy everywhere with an emotionally painful sense of discord and dissonance, wishing to heal, yet also hurt human hearts, to build and break, to bond and rupture, to empower but also to shatter so that those dazzling lights from the divinest depths of our beings could emerge on the surface, thus faintly touching on the essence of the dialectical thesis which I would later extensively discourse on in my philosophical treatises. “It’s time to go round, a one man showdown, teach us how to fail; we’re off the streets now and back on the road, on the riot trail”, Sonic Youth’s indie anthem, Teen Age Riot off Daydream Nation, wraps up, glorifying all those who clownishly produce impeccability out of failures and drawing vision of a road, a symbol of order, of precise and conventional path, and a riot trail, a call to creatively differ and not conform to living standards side by side, as dialectical as the image of the road itself, with the spirits of connectedness and separateness that it simultaneously embodies, the image my music pined to have infused within itself too. An encounter of aural cacophony and pure beauty in this rolling train of unrepeatable notes that, as such, like most jazz improvisations, never becomes boring to listen to as it rolls by our ears was thus spontaneously woven to yield a dialectical audio clash that brings sheer bliss to the listener’s mind. My music, to that end, resembled a ride through the Indian countryside<sup>42</sup>, where the filthiest and the most touching one could see on planet Earth are concocted into one and where the experiencer is awed and left breathless by one unique visual detail after another, having neither the beginning nor an end, like Godard’s *Histoire(s) du Cinema*, a Cassavetes’ movie, a Mingus’ symphonic jazz tune or this very book, but rather resembling a shower of ideas falling on one like stars of the night sky, thus faithfully reflecting the philosophy of the Way expounded on these pages, finding destination within every segment of the road and rolling, rolling, undyingly rolling the wheels of that starry train<sup>43</sup> of an ethereal sound. Implicit in my music has been, therefore, the idea that for as long as the rhythm and harmonies woven into the heart of the song radiate with timelessly moving magic, no amount of low-fi graininess and screeches of dissonance interspersed through its aural landscapes could dispel its enchanting beauty; as a matter of fact, if these elements of chaos are masterfully introduced into the composition, they will only manage to endow the tonal progressions with an ever more touching character. Or, in other words, given the beautiful spiritual essence of our acts and the very being in life, enwrapped as a cocoon in inexplicable threads of aspirations, intentions and emotions nurtured within us, no lack of superficial appeal and glamour could ever threaten to suffocate the waves of beauty emitted from the core of our being and mysteriously spread across the face of the world. This philosophy intrinsic to my musical creation is, of course, an antithesis to the contemporary musical world wherein the age-old, romanticist

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<sup>42</sup> The breathless rides resembling visual symphonies that compare to nothing seen before or after I specifically experienced while travelling through the villages of the West Bengal. I was given a two-page brochure to read about the destination we were heading to, which was 3 h away by car, but my jaw dropped because of things I saw through the window as soon as we left the point of origin and it never lifted back up nor did I ever find those minute or so to read through that text. Like the people undergoing psychedelic experiences and emerging from them with an impression that they have seen it all, the beginning and the end, having absorbed every emotion under the sun, the same was with this ride. I came out of it purified, having realized that people in the western world have built a cushy civilization, but have turned themselves in the process into facades and walls as compared to the real life of the past that was still lived in these villages of West Bengal.

<sup>43</sup> Starry Train is the name of one of my tunes, but also an informal title that I gave to all my musical recordings combined.

emphasis on the essence, specifically melody, harmony and rhythm as “all that matters”<sup>44</sup>, has been defeated and humiliated in favor of the worship of the garments, of the surface appeal, specifically timbral gloss achieved through lavish production. But to play the way I played had a deeper meaning in my eyes, as every note, in my solitary universe, was an Archimedes’ circle drawn in the sand, in the midst of a battle between the surface and the senses on one side and the mind and the spirit on the other, secretly hoping for the triumph of the latter. Hence, rather than pulling out a short melodic sequence of any given song from my musical repertoire, making it repetitive and then dressing it up in flashy, appealing clothes, which would be the mainstream model for crafting catchy tunes, my approach has been to compose an intrinsically moving rhythm and harmony and then ruining these impeccably pure marble columns of musical expression, all until truly poignant pillars of love and beauty facing up their ruinous antipodes are produced. Again, the credo underlying one such creative approach has been that insofar as the essence from which the vibe of our artistic self is emitted remains angelically pure, we can afford spoilage of the surface of our expressions to freely take place, for nothing can then stand in the way of our generating rousing wavelets that will subtly bounce back and forth off the shores of human minds inhabiting this planet, forever and ever. Like the Ode to Joy played on the bells of SF Grace Cathedral, in the shade of which many of these words have been written, cacophonous and still helplessly beautiful, unexplainably enlightening my mind with the clash of dissonance and harmony intrinsic to it, so is, I believe, with the starry train of my music and the convergence of a sense of aerial purity and the feeling of falling into pieces that it carries, dragging the listener up and down, to the stars and to the ground, soaring it and plummeting at the same time, turning it into a flying feather and a sinking stone all at once. Love Among the Ruins, the title of the 1855 poem by Robert Browning, later borrowed by Edward Burne-Jones to name one of his paintings and by 10,000 Maniacs as the title of their first record without Natalie Merchant, being the phrase I previously placed as a diadem on my hometown and the family oases in which I was brought up and lived my time in paradise, could also be an appropriate title for my music, as it neatly epitomizes the blend of eternal sadness and cosmic joy engrained in it as well as the starry sparkles of joy and sunshine of clear and untainted smile at sunset, red and glossy in its dying in beauty, peering shyly behind notes falling apart like Ionic pillars in their dusty hum and antique graininess. For, “each note a twinkle of joy and a wail of sorrow at the same time” was an unwritten rule with which I approached my musical compositions, wishing to make every pluck of a string of my guitar deliver exactly that - a touching concoction of cosmic joy and ethereal sadness, as if it has emanated from the twinkles of the eye and the gleeful voices of the silhouettes of cherubs and mermaids dancing on the rooftops over my head immersed in an ocean of stars. The slightly out-of-tune guitar of mine paired with harmonies that sounded indestructibly beautiful to me, as if softly saying that when we have beautiful things to say, nothing, really nothing could stand in our ways, was equally subtly sending forth the message of the need to tread sloppily and insecurely, like the Little Tramp, for the angelic radiance of our spirits to be unleashed and released in its full splendor. “That which is the straightest seems like an impasse. The greatest skill seems like sloppiness. The highest eloquence seems like stammering” (Tao-Te-Xing XLV), Lao-Tzu claimed, and this message could be seen as deeply engrained in the delicately fragile and angelically beautiful music of mine, at least in the eyes of its creator. For, only when our acts are such that they appear to the world as if they will fall into an abyss at any time do we get to awaken gracious sympathy in the watchers and listeners, whose

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<sup>44</sup> See Paul Desmond’s interview with Charlie Parker (1954), retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3W8Ff\\_4oFg&t=235s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3W8Ff_4oFg&t=235s).

spirits would have been otherwise merely put to sleep by the exhibitions of sheer perfection. To fall, then, is to climb, as I have loved to claim, bringing to mind the spiral shape of our galaxy as a powerful metaphor of how sane paths along which we advance forward in life look like, consisting in careful revisions that take us a step back after each two forward steps made and prompting many a sage to conclude that crooked are the roads of Nature, including Lao-Tzu who once noticed that “the one who has advanced in Tao appears as if traveling backwards; the one who travels along the straight path of Tao appears as if descending and ascending” (Tao-Te-Xing XLI). The Little Prince concordantly noticed that “by heading only straightforward, one does not travel far”, while one of the basic principles of *feng shui*, the traditional Chinese approach to harmonious spatial design, is that “good energy travels around curves and bad energy travels on a straight line”<sup>45</sup>. In fact, if we were to carefully follow the trajectory of any given atom or molecule diffusing through a medium on its journey from point A to point B, we would realize that there is no such thing as a linear path, except in perfect vacuity, and that everything travels in zigzag fashion, changing its direction innumerable times before it reaches the destination. As it collides with other atoms and molecules, the diffusing entity gives us a great and immensely instructive idea as to how we should proceed toward any destination in life: not by ignoring our keens and zealously avoiding them in order to maintain a linear path and reach our goals as swiftly as possible, but by compassionately colliding with the nearby souls and allowing them to modify and occasionally even fully reverse the directions of our movement for limited periods of time. The unnaturalness of any straight path in life thus becomes immediately obvious as well as the necessity to wander off the broad and bright avenues into dim and mysterious alleyways if we are to continue our journeys in harmony with Nature and in style. In other words, we need to get distracted on our voyages and move like a looney spiral, combining steps forward and steps backwards in an elusive and undecipherable order, sacrificing the prompt accomplishment of our goals for the sake of being dragged down via coming to touch with entities that we share this plane of reality with, and, most of all, infusing our strivings for perfection with an incessant indulgence in imperfection, smartly and sensibly. And so, as I posted my musical works online for the first time, on the Easter of 2007, I remember I accompanied them with the following message: “You may perceive an entwinement of preconceived, rhythmical streams of harmonies and unrepeatable, improvisational threads of notes. Such a structure of these compositions reflects a broader philosophy of life related to the balance between logic, discipline and rigorous analytic approaches on one side and spontaneous and improvisational on the other. By learning how to achieve and maintain this balance, we may have the chance to overcome both the whirlpools of absurdness and meaninglessness that distinguish a large part of today's artistic worldviews and the rigidness and inertness of the attitudes based on pure discipline, preconceptions and experiential tightness. Maybe the future days would bring forth a rise in the propagation of these balances and their musical reflections, so that what today sounds as 'experimental' would be one day accepted as 'mainstream'. It was also not superficial ornamentation of the prime sounds, but generation of an inspiring flow of harmonies that constituted the basic creative impulse that underlain the creation of this music, which presents another reflection of the ideal of balancing precise and ordered on one side and natural on the other. This is why instead of being permeated and guided by perfectly clear sounds, computerized metronomes and inhuman beats, dustiness and hum present an inherent aspect of the whole artwork. This is yet another reflection of a belief that angelic, celestial sounds that

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<sup>45</sup> See Richard Edward DeLeon's *Left Coast City: Progressive Politics in San Francisco, 1975 – 1991*, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, KA (1992), pp. 1.

intertwine heavenly sadness and shining joy appear beautiful through the harmony between clarity, purity and grace on one side, and the sense of uncertainty, unsteadiness and wondering on the other". Hence, before I was even to consider beginning to explicate in words, on the pages of this and other books of mine, my belief that acts of a spiritual star radiate with a tremendous shine of inspiration because they embed wonder and love in both the form in which they emerge to the world and in their sources, that is, the foundations of the heart of the star from which all its physical movements launch like rockets into stellar spaces, my music embodied this magic alchemical blend of wonder and love, which I nowadays claim to be the beginnings and ends of all knowledge and being. Dropping pebbles of beautiful harmonies that touch the earthlings' hearts in combination with producing a feeling that this rolling train of starry twinkles could fall apart at any given moment has reflected the blend of dazzling, sunshiny love and punchy wondrousness that makes one see stars everywhere, of a sense of giant respect for another and empathic tendency to "rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:25) on one side and a drive to rebelliously astonish and amaze by being thoroughly different from what others may expect and go against the stream of clichéd habitualness on the other side, which I have ascribed as the key to all the utterly creative acts in this life. "Saints, like many of the artists who painted them, went against the conventional behavior of their times... however, as writers and artists repeatedly show, the appeal of the saints is not merely in their sanctity but also in their common humanity"<sup>46</sup>, observed the Harvard University professor emeritus Robert Kiely, and finding this empyrean balance between being one and only, different from anything the world has ever seen, and being one with another in compassion and empathy, blending Wonder and Love, respectively, in the cosmic head and heart of ours, has been the mission to accomplish by the most angelic spirits of this world. As for the empathic aspect of this celestial creativity, it is being exercised through prompting our spirit to constantly fly out, away from the cages and stony fortresses of our ego and into the hearts of others, so as to blend with them and yield spiritual syntheses that send forth the sunshiny bliss for gods and angels to happily bath in, invisible to the eye, but nevertheless all-pervading. And as for the nonconformist, inherently rebellious aspect of this ultimate creativity of human beings, we need to always reckon that in order to endow our works with an opportunity to shine to the world with an impressive beauty, we need to break the pattern of ordinariness and normality, to let the music of our being echo the steps of Gregory Peck as he walks out of the palace of sterilely structured royalty life and enters the realm of celebratory, ecstatic and nonconformist lifestyles at the very end of Roman Holiday, leaving the stories written using mere words untold, knowing that life, in the end, would be taken from the world, not given to it by their means. These strivings behind my musical creativity partly explain the innovative experimental sound of my audio works as well as the never-ending, rollercoaster-like sentences that draw on the starry train of thought that journeys through my head, which you may encounter in my written works.

To sum up, with a little bit of imaginativeness and a whole lot of burning wishes to save the world with our creative deeds, myriads of profound insights could be delivered to the world without using a single word, which brings to mind yet another one of Lao-Tzu's thoughts: "The sage teaches without words... Nothing in the universe can be compared with the wordless teaching" (Tao-Te-Xing II... XLIII). On the other side of the globe, two millennia after Lao-Tzu came up with the ethical system that has comprised the essence of every religion of the world since then, a pen in the hands of the French mathematician and theologian, Blaise Pascal, known for his complete abandonment of math and physics by the time he turned 24, the age at which he

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<sup>46</sup> See Robert Kiely's *Blessed and Beautiful*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT (2010), pp. 7.

left his prodigal knowledge of natural sciences behind and fully dedicated himself to unwinding the mazy ball of yarn of theological thought, inscribed a message that echoed a similarly anarchic vibe: “True eloquence has no time for eloquence, true morality has no time for morality... To have no time for philosophy is to be a true philosopher”<sup>47</sup>. In that sense, during these vernal days in which I, following the Christ’s advice (Matthew 23), considered scribes as inherently predestined never to be able to depict the essence of life by means of words, I would have found myself in agreement with what Felix Mendelssohn proclaimed once: “People usually complain that music is so ambiguous, that it leaves them in such doubt as to what they are supposed to think when, whereas words can be understood by everyone. But to me it seems exactly the opposite... what the music I love expresses to me are thoughts not to indefinite for words, but rather too definite”<sup>48</sup>. Soon, we will realize, however, that music that touches us most is, in fact, far from definite, as it engrains encounters of opposites and thus brings a receptive mind to a state of ineffable paradox, during which enlightening impressions are produced akin to the flashes of light forming when matter and antimatter collide and annihilate each other. Following this thread of thought, I am also calling to mind Ludwig van Beethoven, who created timeless pieces of art that still illuminate the skies of many a human mind and said once how he would have rather written a single note than 10,000 words<sup>49</sup>. To prove the extent to which simplicity can be monumentally powerful, he came up with the melody for Schiller’s Ode to Joy, puzzlingly simplistic in the times of dominance of the classical approach to musical composition where any repetition of a melody, especially of one as aesthetically impoverished as the Ode to Joy, was considered blasphemous, and incorporated it in the memorable finale of his last, ninth symphony. Not only did he show thereby that not the melody, but the subtle ornaments that aurally paint the context through which the melody floats are what defines its beauty, but he also demonstrated that any given melody, regardless of how annoyingly debilitating it is *per se*, could cede the place of the finale of one’s lifework and still enlighten generations of human spirits that patiently lean their ears onto its softly shaking walls. The secret message of this colossal musical moment may have also been that any act under the sun is allowed to be made and able to illuminate the dark spaces of reality if it only arises from the seed of the divine soul implanted deep inside us. Of course, this strategy of invoking a simple philistine tune and proving that far greater treasures can be excavated from it than it may seem to an uninitiated ear was by no means foreign to the German maestro as he had employed the same trick two decades earlier in the final movement of his Symphony No.3, Eroica, in E-flat major - the chord ambivalently evocative of both valor and calamity that should have hung ominously, just as it hung across different octaves at the beginning of the prelude to Wagner’s Ring of the Nibelung, in lieu of little insipid, *aum*-like E major, for whole 42 seconds, at the end of the Beatles’ A Day in the Life<sup>50</sup> - where after a couple of staggering attempts to animate the orchestra with intricate accompaniments of the main theme ended in disconcerting anticlimaxes, a “common little dance tune”<sup>51</sup> appears out of the blue, “quietly and calmly pleading to be heard”<sup>52</sup> and succeeding in this effort to set the whole concert venue ablaze with the aural grandeur concealed in its “still small voice” (Kings I 19:12). This humble melody was made to sound particularly striking by

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<sup>47</sup> See Blaise Pascal’s *Pensée* No. 513, Series XXII, Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK (1669).

<sup>48</sup> See Anthony Storr’s *Music and the Mind*, Random House, New York, NY (1992), pp. 65.

<sup>49</sup> See Alan Fletcher’s *The Art of Looking Sideways*, Phaidon, London, UK (2001).

<sup>50</sup> Listen to the Beatles’ A Day in the Life on Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band, Parlophone (1967).

<sup>51</sup> See David Hurwitz’s *Beethoven or Bust*, Doubleday, New York, NY (1992), pp. 60.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59.

contrasting the grandeur of the overall structure of this seminal romantic symphony, only the first movement of which was longer than a typical symphony from the preceding era of classicism and the two themes in which were, famously, linked by a 38 measures long transition, which, itself, introduced a couple of new motifs, alongside nudging the natural meter off center. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, merely attempting to do this would have surely been denounced as an act of a madman, if not a messy amateur who tries to fit every one of his ideas in a single work of his, even when they obviously look out of place. Likewise, in the finale of his ninth symphony, Beethoven alternately summons and rejects the principal themes of the preceding three movements, shunning them because of their excessive complexity with the “Oh friends, not these sounds”<sup>53</sup> line from the baritone soloist, before prompting the voice to start singing the superbly simple Ode to Joy, which then the entire chorus cordially joins in<sup>54</sup>. Now, some claim that the aforementioned Beethoven’s saying goes the other way around, referring to 10,000 notes and a single word, but if we accept that the German composer was not a lazy person in the first place, we could agree that the former saying would make more sense. Not that he abhorred the written word, however, as many times he was caught composing the earliest sketches for his musical scores using not notes, but words, describing by their means the emotion to be captured and the structure that the notes were supposed to follow. At least, so, as the story goes, witnessed Franz Schubert by sitting in the same inn as Beethoven before going on to tell it to Braun von Braunthal, who immortalized it in a written word: “That is the way he works. He uses words to describe the course of the ideas for this or that composition, and at most intersperses them with a few notes”<sup>55</sup>. This method of conceptualizing art by verbal means must have helped Beethoven grasp the bigger picture of what his music was to achieve in the context of the complete history and trends in his art and create works as innovative and ahead of his times as the string quartet in C sharp minor, Op. 131, upon the hearing of which the very same Franz Schubert allegedly remarked, “After this, what is left for us to write?”<sup>56</sup> Whatever the case, talking about historic events inescapably equals telling lies at the same time, since the stories we tell never reflect the states of mind of the characters involved in them nor are they ever able to grasp the entire contexts of their existence, which is vital for understanding and justifying their actions. Knowing this, the 18<sup>th</sup> Century English poet and literary critic, Samuel Johnson wrote down once that “if a man could say nothing against a character but what he can prove, history could not be written”<sup>57</sup>, so as to make us aware that readiness to judge about any historic events, involving living persons or inanimate objects, implies indulgence in dishonesty<sup>58</sup>. One such resistance against writing falsities about historical figures based on what textbooks that vulgarly digest entire lifetimes into

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<sup>53</sup> “O Freunde, nicht does Töne” in German. See Ted Libbey’s *The NPR Guide to Building a Classical CD Collection*, Workman Publishing, New York, NY (1999), pp. 26.

<sup>54</sup> The same trick of recalling and rejecting the melodies of the preceding three movements in the final, fourth one would be replicated by Berlioz ten years later, in his symphony with solo viola titled *Harold in Italy*.

<sup>55</sup> See Paul Mies’ *Beethoven’s Sketches: An Analysis of His Style Based on a Study of his Sketch Books*, Translated by Doris L. Mackinnon, Dover, New York, NY (1929), pp. 131.

<sup>56</sup> See Zachary Woolfe’s *At Mozart Festival, Dvorak and Others Shine*, *The New York Times* (August 8, 2011), retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/09/arts/music/takacs-quartet-at-mostly-mozart-festival-review.html>.

<sup>57</sup> See Margot and Rudolf Wittkower’s *Born under Saturn: The Character and Conduct of Artists*, New York Review of Books, New York, NY (1963).

<sup>58</sup> Once we grasp and embrace this point in our explicitly referencing historic events, we are ready to move toward even greater broadening of our analytical scope in concordance with Jean-Luc Godard’s norm: “Finding out what never happened is the role of historian”. Watch *Histoire(s) du cinema* directed by Jean-Luc Godard, Chapter 2a: *Only Cinema* (1997).

a few dry sentences tell us was wittily displayed by the written response of a student, an attendee of Stanley Kauffmann's class on cinematic arts, to the elementary question of who Charlie Chaplin was: "I don't know how much I know about Charlie, but he certainly knows a lot about me"<sup>59</sup>. Indeed, whenever we make an attempt to place a history-dependent quality, which is about everything around us including human personalities, into a set of words, we should recall that "only concepts without history can be defined"<sup>60</sup>, as Friedrich Nietzsche observed, and reawaken a mindset that rests in the present plane, dispel the clouds of judgments that collected over the bright fields of our mind and restore clear views of the heavens above. For this reason, I have ever since loathed reading biographies in which entire lifetimes are packed into a couple of paragraphs; although many people crave having Wikipedia bios, the very thought of one of my own seems nothing but terrifying to me. As a matter of fact, if I ever become renowned enough so as to allure one of the readers of these lines to seek details that could be incorporated in my bio, I use this opportunity to tell him that the most significant moments in my life have been the most ordinary ones too – a butterfly that flew by me this morning and said hello on behalf of the universe as a whole, a leap over the gap between two warehouses on a starry night in my pan clothes or a warmhearted wink of a stranger that brought on a twinkle in the constellation of stars that the aureole of my spirit is are events I'd rather have in it than any of the dryly verbalized details about what would be seen as my personal accomplishments in the eyes of the typical, ego-emphasizing biographer. After all, any verbal description of a most ordinary real life event, let alone of a whole lifetime, is predestined to be a pale copy of the original, a pithy sketch of an infinite, a bottle of seawater compared to a full ocean left out. To add to this impoverishing effect of converting real-life events to compendia of dead words on the identity of human creatures, falling like autumn leaves thence in our eyes rather than being uplifted on summery breezes all the way up to the heavens above and scattered like confetti therein, we could also recall that goodness of one and maliciousness of other people is predominantly the result of nurture and the overall sum of their interactions with the various contexts of their beings. For this reason, whenever we find ourselves bluntly celebrating the lifework or personality of certain people on the account of depreciating those of others, we should remember that who we are is to a great extent crafted by the strange web of circumstances enwrapped around our beings rather than by our internal creative dispositions only. This insight that diminishes the validity of any judgment that does not take into account the hypothetical infiniteness of the context of the Universe as a whole naturally leads us to seeing it all with cosmic eyes to whom all is merely a part of that grand One, a magnificent whole evolving through the dialectical cross-fertilizations of antipodes into something more beautiful with each passing moment of our lives as tiny parts of it in which the whole has been wholly reflected and *vice versa* - the whole in which even the finest movements of the dancing silhouettes of our spirits or the most minute ripples of the mental energy caused by the pebbles of thought delicately thrown into the oceans of our minds leave permanent traces on the identity and the evolutionary pathway of the whole.

To one of the key systemic points that perceives contexts as co-definers of qualities of natural systems alongside their intrinsic structure and dynamic internal organization I will return later, as nothing other than the essence of the co-creational thesis, according to which Nature and mind co-create anything that mind is aware of, lies dormant in it. For now, I will only give a few

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<sup>59</sup> See Stanley Kauffmann's review of Tokyo Story, In: Tokyo Story, edited by David Desser, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK (1975), pp. 152.

<sup>60</sup> See Lars Elleström's Divine Madness: On Interpreting Literature, Music, and the Visual Arts Ironically, Rosemont Publishing, Danvers, MA (2002), pp. 15.

illustrative examples and since (I) sweet musical notes gently gliding through the air and sliding down the ladder that stretches from the firmament to the earth, (II) swiftly swooshing soccer balls, (III) rotating molecules and (IV) twinkly stars usually fly side by side through the mental chambers of my fancy, it should be no wonder to anyone that the first four of them will refer to musical creation, the art of *joga bonito*, interacting atoms and swirling galaxies, in that order. I will start off with Elizabeth Fraser, whose vocals many, including myself, consider the sweetest and the most angelic ever sung by a human. Yet, while her voice does appear ethereally beautiful on the last three records by the Scottish band, Cocteau Twins, this cannot be said for some of her notable guest appearances, including that on Teardrop, a song from Massive Attack's Mezzanine, as well as on the soundtrack for the Lord of the Rings. This is to say that the beauty of her voice owes a great deal to the marvelous guitar work by Robin Guthrie and Simon Raymonde, and that, figuratively speaking, the frame that extends all the way to the end of the Cosmos defines the beauty of a painting just about as much as lines and colors on it do, an insight that makes myself, the holder of a sign that unceasingly points at the significance of the hidden, stretch into a bow-like smile, like that of a crescent Moon, serving to put many arrows of enchanting bodily expressions to flight towards heavens. The second example from the pop music genre, having broader but less palpable connotations for artistic creation, comes from Oasis, which counts among a rather small set of bands to realize that what surrounds music, notably in terms of various brags, brawls and other shenanigans, endows the sound with qualities that will impress the minds of millions and leave a magical footprint on the global consciousness. This has implied that occasional walkaways from the stage in the middle of a performance or out-of-country deportations even before the concerts began, as on the band's way to play their first gig outside the UK, on a ferryboat to Amsterdam in February 1994, carried a greater musical weight than making those performances as scheduled, on one hand positively affecting the sounds that emerged from their vocals, guitars and drums, and on the other hand acting to open secret channels in the listeners' minds through which the ultimate message of an artistic work could be smoothly poured thereto. Another example flies us a decade back in time, to the late summer of 1985 and the recording of Prefab Sprout's masterwork, Protest Songs, which would spend whole four years stored in a safe and dark drawer, waiting for the daylight to be released to. Its memorable *memento mori* ending may sound to a casual listener somewhat affected with its lyrics describing a line before the Pearly Gates, where souls graciously allow each other to pass through "those imposing doors"<sup>61</sup> and see the bliss of Heaven first, but this rather pretentious connotation gets instantaneously erased when the song is put in the context of the Heysel Stadium tragedy of the UEFA Champions Cup final played in May 1985, whereupon the line "there'll be no stampede on the Pearly Gates"<sup>62</sup> gains a whole new meaning. As for a classical musical example, I will pick only a few out of innumerable possible ones. In Cesar Franck's Symphony in D minor, a Romantic exemplar of musical cyclicity, for one, if one listens closely, one could hear a theme opening the first movement and then being modulated over and over again throughout its course, sounding somber and dreary, dark and funereal. The same theme is, then, used as a coda in the last movement of the symphony and yet, this time, strikingly, it sounds jubilant and cheerful, proving that not the melody whistled or played on an instrument *per se*, but the contextual orchestral arrangement surrounding it is what endows it with the key harmonic qualities and emotional nuance. Anton Bruckner employed a similar approach in his Symphony No. 4, a.k.a. the Romantic, where two main musical motives, utterly

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<sup>61</sup> Listen to Prefab Sprout's Pearly Gates on Protest Songs, Kitchenware (1985).

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

melodically simple, traverse the piece over and over again, though receiving new nuances every time they are evoked by the orchestra, illustrating an infinite spectrum of emotions conveyable by each and every motive, depending on the harmonic clothes in which the orchestration dresses it up in, prompting a critic to note that such music “transcends ordinary sorts of feelings”<sup>63</sup>. Yet another example may come from the last, fourth movement of Tchaikovsky’s final symphony, No. 6, where the triumphant second theme evokes a sweeping blast of optimism that can knock the listeners off their feet upon its first appearance in D major, after which it progressively begins to sound graver and more despondent as it makes its reappearances in minor keys toward the rueful end of the piece. The entire classical approach to writing a symphony could be, in fact, considered an exercise in using a same theme to convey multiple, oftentimes diametrically opposite emotions, proving not only the composer’s mastery thereby, but also, more subtly, that not what we do or say, but how we do it matters most in the game of life wherein, concordantly, the contextual skies that gods enfold us in could turn the sinful into the saintly in the blink of an eye, depending on whether they assume a gloomy stance, a translucent one, a misty or inclement, tempestuous or starlit. An example from the classical concerto repertoire can come from a moment from the second part of the second movement of Bela Bartok’s unfinished Piano Concerto No.3 as I heard it once half-awake, not being sure if it happened for real or was but the product of my fancy. In it, the pianist playing the piece makes a stridently dissonant chord and then, as if sensing the listener’s disapproval, shyly backs away into the shadow while taking the listener by the hand to it, before engaging in the weaving of a long thread of mesmerizing notes that end in a crescendo and arrival at that very same chord, this time sounding beautiful, capable of earning nothing but approval from the very same listener, thus demonstrating in a technically masterful manner how context matters more than the content when it comes to shedding signs that aspire to enlighten the world. From one form of play to another we must go and on the very day on which I write these words, the Argentine soccer player, Leo Messi has won Ballon d’Or for the fourth consecutive year, which no one before him succeeded in, and yet, amazingly, the judges seem not to have taken notice of the fact that what has set grounds for his extraordinary goal-scoring achievements was the magnificent midfield of the Catalan squad in which he played; transferred to his national team, his attacking skills noticeably dwindled and the ratio of goals scored vs. games played dropped from 0.92 as of August 2018 in Barcelona to only 0.31 for the national team, with the only goal he scored at the first two World Cups he played, in 2006 and 2010, being the one against my home country<sup>64</sup>. Further, because a hypothetic team composed of 11 Messi’s would most definitely lose to an equally hypothetic team of 11 technically limited, but more universal Premiership players, such as James Milner, John O’Shea or Nicky Butt, let alone of more technically gifted ones, like Paul Scholes, Wayne Rooney or

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<sup>63</sup> “You can't even say 'Is it jolly?' 'Is it sad?' 'Is it that?' 'Is it that?'. You can't say that with a late Beethoven tune either. It is above these things” is the continuation of the quote by Georg Tintner, albeit pertaining to the second movement of Bruckner’s Symphony No.7. See the Wikipedia article on Bruckner’s Symphony No.7 retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony\\_No.\\_7\\_\(Bruckner\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._7_(Bruckner)) (2020).

<sup>64</sup> In 2014 in Brazil Leo did succeed in winning the title of the best player of the World Cup, but this was almost unequivocally accepted as undeserved among the soccer experts and even his compatriot, Diego Armando Maradona called this controversial decision shameful, saying that it was more the result of giving in to preconceived marketing plans than of an unbiased expert opinion. And, as others have said, Messi may be the best, but Maradona is the greatest, and that is a big difference. See Maradona: Volim Lea, ali sramota, *B92 News* (July 14, 2014), retrieved from [http://www.b92.net/sport/brazil2014/vesti.php?yyyy=2014&mm=07&dd=14&nav\\_id=876496](http://www.b92.net/sport/brazil2014/vesti.php?yyyy=2014&mm=07&dd=14&nav_id=876496). Maradona’s critiques of Messi’s play for the Argentine national team continued to be heard in the media even after the 2015 Copa America; see, for example, Maradona: Ne mazite Mesija u Argentini, *B92 News* (July 13, 2015), retrieved from [http://www.b92.net/sport/fudbal/vesti.php?yyyy=2015&mm=07&dd=13&nav\\_id=1015234](http://www.b92.net/sport/fudbal/vesti.php?yyyy=2015&mm=07&dd=13&nav_id=1015234).

Steven Gerrard for the simple reason that Messi does not nor knows how to play defense, the Messi idolatry can be considered essentially a consequence of the blindness of the masses to the effects of contexts on the definition of people's qualities, which are in this case determined by the team in which a player plays as much as by his individual skills. To cement this inference, when Messi finally did with the World Cup title in 2022, the victory in the final was, ironically, the result of the team effort of the Argentinian squad against the mostly one-man show of Kylian Mbappe on the French side. At the same time, even more ironically, Paris Saint-Germain, where both Messi and Mbappe and a plethora of other soccer superstars played in 2022, has yet to win the Champions League, that single greatest achievement in soccer at the club level. Another case where contexts have a decisive effect on determining the quality of performance of a soccer team is that where a squad that played immaculately in the qualifiers for the major tournament, such as the World Cup, ends up playing disappointingly at the tournament, the reason being that the type of players and chemistry between them proving successful in the qualifiers, which are played on the home/away basis and where games are intercepted by long breaks, is likely not to present the best choice for the major tournament, where games are watched by hundreds of millions in live broadcast, where the pressure is far more immense, and where players spend time together for prolonged periods of time, a type of circumstance that provably favors the mental attitude of a Toto Schillaci over that of a Stéphane Guivarc'h<sup>65</sup>. Drawing smiles of sympathy from holists of the world, we could thus conclude that qualities of a part are always partly determined by the qualities of the whole. As for atoms and molecules, I may recollect the words of the late Nobel Laureate, Richard Smalley, and his comparison of a pair of interacting atoms or molecules with a boy and a girl, who cannot be bonded by simply being pushed towards one another, without precisely setting the contexts of their interaction so that it can give a desirable outcome: "Near the center of the typical chemical reaction, the particular atoms that are going to form the new bonds are not the only ones that jiggle around: so do all the atoms they are connected to and the ones connected to these in turn. All these atoms must move in a precise way to ensure that the result of the reaction is the one intended"<sup>66</sup>. Now, the first time I glimpsed a two-dimensional diffraction pattern of a crystal, bearing resemblance to the starry sky, I remember, was a most memorable experience that inaugurated once and for all every atom as a miniature star in my microcosm of thought, an analogy whose approximate validity Niels Bohr verified when he theoretically treated the atomic nucleus as comparable to the Sun and the electrons orbiting it as akin to the planets of the solar system and surprisingly came up with the correct values for the spectral emission lines of a few simplest atoms in Nature. And when it comes to stellar sources of light in our proximity, we should remember that their ability to nourish us with the food of life depends not only on their fiery insides that forge colossal amounts of energy, but also on the dark spaces of nothingness surrounding them. Their starry nature would be, therefore, not enough to guarantee them the status of the stars had there been no darkness in which they are plunged, and once again the contextual surrounding of an object proves itself as vital in determining the qualities of the object in the eyes of an external observer. From stars of the night sky to the stars

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<sup>65</sup> For those who remember, at the 1990 World Cup in Italy, Toto Schillaci replaced Andrea Carnevale as a center forward as a substitute for the first two games in the tournament and eventually became its best striker, earning the Golden Boot. In contrast, Stéphane Guivarc'h was the first choice for the center forward of the French national team that won its first World Cup title at home in 1998, even though he did not score a single goal at the tournament. Ironically, the same situation would occur two decades later, when France won its second World Cup title, with the center forward, Olivier Giroud, not scoring a single goal at the tournament either.

<sup>66</sup> See Richard E. Smalley's *Of Chemistry, Love and Nanobots*, *Scientific American* 285 (September 2001), pp. 76 – 77.

of the movie screen we must make a step now, which is where one of the many examples of the contextual definition of qualities awaits to be mentioned. To do so, we must move for a moment into the quaint world of Amélie Poulain. Though for the most part this shy and whimsical heroine has been like Agnès Varda's shepherdess "guarding secrets of her landscape better than her animals"<sup>67</sup>, her inner fire burned solely for other souls. In one scene, thus, she grabs a blind man off the street and swiftly leads him by the hand while zestfully describing the surrounding world to his ears and leaving him at the end of the road with her head, victoriously, raised to the skies above. If you paid close attention to the scene, you might have realized that the music, the rapidly alternating frames and changing perspectives, as well as, more than anything, the final rollercoaster ride of the camera was what gave a dizzyingly moving sensation to the scene. Amélie's monologue could have been, of course, presented in a thoroughly different light had her voice been accompanied with still or slowly moving imagery or sheer darkness, in a way the blind man had probably experienced the entire event. Another cinematic example where contexts are played around with to elicit desired qualities, in this case of a character, comes from Mike Leigh's taking the personality of Withnail, that semblance of my alter-ego from the days of early adolescence, from the grungy setting of Bruce Robinson's black comedy classic and putting it into the apocalyptic context of *Naked*, in the body of now wealthier but equally hedonistic Sebastian Hawk, thus transforming the impression of the character from positive to negative. Speaking of European movies, one of the most striking instances where provision of the right context for the viewer was able to induce a sudden shift from his seeing sheer worthlessness in the viewed to seeing invaluable sources of inspiration in it is the 2008 movie directed by Hou Hsiao-Hsien, *Flight of the Red Balloon*. Namely, not knowing that the movie as a whole is a clever homage to Albert Lamorisse's 1956 classic, *The Red Balloon*, may make the common watcher conclude that it is one of the most boring and trifling movies ever made, without any plot or message, let alone evolution of characters into something beyond what they had been at the onset of the movie. However, when one puts the movie into the right context, that is, of its being a reference to the half a century old cinematographic classic in which a boy makes friends with a mysterious balloon that follows him through the city and in the end becomes lifted up to sapphire skies as a result of his faith in this friendship with what seemed as a piece of irresponsive, dead matter to everyone else, the appearance of the movie suddenly changes by 180° degrees and its striking meaningfulness begins to flash before our eyes. For, with its depiction of bland, lifeless personalities that live the most mundane, sickeningly uninspiring lives, all of which are roads to nowhere in their own special ways, the movie literally illustrates the flight of the red balloon, with the latter being a symbol of fancy that is greater than life, that is able to soar us far beyond the Parisian rooftops and straight to heavenly heights of being. As such, this movie belongs to a class of pieces of art that show us what *is* by removing what *is not*, so to say, fairly similar to mathematicians' method of proving the validity of logical statements by negating their opposites, a.k.a. *reductio ab absurdum*; namely, by creating characters and an ambiance that the red balloon approaches, but only to swiftly recede and fly away into the distance, the nature of a divine personality, presumably missing in our worlds, is being imagined and sketched before our eyes. *Red Desert*, Michelangelo Antonioni's first color movie, containing the memorable scene of a ship gliding into a sunlit bay and then retreating when the protagonist's superego began to swim towards it, presents a closely related example with its similar display of cold and compassionless souls emerging from the era of excessive mechanization and the portrayal of slow death of dreaminess in it, topping it all with the little

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<sup>67</sup> Watch Agnès Varda's debut feature film, *La Pointe Courte* (1955).

boy's, the heroine's son's pointing at the sky and wondering how come the birds inhabiting the celestial spheres do not hang around the chimneys from which the poisonous smokes come out, before concluding that "the little birdies know by now, they don't fly there anymore". Through one such artistic *reductio ab absurdum* approach, the watchers become impelled to imagine what these freely flying spirits must be like rather than tempted to negate the results of an attempt to draw them before their eyes, the results that are predestined to be imperfect and, thus, essentially a failure. Once more, an expression, which may have seemed utterly boring and insipid, becomes seen as an illuminatingly lively and utterly interesting after it becomes shifted to the right context. Sometimes a miniscule detail in the movie provides a hint for the shift of attention to the right context, whereby what may have been seen as bland becomes seen as illuminative, and a notable example is Hitchcock's *Rope*: namely, the fact that the rope in it gets tied around two things only, the neck of a stifled young man and a stack of books, gives the viewer a clue that the film is not about suspense for the sake of suspense, but that it is a story about the harm caused by valuing abstractions more than the people ruminated about, as the idea that superior spirits can have the inferior ones abstracted from reality then becomes seeable as equivalent to the idea that ideas are more important than life. And once again, the elimination of life is used to celebrate it in a subtlest of ways. Finally, speaking of *reductio ab absurdum* in the moviemaking genre, I could not think of a better example than John Huston's posthumously released masterpiece, *The Dead*: it is an ode to life like no other, but solely thanks to each and every character in it being figuratively dead, yielding a possible hint at the coming of the times when the alive will be dead and the dead alive. "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death" (Song of Solomon 8:6), said King Solomon and, logically, another case in point may be Michael Haneke's *Amour*, a movie praised and laurelled all over the globe in 2012 despite being a bland depiction of, essentially, only shadows of the eruptive emanations of divine Love, as flimsy as those coursing the crimsoned rooms of wretchedness in Ingmar Bergman's *Cries and Whispers*, yet another testimony to Love in which not even an iota of it was breathed. After thinking about it for a long time, I concluded that the movie may deserve a similar shadow of one star only in my head, to reflect its mediocre quality, if its creator were to admit that his creation was an ode to an open air, to endless skies and the fresh air and the hat of the heavens above, where the little homing pigeons come and go, but which neither the camera, confined to an apartment in Paris where the whole action takes place, nor any of the characters ever step under, remaining to die while dreaming before the rusty windows to them of their ephemeral beauties. Like the woman from Tsai Ming-liang's *Vive l'amour*, yet another *via negativa* homage to love, sobbing for the whole five minute long final shot, as still as a stone, seconds after the camera made one of the most alienating pans in the history of cinema, losing the protagonist in the midst of rundown renovations of Da'an park in Taipei, then reducing her into a dot in the distance and then finding her again, all because of never, comically, coming across the person whom she has shared her flat with, so would we be reduced in such a state of mind to one such cosmic teardrop at best; 'tis the instant in which we might realize that all this never arriving, never meeting and never being, was there to tell us about the beauty of their antidotes, that all this staying firmly on one's petite planet, like the lamplighter and the star-owner and the cartographer, is to instill in us the beauty of hopping, like the Little Prince's, from one planet to another, from one eye of another to another, lest all we meet in this endless universe be but our lonely self, and that, finally, the message of this movie, itself, which could have been discarded as vacuous, is a beautiful and an infinitely rich one, pushing one toward the embodiment of the very opposites of personalities portrayed in it, toward the celebration of love at every level of

one's being. Of course, examples of this type whereby placement of the right contextual filter between the mind that sees the world and impressions arriving to its grasp makes one realize the enlightening features of observed systems that previously passed by the windows of one's attention wholly unnoticed or were considered as pure rubbish can be piled up endlessly. As far as the static visual arts are concerned, one of my favorite examples comes from the realist paintings of Edward Hopper. Namely, if one were to focus solely on faces and figures on characters painted on most of them, from *Chop Suey* to *Morning Sun*, one would find them awkward and uninteresting, almost mediocre in quality. However, viewed within the context of their spatial surrounding, all of a sudden the beauty of their inner worlds becomes apparent. Thanks to this, his works could be seen as homages to space, which he must have seen as a gateway to the human soul and to the discovery of the extraordinary in the conundrum. Another familiar example comes from the characters of a comic book by Joe Daly<sup>68</sup>: although their faces are literally expressionless all the way through the story, the mouthwatering plot provides an enthralling context that infuses their facial gestures with an impression of extraordinary liveliness. In contrast, the chance is that even the most excitingly grimacing faces enshrouded within dull and prosaic contexts will tend to appear equally tedious and repulsive to an external observer. Yet, what is vital to notice at this point is that where a road is open in one direction, travels are possible in the opposite one as well, which means that so long as contextual skies under which we rest color our views and affect the light in which we see one another, the space will be open for the shine of our beings to illuminate these very skies poised above our heads. From dull and expressionless faces having become infused with spiritedness in a vivid, colorful setting to souls erupting with sunshine and bringing the dry and dusky desert around them back to life, a full circle has been made, for wherever the earth reaches up to the heavens, the heavens will bow down, in all their impeccable glory, to dandle and garland the earth.

Now, that perceptual contexts matter enormously much during the formation of impressions of perceived objects can be evidenced by the many times observed facilitation of the process of recognition of objects by presenting them in their natural contextual surroundings rather than on a uniformly colored background, with no contextual cues whatsoever<sup>69</sup>. Moreover, innumerable optical illusions – including, most notably, the famous Munker and Koffka chromatic illusions wherein the same shade of a given color appears lighter when placed in front of a black background and darker when found against a bright background, as well as a more recent one that involves green spirals that appear green when intersected by orange lines and blue when intersected by purple lines<sup>70</sup> - can suggest that such contextual co-definition of qualities does not only arise from our mental reflections or pure fancy, if you wish, but is deeply integrated into our perceptual apparatuses. In other words, whenever we become impressed by anything in life, we may wonder to what extent the intrinsic and objectively existent qualities of things that impressed us are responsible for this and how much it is due to the context in which they were experienced, which is most often as subjective as the thrill of a big dipper ride in an amusement park. As we ride under the neon lit skyway and let our almond-eyed muses dance around the twinkly skyline in the hazy distance, we may wonder how come the same faces seen inside of a humongous SUV or a teeny tiny car with round-shaped blinkers such as Mini Morris appear arrogant and bitchy, or cute and winsome, respectively, know that our impressions are in

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<sup>68</sup> See Joe Daly's *The Red Monkey: Double Happiness*, Phantagraphics, Seattle, WA (2009).

<sup>69</sup> See Ryan Moorhouse, Thomas Mainville, Mirjana Pavlović – “The Role of Context in the Visual Identification of Objects”, *Medical Data* 4 (2) 191 – 198 (2012).

<sup>70</sup> See *Your Eyes Cheat Your Brain*, available at <http://www.buzzhunt.co.uk/2009/06/22/green-and-blue/> (2009).

this case too, as ever before, imperceptibly tricked by the contextual surrounding of the objects of our perception. Glancing through the daily newspapers, the task I rarely ever indulge in, can then remind us that not only what the events comprising the news are, but also how they are told determines the message conveyed to the reader as well as the general opinion of the public in the long run, being a principle that the mass media manipulators of the present and the past have been exceedingly familiar with. Then, if the fact that the movie director normally takes the credit as the single most important person in the making of a movie, while scriptwriters are “treated like shit”, as the UCLA professor emeritus of the art of cinema, Howard Suber courageously noted out loud at a Hollywood filmmaking seminar<sup>71</sup>, tells us something, it is that not what we do, but how we do it, that is, in what context we enwrap our actions, defines the artistic, aesthetic quality of our deeds and their potential to arouse the nearby spirits from their phlegmatic slumbers and apathetic sluggishness. One of the fathers of the French New Wave, Claude Chabrol was noted for believing that how the story is told matters more than the story itself<sup>72</sup>, which was at the time a call for the celebration of style over content and spirit over matter that inspired a key generation of European filmmakers to once and for all liberate cinema from its predecessor, the drama and the theater. Not only were the overly naïve narratives thus substituted with plotless, natural and, some may say, absolute cinematic experience, but way was paved for the use of simple themes, be it gazing at a seashell or aimlessly strolling through a toneless cityscape, as the route to an ultimately poetic experience too. The renowned film critic, Roger Ebert correspondingly came up with what came to be known as Ebert’s rule applicable in the art of filmmaking, the one that lies closest to the real life: “A movie isn’t just what it’s about; it’s *how* it is what it’s about”<sup>73</sup>. Actors and directors of inspiring movement, holding on to Barnett Newman’s idea that “artists need critics as much as birds need ornithologists”<sup>74</sup> and sharing the belief that only an emotion can produce a motion<sup>75</sup> and only a genuine action, not the talk of it, can spark the way of being that uplifts the human soul, would, of course, unanimously embrace this particular saying. Therefore, asked for a recipe for artistic creation, a Croatian musician, Dado Topić, having possibly been aware that a system of lower complexity could not be used to describe one of higher complexity and that, therefore, language is only a pale copy of the territory of creative being that eloquent intellectuals try to survey on its wings, replied saying,

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<sup>71</sup> See Howard Suber’s *Letters to Young Filmmakers*, Michael Wiese Productions, Studio City, CA (2011).

<sup>72</sup> See V. Renée’s *The Script Doesn’t Matter: French New Wave Director Claude Chabrol’s View on Style*, No Film School (August 2013), retrieved from <https://nofilmschool.com/2013/08/french-new-wave-director-claude-chabrol-on-theme>. See also Adrian Martin’s commentary on *Les Cousins* directed by Claude Chabrol, Criterion Collection (1959). This paradox of heavy reliance on witty scripts in Hollywood, while at the same time treating scriptwriters as “shit” was tackled immaculately well in Robert Altman’s film *The Player* (1992). Its self-referential script shows how a good scriptwriter, a true poet becomes destroyed by the movie industry, while a psychopathic scriptwriter, whose film we end up watching as per the script *per se*, succeeds.

<sup>73</sup> See Todd Rendleman’s *Rule of Thumb: Ebert at the Movies*, Continuum International Publishing Group, New York, NY (2012), pp. 37.

<sup>74</sup> See Susan Stewart’s *The Open Studio: Essays on Art and Aesthetics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL (2005), pp. 3.

<sup>75</sup> They would also unequivocally enjoy the following cryptic story on the secrets of artistic creation told by Jean-Luc Godard in *Histoire(s) du cinema*, Chapter 4a: *The Control of the Universe* (1998) – “In the beginning, it felt only a few things and thought it knew everything. Later on, full of doubt, grief, awe before the mystery of life, all floated before its restless eyes. And now that it was feeling everything, it thought it knew nothing. And yet, from insouciance to disquietude, from the impassioned painting of its first efforts to the hesitant but essential form of its last, it is the same central force which governs cinema. One follows it within itself from form to form, with the shadow and the ray of light which circle around, illuminating one thing, hiding another, causing a shoulder to jut forth, or a face, or a raised finger, an open window, a forehead, a little child in a manger”.

“You need to have a feeling for the feeling”, suggesting none but an emotive act as a way out of the labyrinth of intricate conceptualizations and verbalizations and onto the fresh air of spontaneously exhibited eruptions of creativeness. Yet, “one must never speak of feeling to the actor”<sup>76</sup>, the famous Russian theatre director, Konstantin Stanislavski held, wishing to emphasize that action, both psychological and physical, is the prime impetus behind acts that do not merely imitate life, but rather “awaken the super-conscious”<sup>77</sup> and deeply touch the observer. “Actions speak louder than words”<sup>78</sup> is correspondingly one of the central truisms in performing arts, adding up to Stanislavski’s “a good idea, badly shown, dies”<sup>79</sup>, reminding us that not what we say, but how we say it – that is, with what gestures and with how mellifluous flow of intonations - matters most in our strivings to make our acts magical and capable of conveying invisible touches that bear sheer enlightenment in others. This principle prompted the French playwright, Jean-Jacques Bernard, an advocate of the school of acting that highlighted the art of the unexpressed - or contextual, as we could note now - over that which is told or visible on the surface, to add that “the theatre has no worse enemy than literature”<sup>80</sup>; for, in his opinion, literature, composed of words, precursors of creative action, the ultimate aim of our creative being on this planet, “expresses and dilutes what should be only suggested”<sup>81</sup>. Finally, forced to describe my decision to enter the drug delivery field in my research adventures in the spheres of science in a single sentence, I, forever a drift pin in the conformist eyes of the world, a rebel against its dogmas that overvalue what is told on the account that which is being unsaid, merely mentioned how I saw it as a practical exercise in my ability to prove the philosophical premise that *how* matters at least as much as *what* in each and every facet of life, in this case the route of delivery of a therapeutic versus the identity of the drug itself, and that contexts enfolding our spirits draw the glowing auras around them together with that mystical light emerging from the inside.

Objective contextual shaping of qualities is equally significant and omnipresent as the subjective one, and untangling the two is, in fact, equally impossible as attempts to separate the creative role of oneself and one’s environment in bringing forth any product of one’s perception. The lines of poems I read on the Adriatic seaside, under a swaying palm tree, thus reverberated with a wholly different vibe from the same lines I plunged into as I sat scarily squatted in a shelter, hiding from the bombs dropped from the aircrafts that ominously flew above my head. Survivors of wars are usually made familiar of the fact that rarely ever in an armed conflict there is only one side to blame; rather, both sides could be colored by a blend of gloriously benevolent and unutterably vile aspirations. And with nothing in life being purely black or white, contexts are those that highlight either the blackish or the pristine features of the systems subjected to our scrutiny. This is why the same personas who had received Nobel peace prizes could have ended up in prisons for life, unequivocally condemned by the global community, had their acts only been viewed in different contexts, and *vice versa*: some nations’ leaders rotting in slammers may have been celebrated for their peacemaking ordeals if the wheel of history took a slightly different turn in the past. From the objective standpoint, we could thus agree that the complex web of circumstances enfolding an object is the prime determinant in the assessment of its

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<sup>76</sup> See Harold Clurman’s *On Directing*, Macmillan Company, New York, NY (1972), pp. 152.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 153.

<sup>78</sup> See Hermon Ould’s *The Art of the Play*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., London, UK (1948), pp. 37.

<sup>79</sup> See Harold Clurman’s *On Directing*, Macmillan Company, New York, NY (1972), pp. 152.

<sup>80</sup> See Hermon Ould’s *The Art of the Play*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., London, UK (1948), pp. 115.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

qualities. From the subjective standpoint - always inextricably entwined with the objective one in the eyes that see it all as an act of co-creation involving the poles of mind and Nature - the discerned qualities will always be at the partial discretion of the eye of the beholder, so to speak. For, the light in which we see determines what will be seen, to put it simply. Change a lamp that illuminates your living room and, if sensitive enough, you will be amazed with changes in the mood that this subtle alteration in the interior entails. For example, white fluorescent lights, such as those washing over mannequins in a fancy boutique, naturally reflect their coolness in our mood, whereas incandescent yellow bulbs, especially if shaded, produce a greater degree of warmth in the space around us and therefore in our mind too, as much as we could argue that candlelight lampions tend to awaken spirited and yet delicate streams of thought, while glittering neon lights tend to make us feel all spacey and wired. Fashion designers can then remind us that wearing a glossiest cocktail dress on the beach or a sweetest nightgown at a formal gathering present occasions where incompatibility with the context diminishes the value of an object, in this case the attire we are dressed in, let alone that wrongly chosen combinations of colors, stripes or textures can turn the most fabulous piece of garment into a mediocre one, or that the postural elegance with which cloths are worn determine the appeal they will have in the eyes of casual observers. Admirers of visual arts could then tell us that not only does the wave depicted on Katsushika Hokusai's *Hollow of the Deep-Sea Wave off Kanagawa*, having inspired Claude Debussy to compose his *Three Symphonic Sketches*<sup>82</sup>, a.k.a. *La Mer*, partly owe its impressive power to its dwarfing Mt. Fuji drawn in the background, but the radiance of the figures and faces in da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* and *Virgin of the Rocks*, Thomas Gainsborough's *Portrait of the Artist's Two Daughters*, van Eyck's *Madonna of Chancellor Ronin* and El Greco's *St. Bernardino of Siena*, alongside those findable on innumerable other paintings, derives to a large extent from the deep, misty and rocky landscapes extending behind the backs of da Vinci's muses, from the dark and thistly aureoles painted behind Mary and Margaret Gainsborough's bright faces and figures, from the hazily lit town and nature in the back, and from the stygian cloudiness looming behind *St. Bernardino*. As a matter of fact, using the surrounding of individuals depicted on paintings to reflect their states of mind and personality traits has been in practice for millennia by artists all over the world, who have essentially played on our spontaneous endowment of observed systems with the qualities of the environment enfolding them. If we now switch our attention to the economic realm and bluntly correlate the income of a person with her contributions to the value of a given economy, we might be prompted to erroneously deduce that workers from the same profession in a developed country of the world are more skilled and valuable than their counterparts in underdeveloped countries, even though the former are paid more for their equally hard work only because they "work in a context of general prosperity and opportunity that enhances the value of their work"<sup>83</sup>. In another eco realm, the one of ecology, examples are equally pervasive and observable everywhere we land the rays of our attention in it. For example, replant a hardly noticeable and yet gorgeous and luscious tree from Golden Gate Park to a sandy desert, such as the one this urban oasis was a bit more than a century ago, and the tree might receive a cult status, impressing passersby in caravans and other visitors. In other words, even though the internal structure of the tree has remained the same, its qualities measured by the effects it exerts on the world would have skyrocketed. As for the subjective contextual definition

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<sup>82</sup> See Ted Libbey's *The NPR Guide to Building a Classical CD Collection*, Workman Publishing, New York, NY (1999), pp. 58.

<sup>83</sup> See Frederick S. Weaver's *Economic Literacy: Basic Economics with an Attitude*, Roman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Lanham, MD (2011), pp. 83.

of the qualities of the tree, we could look at it on a day when future seems bright and our spirit appears to be washed by the divine light and sprinkled over by the stardust of godly grace, and then compare its appearance with that on a gloomy day, when our soul feels tired, the knees shaky and the heart trembling. All of us could have noticed how on the days when our mind resembles a lively and sunshiny landscapes, with suns of love and stars of wonder enlightening it, and rainbows of fanciful visions and white sailboats of hope stretching and shimmering like long shadows on the seascape horizon at sunset, all songs sound beautiful to us, abounding with inexhaustible sources of amazement, whereas on the days when our mind is rainy, gloomy and covered with thick clouds of worrisome thoughts, even songs that used to always strew us with graceful stardust of wonderful impressions might leave us bored and indifferent.

That replacing objects from one context to another can endow both them and the new spaces that home them with new meanings and have an enlightening effect on the viewer is proven by the existence of an entire branch of visual arts based on such mere re-contextualization of ordinary items rather than getting involved in any delicate craft – conceptual art. When the Southern Californian conceptual artist and expressionist at the time, Robert Irwin gave up on displaying his paintings in galleries and museums following realization that placing them in a setting different from the one in which they were conceived and initially created would make them be seen in a thoroughly different light, as if composed of new and unintended messages and meanings, he was on the verge of the systemic discovery that the context co-defines the core of the content of any natural system. His thinking at the time echoed the realization of Mies van der Rohe, amongst presumably many other architects, that proportion matters not only internally, within the work of art itself, but also in relation of the work of art to the objects surrounding the site of its placement<sup>84</sup>. Figuring out that in these foreign settings both the objective effects, such as lighting and spatial relations with the surrounding objects, and the subjective ones, including interpretational expectations and the observational approach, would be different from those existing in the home setting of his studio, he was afraid that he would strip his paintings off some of their essential beauty if he decided to put them on exhibit outside of his workroom. Notwithstanding the advances in outdoor painting made by the Italian *veduta* painters, John Constable and other English painters of the Romantic period, and Barbizonniers of the 1830s<sup>85</sup>, it was early impressionists, such as Monet and Renoir, who revolutionized the art of painting by showing that the entire paintings, not only the sketches thereof, could be painted outdoors, before the exact subjects of their paintings, yet Robert Irwin took this principle one step ahead and argued that the work of art must stay for indefinite periods of time in the very same setting in which it was created. For, once the house we build is no longer only *on* the hill, but is, more importantly, *of* the hill, as Frank Lloyd Wright once observed, we simultaneously arrive at the full realization of the fact that works created in the context of a given space and time cannot be transferred to another location or era without being deprived of a plethora of their essential qualities. Hence, not only during the occasional attempts to display his works of art in a foreign ambience, but during their very creation Irwin would thus spend more time decorating the environment than the painting itself, amending the texture of the walls and repainting them, fixing the tiniest scratches in the distant corners of the exhibition room and oftentimes rounding them off, finding the optimal lighting and fine-tuning the temperature and wind currents, gradually realizing that peripheral contexts surrounding every object are equally involved in outlining their qualities as the very structure of these physical systems and that the aesthetic

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<sup>84</sup> Watch Mies directed by Michael Blackwood (2005).

<sup>85</sup> See Stefano Zuffi's *Color in Art*, Abrams, New York, NY (2012), pp. 160.

quality of our expressions is inextricably tied to the state of the world as a whole. And so, having faced a choice of either remaining to be devoted to creating arts in the solitude of his studio, never showing them to the social daylight, or leaving his loft for good and making the world his painting atelier, he opted for the latter<sup>86</sup>. “When I married the painting to the environment, suddenly it had to deal with the environment around it as being equal to the figure and having as much meaning”<sup>87</sup>, Robert Irwin realized before he dismantled his studio and sold everything he had owned, feeling as if the ultimate cubist ideal of fading the line that separates an image from its environment was achieved and that a complete dissolution of an artist as a distinct figure into a sense of great unity with all things, as if epitomizing the legendary Biblical seed that has to die in soil in order to yield fruit (John 12:24-25), could finally begin. Quite in harmony with these cubist dreams, a Cuban musician stopped to record his music in a studio when he arrived at the enlightening insight that playing music out of its natural, improvisatory context, adjusted to the unrepeatable magic of the moment, leads to irretrievable bleaching of its most essential qualities and that “improvisation can be taped by a record company, but the product is a recording, not the improvisation, which is linked indissolubly with a space and time that cannot be reproduced”<sup>88</sup>; epilogue is that, like Robert Irwin, he left his studio for good and began to play music on the streets of Havana for the rest of his life. The same fate of lifelong reclusion from the dreadful music industry struck the Canadian country singer, Mary Margaret O’Hara after she refused to make a video for one of her most popular songs<sup>89</sup> because she would sing it in a new way every time while the video required her to sing over a previously recorded version and that would make her “dead inside”<sup>90</sup>. Her getting the bum’s rush from this cold and callous industry came amidst a myriad of other instances of unwillingness to compromise to the demands to make her music the same from one performance to the next, free of surprises and unpredictability, but also of the magical ability to heal and inspire, thus evoking the fate of myself as an academician too, who refused to let go of the improvisatory attitude before students in the classroom and the university administrators whose sharp-bladed pendula requesting the dry sameness over the freshness of a jazz philosophy inside the academic performance package hung over my head instantly since then. In fact, what the story about Irwin’s evolution of style stands for is a real-life parable of the type of spiritual journey taken by many systemic, common-sense thinkers who have come to the same conclusion that contexts shape every single natural quality and eventually, on its bases, expand their awareness all until they realize in the spirit of genuine, holy holism that the whole Universe is involved in shaping the qualities of the littlest seashore pebble that they hold in their dreamy hands, while the legendary question posed by the Pixies, “Where is my mind?”<sup>91</sup>, is best answered by saying, “Everywhere, as its waves are crashing over every single natural detail and penetrating it with its pulsations, beautifying and strengthening it whenever these waves possess a divine vibration intrinsic thereto”. With this true holistic knowledge illuminating our mental landscape, we become aware that our mind can indeed be like a sun, sending its enlightening glow everywhere, provided that its heart, a radio-head of a kind, becomes tuned to the cosmic

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<sup>86</sup> See Lawrence Weschler’s *Seeing Is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees: Expanded Edition, Over Thirty Years of Conversations with Robert Irwin*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA (2009), pp. 160.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 112.

<sup>88</sup> See Antonio Benitez-Rojo’s *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, translated by James E. Maraniss, Duke University Press, Durham, NC (1992), pp. 19.

<sup>89</sup> Listen to Mary Margaret O’Hara’s *When Body’s in Trouble* on Miss America, Virgin (1988).

<sup>90</sup> Watch Mary Margaret O’Hara on Q TV (2009) retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGJSgIQIlyw&t=652s>.

<sup>91</sup> Listen to Pixies’ *Where is My Mind* on Surfer Rosa, 4AD (1988).

vibration of love that permeates the entire existence. Letting this profound philosophical insight take over our being completely, we come to realize that we have magically been transformed into the dying Biblical seed whose tiny essence dissolves into the world, disappearing in its egotistic limitedness and becoming a source of wonderful new ways of divine being.

Illuminated by this sacred systemic knowledge, realizing that the arrangement of the objects surrounding a piece of art on display is equally important as its form and content, that contexts cannot be artificially recreated and that replacing things from one setting to another helplessly changes what they represent, Robert Irwin first spent more and more time organizing this immediate environment around the works of art and then eventually abandoned his studio and set off to the world for good, somewhat similar to what many missionaries do following the long process of sprouting of their spirits in solitude whereby the seeds of their miniscule egos die and they, magically, become born to the world. Aware of this volatility of the quality and the meaning of a work of art in a world where contexts in which they are being viewed change from one second to another, expressionists and postmodernists have traditionally held that art can exist only in the process of art-making, whereas when the piece of art is made, so does the art end too<sup>92</sup>. And as it is impossible to reincarnate the contexts in which past events have taken place, retelling stories about them could be accepted as equal to telling lies, which many journalists with their picking assertions out of context and presenting them in light of points that they, themselves, would like to make may be very well aware of<sup>93</sup>. John Lennon said that “the Beatles are bigger than the Christ” to illustrate how moving melodies and verses found in pop songs have a greater influence on kids compared to guidelines handed to us by the sages from the past, and not to claim that his music was greater than the message of the Christ. Still, the public release of this sentence yielded only misleading connotations and resulted in organized burnings of the Beatles’ records by the religious fanatics in the US. In that sense, whenever we come face-to-face with the journalistic tendencies to warp other people’s worldviews in order to make them comply with their own, we could either smile at this relativism and flexibility of semantics of anything we put into words, or even recall the phrase exclaimed by Eric Cantona at the so-called post-kung-fu-kick press conference: “When the seagulls follow the trawler, it’s because they think sardines will be thrown into the sea”. Al Pacino held a similar point of view when he said, “I’ll do whatever I feel like because it doesn’t matter. I can’t control it; they’re going to say what they say. I’m starting to relate to gossip in a certain way that I never have before. I’m starting to understand it. It’s kind of liberating”<sup>94</sup>. For, whatever the carpets of intentions the words that come out of our mouth fly on, red, phony and fiery or golden, gleaming and kindhearted, they will be reconstructed by others in attempts to explain our actions, which quite often, especially if we are outlandishly eccentric, implies their intentional blemishing and presentation as inherently spoiled to the rest of the world. Rumors, namely, tend to particularly critically warp one’s true intentions when they concern a person who is inherently dialectical and who disobeys an easy categorization, which most people, sadly, in our current, heavily sociopolitically polarized reality, could be subjected to, the rumorers included. I, in contrast, have been impossible to put into common categories without losing or heavily distorting some of the idiosyncrasies that define my personality; for, my life began atypically, with a sentence to death prescribed by the doctors even before I was born, proceeding from then on in rather unusual ways, with teenage

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<sup>92</sup> See Mladen Spehar’s *A Sentimental Journey: Postmodernism*, Scribd (2019).

<sup>93</sup> Hence the popular joke where a scientist asserts, “My discoveries are useless if taken out of context”, and a journalist reports it with the claim, “Scientist says his discoveries are useless”.

<sup>94</sup> See “Al Pacino in Conversation with Lawrence Grobel”, Simon & Schuster, New York, NY (2006), pp. 66.

years coinciding with the bloodiest war Europe has seen since World War II, and no simple narrative, let alone a linear one, can be used to describe it, which is why its path and worldviews emerging from it seem unspeakably confounding and surrealistic to many of my acquaintances and peers, leading to incorrect interpretations thereof more often than not. In cases like mine, therefore, the rumors are bound to be neither “completely unfounded”<sup>95</sup>, as Morrissey would have had it, nor would they faithfully represent the person in question, who, especially in a social system traversed by great doses of jealousy, sociopathy and maliciousness, where the gossipier is inherently selfish and has the urge to cleanse oneself through the blemishing of another, would be painted black, discarded as a weirdo and impelled to cry many a day and night and wonder in silence over the real reasons for his rejection by those to whom he has dedicated his entire existence, finding none at all except his soaring into heavenly skies of beautiful action or thought, which the social consciousness poisoned on the inside always craves to crash. But if sufficient mental stamina is built, then Al Pacino’s liberating view could be summoned up when we witness other people distorting our actions and intentions for the sake of diminishing and tainting our heavenly pure ethics and benevolent spiritedness, which will, as we all know by now, be an inevitable fate of ours on our stellar ways. For, if we were allowed to paraphrase the words of Oscar Wilde, we would come up with the following motto: “If there is one thing worse than gossiping, it is not being gossiped about”. After all, the Christ’s words can clearly remind us that not when we are praised left and right, but when we are accused of being a faulty outlaw or a spoiled brat is when we could know that we might be crossing the critical spaces toward the truest of stellar heights: “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matthew 5:11-12). Therefore, when you get prosecuted for being a child of the heavens, sometimes cranky, sometimes walking on clouds, sometimes moody and sometimes exalted, remember that the cold, cold eyes of the prosecutors, jutting out of their restrained countenances at the sight of the glorious emanation of “a fundamentally romantic response to modern life – rebellious, individualistic, unconventional, sensitive, irritable”<sup>96</sup>, actually see the reflection of their own youthful spirits that are long gone from the stories of their lives, the spirits that used to beam everlasting cosmic beauties, honestly transparent and Christ-like magical, but are now insensate and parched, meaning that you, in the end, despite losing the battle on their grounds, will be the winner, should you only not give in to the temptation to become yet another soul sold to the devil, just like theirs.

The meanings of words and sentences, after all, arise only insofar as we grasp greater parts of the linguistic wholes that they belong to. Ultimately, to arrive at perfectly truthful meanings, we would need to not only grasp the entire history of the creature that proclaimed or wrote the given words, but also to comprehend it under the umbrella of the context comprising the Universe as a whole, with every tiny teeny star that twinkles in it. Since the encounter of two endless horizons arising from the minds of an author and an interpreter - who have held their hands together in communication and faced the sunrises behind these horizons spreading in all directions - defines the meanings of words, their semantic infinitude becomes crystal clear to us. The volatile meanings ascribed to words should not be tried to be solidified by all means, lest the view of these wonderfully inspiring horizons of infinity be blocked. Instead of confining this

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<sup>95</sup> Listen to Morrissey’s *Speedway on Vauxhall and I*, Parlophone (1994).

<sup>96</sup> See William C. Seitz’s *Abstract Expressionist Painting in America*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA (1983), pp. 103.

infinity into forms that will be far from perfect, we should spur awareness that drives our refocusing from superficial meanings dormant in words to aspirations, intentions and feelings which lie within their roots and from which they have arisen. In view of this, the way I see it, what Beethoven might have wanted to point out was that the music that the reality abounds with could not be placed into meanings conveyable by words. Music can only be described by music, and if life is ultimately a form of music made by uninterruptedly dancing atoms, molecules, cells, stars, beating hearts and swirling galaxies, then music presents the ultimate and only viable form of art. Or, as pointed out by John Cage, the versatile experimental composer and the author of the legendary three-movement composition named 4'33'', for which the performer is instructed not to play anything, "Everything you do is music and everywhere is the best seat"<sup>97</sup>. After all, as the profoundest musicians deem, all things dance harmonically, to rhythm and melody, including each cell in our bodies and dozens of millions of unstoppably moving protein molecules inhabiting it<sup>98</sup>, ion channels and receptors swaying like rafts, up and down the cell membranes, synapses firing and taking up impulses in waves and atomic elements and bonds fluctuating in macromolecules as they undergo unceasing conformational changes, and this, as others would note, may be, mechanistically, why the aural waves of one tune bouncing back and forth between the walls of our mind wash our insides with sunshine, while those of another tune pierce us with the ugly arrows of irritation and hate. And with the harmonic aura arising from the concentric circles of our psyche being the foundation of physical health, we naturally arrive at the healing power of music *per se*, though, as Paracelsus might have added, we ought to never forget that what heals in one context can be poisonous in another, while contexts cannot be described but by words emerging from St. Paul the Apostle's musings over the divine ways pervading the reality: "Unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out" (Romans 11:33). The following Thomas Carlyle's thought beats in accord with such realization that every detail and corner of the Universe are suffused with music, making it, as Novalis maintained, the source of every frailty and every cure in life: "See deep enough, and you see musically; the heart of nature being everywhere music". This broadly musical viewpoint touches the message shared by many sages that walked across this planet and summed up in the words of father of the beat poet, Allen Ginsberg: "God created the universe in order to hear music, and everything has a song of praise for God"<sup>99</sup>. Likewise, after setting up the principles that govern the motion of astronomical bodies in his timeless piece of Renaissance science, *Harmonice mundi*, Johannes Kepler noticed that "the heavenly motions are nothing but a continuous song for several voices"<sup>100</sup>, thereby evoking the spirit of Pythagoreans, of Orphic mystics and of Aristotle's cosmological musings: "When the sun and the moon, they say, and all the stars, so great in number and in size, are moving with so rapid a motion, how should they not produce a sound immensely great"<sup>101</sup>? In a

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<sup>97</sup> See Mickey Hart's and Fredric Lieberman's *Spirit into Sound: The Magic of Music*, Grateful Dead Books, Novato, CA (1999), pp. 29.

<sup>98</sup> The number of different proteins in a yeast cell has been estimated at 5,858 and the number of individual protein molecules at around 42 million. See B. Ho, A. Baryshnikova, G. W. Brown – "Unification of Protein Abundance Datasets Yields a Quantitative *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* Proteome", *Cell Systems* 6, 1 – 14 (2018).

<sup>99</sup> See Mickey Hart's and Fredric Lieberman's *Spirit into Sound: The Magic of Music*, Grateful Dead Books, Novato, CA (1999), pp. 174.

<sup>100</sup> See Frank Wilczek's and Betsy Devine's *Longing for the Harmonies: Themes and Variations from Modern Physics*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, NY (1989), pp. 12.

<sup>101</sup> Aristotle here, in fact, refers to the opinion of his predecessors, presumably Pythagoreans. He, himself, believed that the combined movement of all astral bodies, though perhaps perfectly orchestrated, may not be perfectly harmonic and that a fine concoction of concordance and discordancy most probably arises from these all-encompassing movements. It is one such combination of harmony and disharmony that I wished to capture with my

play by the 16<sup>th</sup> Century poet, John Davies, Penelope is allured by her suitors to “imitate heaven, whose beauties excellent are in continuous motion day and night” and begin to dance, and yet she blushing opts to sit in the corner, in the spirit of Shakespeare’s Romeo<sup>102</sup>, secretly knowing that even when we do not dance ritualistically, in platitude, we dance with our soul, heart and veins; in fact, each cell and molecule is in a state of singing in joy and dancing in rapture whenever we feel the waves of harmony washing over our being. “Love in the twinkling of your eyelids danceth, love danceth in your pulses and your veins”, is what floats along the sea of thought in Penelope’s mind, aware that “those flowers that have sweet beauty too, the only jewels that the earth doth wear, do wave their tender bodies here and there” and that “kind nature first doth cause all things to love; love makes them dance and in just order move”<sup>103</sup>. She may have distantly felt at that moment that even the Death Valley, a landscape as dry and dull as its name suggests, exhibits an unusually lively dance of turtleneck rocks, salt pans, boulders, limestone and coral remnants of what once was a verdant sea, which are all imperceptibly slowly moved in harmony with the uplifts of mountain ranges and the underlying interplay of magma flows and continental drifts. Even as we stand in the midst of the most barren and hush landscape imaginable, in perfect stillness of the sea of our spirit, we could try to feel the musical sensations that encompass the entire Universe because everything around and within us, from trillions of cells with their feedback loops that act as internal clocks, to rhythmical patterns that harmonize biochemical processes occurring inside of them, to thousands of moles of atoms in us, rotating, oscillating, twisting, turning, spinning and surfing through space according to precise quantum beats, incessantly creates the music of life. To illustrate how even the most quiescent and immovable things ceaselessly pulsate with the cosmic music, I often refer to Yasujirô Ozu’s cinematic eye to the world, an epitome of stillness in the filmmaking realm, pointing out that even it possesses ultrafine palpitations that, altogether with the flickers of light on the celluloid tape, some of which were created intentionally and some of which were added by the process of aging, supply it with ocular naturalness that, in my opinion, plays a vital role in endowing the characters and events projected on the movie screen with subtle shades of timeless beauty. In fact, aware of how seeing still images in the context of delicate dynamic shifts infuses more liveliness into them and makes them more impressive to the observer’s eye, contemporary photographers often present their photo albums by allowing individual pictures to zoom in or out with respect to the viewer. Hereupon, even when at our stillest, we are still able to have our senses finely palpitate in a subtle dance that sends forth the radiance of a glowing spirit throughout the cosmic ether, resembling illuminating ripples that splash over the arid coasts of human minds, bringing refreshing flashes of enlightenment thereto. And since we are all made of

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guitar sounds, seeing every pluck of its strings as a cry released by a twinkly star, a cry of simultaneous joy and sadness, exultation and pain. See Aristotle’s *On the Heavens*, Book II, Part 9, Translated by J. L. Stocks (4<sup>th</sup> Century BC), retrieved from <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/heavens.html>.

<sup>102</sup> “Give me the torch: I am not for this ambling; Being but heavy, I will bear the light”, says Romeo, to which Mercutio replies, “Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance”. Romeo does not give in to these appeals and responds by saying, “Not I, believe me: you have dancing shoes with nimble soles: I have a soul of lead so stokes me to the ground I cannot move”. The discussion continues as Mercutio and Benvolio try to convince Romeo to dance, yet Romeo is determined to remain standing still, eventually putting an end to the quarrel with the following words: “A torch for me: let wantons light of heart tickle the senseless rushes with their heels, for I am proverb’d with a grandsire phrase; I’ll be a candle-holder, and look on. The game was ne’er so fair, and I am done”. See William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* Act I, Scene 4, retrieved from <http://www.pubwire.com/DownloadDocs/PDFfiles/SHAKESPR/TRAGEDY/RMEOJLET.PDF> (1597).

<sup>103</sup> See E. M. W. Tillyard’s *The Cosmic Dance* (1943). In: *What is Dance?* Edited by Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen, Oxford University Press, New York, NY (1983), pp. 500.

cosmic music embodied by cells, molecules, river flows and cordial beats, sunshiny looks and orbits of stars inside our stellar heads, we can be sure that music has the power, like no other art, to harmonize and heal the human mind, to revive the balance between periodicity and novelties found in each tiny molecular dance within our bodies with its melodic carousel of alternating dissonances and consonances, of senses of being lost and found, which every Way in Nature, the symbolism from which my entire Philosophy sprang into life, engrains within itself.

Music is truly everywhere around us, as properties of each creature, object and medium could be represented in terms of harmonies of innumerable vibrations of their subatomic, atomic and molecular ingredients. Perceiving atoms and molecules, the traditional objects of scientific inquiry, in terms of something that is inherently lyrical, of course, opens the door to innumerable creative juxtapositions of science and art. A recent research, for example, has transcribed the quantum mechanical vibrations of amino acids in protein molecules to audible musical harmonies, which the listeners can then play with, as if on an instrument, and modify in search of new arrangements of these building blocks of proteins with potentially new properties and applications<sup>104</sup>. “If our eyes were more perfect, we would see the atoms sing”<sup>105</sup>, concordantly observes the MIT professor of physics and the Nobel Laureate, Frank Wilczek, and continues his musings over the musical, hearable and harmonic nature of every piece of reality by stating that “a race of beings who had this sort of direct experience would no doubt include a high proportion of poets and atomic scientists”<sup>106</sup>, thereby touching the roots of the tree of human knowledge where, as reiterated innumerable times in my writings, scientific analyticity and artistic sensitivity lie inseparably entwined, just as the roots of a plant or the rose around the briar, as some may say, are. The best proof that the mind is a complex form of a musical symphony comes from a simple observation that letting certain songs reverberate within its abstract space has a blissful, purifying and inspiring effect on the flow of thoughts through it, whereas some other, not so harmonious songs tend to induce repetitious and debilitating thoughts to madly bounce off our mind’s walls. Arguments could also be given in favor of the ability of music to penetrate every patch of air around us and color it with the emotions stemming from the deepest atria of the musicians’ hearts, which might at first sight be enough to crown music as the queen of all arts. To confirm the latter proposition, we could recall that not only would most landmark movies deprived of their music and other captivating sound effects lose the visual charms that they possess, but also that practically any, even the most prosaic cinematic scene imaginable could be infused with a timeless beauty by coupling it with an apropos music. How vital the musical background of a movie is in defining the message that will be conveyed to the viewer is illustratable by any given tragicomic storyline whose either tragic or comical elements would be accentuated by purely musical means so as to underline the overall cinematic reflection with more of a moralistic or more of an absurd note, respectively. Pairing poignancy and optimism in a harmonious manner, the two feelings intertwined in most dramatic narratives, is thus often done by the movie directors through a careful supervision of the process of composition of the musical score. The African-American movie director, Spike Lee would have surely agreed with this viewpoint, having himself argued the following earlier: “For me, musicians are the greatest

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<sup>104</sup> See C.-H. Yu, Z. Qin, F. J. Martin-Martinez, M. J. Buehler – “A self-consistent sonification method to translate amino acid sequences into musical compositions and application in protein design using artificial intelligence”, *ACS Nano* (in press, 2019).

<sup>105</sup> See Frank Wilczek’s and Betsy Devine’s *Longing for the Harmonies: Themes and Variations from Modern Physics*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, NY (1989), pp. 15.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

artists in the world. I put them over painters, poets, over writers. You get me the greatest musician, I'll put them up against the greatest painter, the greatest sculptor, the greatest actor, and the musician will come out on top. Music is the greatest way to express the artist, their heart and soul, their essence and their spirit – to express God"<sup>107</sup>. Whereas other forms of art may seem confined to their own little places in space, music may thus seem unique in its ability to travel through space with its waves of pressure, similarly as a ripple forms at the point where a pebble protrudes the sea surface. Play music on a cassette player and know that it colors the entire space, one may fancily argue. However, I will go a step further and remind you that every other form of art equally sends its vibrations through space and time, incessantly affecting the world around and infinitely spreading its influence through an endless chain of interactions. An entity pushes another similar entity, and this wave motion continues, changing the entire world even in its most distant corners, enabling even the finest acts and voices to be heard on the opposite side of the Universe, affecting its fate all the way through. Therefore, gently touch a leaf on a tree or step on solitary rock, lightly, and a secret portal on the other end of the Universe opens, I often advise my children, at home or in the classroom. Or, as Fyodor Dostoyevsky's Father Zosima used to say, "All is like an ocean, flowing and touching all else, so that you touch at one place and it echoes on the other side of the world"<sup>108</sup>, driving us directly to a view of the world before which all is a single energy-field in which all physical and spiritual sensations exist, though capable of being concentrated locally, like ripples, by sentient souls, so that, for example, suffering could be willfully taken upon on behalf of humanity as the whole, in the way of the Christ or my beloved Mother, or happiness stolen from it. A painting may thus seem to occupy a static position in space and time, but it still radiates harmonies of its tones and hues, incessantly absorbing and sending photons to the surrounding space, thereby affecting each molecule in its vicinity. Even when there are no observers who would be impressed by a piece of art and let it trigger a cascade of concatenated impressions in their heads, it can be still said to radiate waves with its essence, subtly and imperceptibly beautifying the world with the aspirations woven into it by the very artist. What makes music more elevated compared to other art forms, including the visual ones, however, is that all of them could be considered as musical harmonies of a kind. For example, overlapped colors on the surface of a painting can be represented in terms of harmonies of electromagnetic vibrations of different frequencies, the reason for which Henri Matisse claimed that "the result of finding the relationship of all the color tones must be a living harmony not unlike that of a musical composition"<sup>109</sup>. In that sense, even a painting or an architectural work and a piece of furniture incessantly play music to the world, just as music sent from speakers to fill the room does. Expressionist painters have been familiar with this effect of visual compositions and their works have correspondingly attempted to yield nothing other but a sense of movement in the mind of the observer, similar to that produced by the rhythm and melody of music. Abstract painters lived up to Walter Pater's phrase that "painting constabty aspires to the condition of music" when they divorced the painted objects from any attempt to represent the objective reality and worked instead to directly associate the basic geometric forms and colors with their corresponding emotions in the viewer's mind, thus bringing the nature of painting near that of absolute music. Paul Klee, for example, was not only a semiprofessional musician who

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<sup>107</sup> See Kaleem Aftab's *Spike Lee: That's My Story and I'm Sticking to It*, W. W. Norton & Co., New York, NY (2005), pp. 105.

<sup>108</sup> See Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, Prosveta, Belgrade, Serbia (1880).

<sup>109</sup> See Henri Matisse's *Notes of a Painter: Criticism, Theory, and Context, 1891-1908* (Studies in the Fine Arts Criticism), UMI Research Press, Ann Arbor, MI.

played in various municipal orchestra in Bern, who was married to a pianist and originated from a musical family on both his paternal and maternal sides and who intensely studied the mathematics of musical harmonies all through his career as a painter, but he also considered his paintings an outgrowth of music and made himself play the violin every morning for one hour before beginning to paint so as to instill a musical impulse into his brushwork<sup>110</sup>. Klee's close friend, Wassily Kandinsky, whose art equally epitomized Pater's abstract ideals, naturally connected sounds with colors and stated that he had decided to become a painter during the performance of Wagner's *Lohengrin* in a Moscow theater<sup>111</sup>. At the same time, visual effects were equally naturally transcribable to musical effects in his head, and he noted once that "color is the keyboard, the eye is the hammer, the soul is the piano with its many strings"<sup>112</sup>. Around the time Kandinsky worked on a book of poems and woodcuts titled, not coincidentally at all, *Sounds*, the Czech painter, František Kupka painted *Piano Keyboard/Lake*, a painting that literally explicated the idea that "the colors should resonate like the sounds called forth from the piano keys as they are struck"<sup>113</sup> by depicting piano keys melting into an impressionist landscape over them. This direct correspondence between the musical harmonies and colors can prompt us to notice how each color with its wavelength impels our mind to travel on its waves in a special manner. Thus, as we go from low to high frequencies in the electromagnetic spectrum of visible light, we emerge from the infrared range to passionate and fiery red and then continue our journey to joyous but depthless orange to the straightforward shininess of playful yellow to empathic melancholy and loving grace of blue to spacey and ethereal violet, all until we plunge into cosmic darkness on our way to the blissful white shine of stars in our mind. The same transformation of colors would follow our passing through the layers of the planetary atmosphere following the launching of the spaceship of our being and setting it off to touch the very stars. No wonder then that Hindu sages ascribed exactly one such sequence of colors, from red to orange to yellow to blue to violet to white to an aureole of stars as one climbs along the seven central chakras of the human body, which symbolizes the human ascent from an animalistic nature to ordinary humanness to artistic superman to prophetic personality to becoming a vibrant celestial creature, a star of spirit. As for the movie screen, where some dwarfed pretenders for holding the lantern of this starry nature dormant in each and every human creature dwell, the essentially musical character of this artistic medium is, naturally, even easier to demonstrate than that of static imagery. For, the very fact that even movies with no plot and no theatrical or symbolic value, such as Yasujirô Ozu's *Late Spring*, for example, the movie during whose watching my spirit dissolves into millions of fanciful colors, makes summersaults through ether and projects itself into a stellar silhouette that dances all across the astral spaces that home it, can be made captivating by means of the beautifully composed scenery, rhythm, camera movement and choreography, let alone music that traverses their background and let it all float on its waves, serves as a proof of the inherent musicality of cinematic arts in general. One way neorealist symbolism, the other way the photographic, panning and choreographic cadence, is thus the crossroad on which many moviemakers stand, choosing one of these directions to walk in more than in the other, with Ozu, Dziga Vertov, Antonioni and, of course, Charlie Chaplin being the epitomes of the latter path where the symbols shed on the screen play a secondary role to the

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<sup>110</sup> See Will Grohmann's *Klee*, Concise edition, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, NY (1985), pp.8.

<sup>111</sup> See Frank Whitford's *Kandinsky: Watercolours and other Works on Paper*, Thames and Hudson, London, UK (1999), pp. 24.

<sup>112</sup> See Wassily Kandinsky's *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, Dover, London, UK (1912).

<sup>113</sup> Watch František Kupka - *Amorpha* (1912) episode of *Masterworks* documentary series, Arthaus Musik (1988).

moving visual musicality in enlightening the audience. Or, as T. S. Eliot put it in words, “The egregious merit of Chaplin is that he has escaped in his own way from realism of the cinema and invented a *rhythm*”<sup>114</sup>. Since no one ever probably enlightened the movie audiences to such a great extent as the Little Tramp did, we could conclude that the aesthetics of gestural dynamics and the overall rhythm with which moving images flow in time has to come before any symbolist semantics. To attest this idea, we could recall how the salience of mesmerizing blinks of the avant-garde kino-eyes legendarily presented in Dziga Vertov’s *Man with a Movie Camera*, the film once celebrated for creating a more authentic cinematic language than the one that had existed thus far, eclipsed even the most striking of analogical correspondences in it, including the one where the camera switches back and forth between the modern muse’s rubbing her eyes to help her awake in the morning and the image of a bustling beehive of Odessa waking up after a long night and entering a brand new day, fresh and full of opportunities, just like the glistening eyes of the dame.

Since music is the essence of the world, one can immediately observe that it cannot be faithfully described by the lower forms of expression, such as literature or painting. The moment one realizes that it is impossible to express and convey the ultimate secrets of being by means of merely talking about them, the moment one stargazes for the first time at the infinite wonders of the world through the telescope of Wittgenstein’s thought levitating halfway between logical symbolism and religious mysticism, “What we cannot speak of, we must pass on in silence”<sup>115</sup>, marks the dawn of a great new understanding of the world in one’s eyes. In that sense, we could recall that some of the stormiest words of anger and disgust were directed by the Christ exactly to those who preached and spake correctly but never acted concordantly, which is a sinful abyss that all of us tend to fall into every once in a while, if not the aberrant blind spot in which we are all immersed and maybe the reason why we spend all this time on Earth, the purgatory for our souls, the suburb of Eden<sup>116</sup>, and the place wherein the tainted spirits of ours are to regain a polished glaze and immaculate glow once again, if they only learn how to dancingly float on the waves of divine spirit that permeate the cosmic space. “Whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not” (Matthew 23:3), thus said the Christ, instituting a way of thinking that does not find solace in its own stellar thoughts, but is all about spreading starry ways of being in front of one, not merely contemplating and moralizing, but living the dancey dreams and walking the preachy talk, so to say.

For, it is only acting, singing, playing and dancing that can touch the depths of profound being. Everything else is merely grazing the circumference of Pascal’s circle that Nature is, the circle the center of which is everywhere and circumference nowhere. Reality is the most complex art form and trying to confine its traits, along with the essence of the art of living in it, in the birdcages of lifeless words can be said to be even less doable than describing high-spirited dancing by a still drawing, a depiction of movement frozen in space and time. A more complex form cannot be described by a less complex form without the creation of redundancies whereby the essence of the former is lost, and so are words unable to faithfully portray neither life nor any music intrinsic to it. Writing about music is consequently equal to dancing about architecture, as a witty critic pointed out once. Yet, music can be seen as “the architecture of time”, as Evan

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<sup>114</sup> See Gilbert Seldes’ “I am Here To-day”, In: *The Essential Chaplin: Perspectives on the Life and Art of the Great Comedian*, edited by Richard Schickel, Ivan R. Dee, Chicago, IL (2006), pp. 108.

<sup>115</sup> See Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*; Translated by C. K. Ogden, Dover, New York, NY (1918), pp. 97.

<sup>116</sup> Listen to Bajaga i Instruktori’s *Strah od vozova on Jahači magle*, PGP-RTB (1986).

Eisenberg noticed, musing over the roofs of a Nara temple casually called “frozen music” due to their rhythmical arrangement and recollecting that Goethe himself considered all architecture as frozen music. Schopenhauer agreeably equated rhythm/time with symmetry/space relationships<sup>117</sup>, while a fellow San Franciscan, Achilles Rizzoli portrayed people dear to him as buildings<sup>118</sup>, thus insinuating the cinematic nature of the latter, in spite of the inanimateness and stillness that they represent. Also, that music can indeed be analyzed using the metaphoric image of architectural edifices has been illustrated by the thought of Ted Gioia and the concept of the House of Music he developed over decades of research in music, scrupulously comparing the architectural and decorative design of an imaginary house, its walls, spaces and interiors, with an auditory examination of a musical piece<sup>119</sup>. Here, particularly worthy of comparison with architectural edifices is music that is monumental and multilayered, concealing a breathtaking range of emotions, the epitome of which would be romantic symphonies, including Bruckner’s, which are occasionally christened as “the cathedrals of sound”<sup>120</sup>. On the other hand, to apprehend the aesthetics of the sound, one has to explore its aural richness with the auditory senses, while to grasp the aesthetics of space, one, logically, has to foresee one’s astral body glide through it in a dancingly explorative manner rather than simply sit and statically stare at it. This is all to say that dancing and architecture can be, in fact, seen as much more consanguineously related to one another than they may seem to be at the first sight. It goes without saying, of course, that if we were indeed to dance about the architecture that surrounds us, monotonous, all dressed up in straight lines, making the Leaning Tower of Pisa, almost a millennium after it was built, still a wonder of the world in which the visual embracement of order and symmetry has subdued and neglected its asymmetric accompaniment, a boring, mechanical dance guided by well “housed” thoughts of ours, reflecting not an aerial openness and freedom of expression of the divine guiding impulses that arise from the depths of our soul, but confinement into shackles of social norms and expectations that drain our creativity and transform us into a spiritless paranoid android on earth, it would be. After all, from Wassily Kandinsky’s *Inner Alliance*, the painting in which the balance of complementary clockwork-like poles is shown as crucially depending on the freehand depiction of both on the canvas, together with all the natural curvatures and digressions from flawlessly drawn lines, to the photographs of Daido Moriyama wherein the simple act of tilting was enough to transform the spiritless solitude of still urban landscapes into extraordinarily lively shots, to the handclaps on Belle & Sebastian’s *Boy with the Arab Strap*, substituting the beats of inhumane, metronomic precision with the instrumental wooliness and naturalness and thus endowing the song with timelessly youthful liveliness, examples in our world are endless that demonstrate how only the blends of symmetries and asymmetries in the right proportion are able to yield creative masterworks that do not dull, but rejuvenate human spirits. The belief that North American cities with gridded streets and an artless embracement of proportion and symmetry were built so as to inspire its inhabitants to grip logic and empiricism rather than poetry and spiritual intuitiveness in their strivings to ascend to the peaks of the towers of human knowledge, an aim in which they have largely succeeded, can thus be correlated with our tendency to feel dull and emotionally deprived

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<sup>117</sup> See Evan Eisenberg’s *The Recording Angel: Music, Records and Culture from Aristotle to Zappa*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT (2005), pp. 22.

<sup>118</sup> *Watch Yield to Total Elation: The Life and Art of Achilles Rizzoli* directed by Pat Ferrero (2000).

<sup>119</sup> See the Preface to Ted Gioia’s *Healing Songs*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC (2006), pp. ix - xi.

<sup>120</sup> See Andrew Stiefel’s *Listening Guide: Bruckner’s Symphony No.5*, Seattle Symphony webpage, retrieved from <https://seattlesymphony.org/watch-listen/beyondthestage/bruckner5> (2017).

during prolonged dwelling in them, as opposed to far greater outbursts of inspiration we experience while walking along the narrow, arched and windy streets of Venice or any other old European town in which asymmetry is so pronounced that it constantly surprises our senses and keeps our mind alert. It is with this correlation in mind that the French comedian and a quixotic criticizer of the modern world enslaved by alienating and spiritually impoverishing technologies observed how “geometrical lines do not produce likeable people”. The Situationist dream of toppling down the Babylonian tower of capitalist thought by designing spaces that would diametrically oppose the dullness of gridded, overly symmetrical and unimaginatively monotonous American urban landscapes with their “ever-changing ambiance through which the post-revolutionary individual could wander from one leisure environment to another in search of new sensations”<sup>121</sup> can be recollected at this place too. Thus, journeying along some exotic passageways of my mind I am also invited to evoke the oval hallway, dark and narrow, separating two broad and somewhat sunlit parts of the Belgrade apartment in which I have grown<sup>122</sup>, the passing through which may have been responsible for awakening dialectical profundity inside of my soul, as well as the humble location of our family house in Mala Moštanica, on the side of the hill, along the top of which the main street ran, so that one would have the impression of literally falling for it and coming home to it, lightly and effortlessly. All of these architectural effects undoubtedly ingrained in me subtle inklings of what I would come to be inspired with later in life in other artistic provinces, so that the origins of the music I like today could perhaps be traced back to the spaces I have inhabited and learned to love. In any case, comparing writing about music with dancing about buildings is, thence, neither to say that each architectural piece through its structural symbolisms does not subtly awaken emotions that are quite danceable at the end of the day nor that these words do not live up to the ideal of giving rise to giggly dancing of starlit muses inspired by the innumerable divine beauties woven into the fabric of reality. For, only a little bit of imagination is required to transform the impressions that dawn on our mind as it contemplates the spatial metaphors that hover over it in the space in which it is confined into an inspiring dance. After all, since all around us is music adopting various physical forms, the task for the systems thinkers, alchemists of the modern age that move and shatter the boundaries between languages, fields and disciplines, is to transmute the golden essence of one of these forms into similarly glowing emanations of the core beauty of another and then to playfully balance them side by side. Hence, when Havelock Ellis observes the following, he brings us on the brink of a gorgeous view in front of which not only are the spiritual and the material seen endlessly flowing to and from each other, but whereupon all things, even the remotest ones, seem utterly connectable: “Dancing and building are the two

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<sup>121</sup> See Richard Weston’s 100 Ideas that Changed Architecture, Laurence King Publishing, London, UK (2011), pp. 47.

<sup>122</sup> Years later, when I visited Frank Lloyd Wright’s home in Oak Park, Illinois, I learned that the famous architect employed the same principle in the design of its upper level: highlighting the inconspicuously inspirational contrast between darkness and light by introducing a dark hallway as a passage between two sunlit rooms. That we innately crave this contrast between darkness and light was affirmed in my head upon watching Theo and Evangelina as toddlers pass every once in a while during the day through the dark closet of a bedroom in our sunshiny Orange County apartment, doing so with as much glee as the guy with a straw hat and a couple of scripts swinging in his hands, who walked down the street somewhere down on Dimitrijala and then made a sudden detour by entering a trolley No. 28 through its front door and exiting it through the middle door, all on a single bus stop, as if deciding to make his stroll a bit more interesting by meeting a few more people on the fly, in a second or two, during this quirky walk, sending me and my buddy, who were seated in one of the back seats, into a state of knee-slapping laughter in spite of the atmosphere of gloom and desperation pervading those war days of mid-1990s, remembering him to this very day as an example of how little it is needed to dispense magic that can inspire a single soul for ages to come.

primary and essential arts. The art of dancing stands at the source of all the arts that express themselves first in the human person. The art of building, or architecture, is the beginning of all the arts that lie outside the person; and in the end they unite”<sup>123</sup>. In the same spirit, a prominent Danish architect made it an aim for his popular essay on experiencing architecture “to convince the reader that it is possible to speak of hearing architecture”<sup>124</sup>, echoing Goethe’s and Schelling’s views of architecture as ‘petrified music’<sup>125</sup> and alluding to rhythm and harmony describable by danceable music as engrained in every visual construction. As he sat on the steps of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome and watched bambini bouncing the ball off its walls, it occurred to him that they learn about different, more profound dimensions of the architectural secrets of the building compared to the rivers of superficial sightseers<sup>126</sup>. For, seen as a form of movement captured in standstill, each architectural construction requires an invigorating flow of movements on part of the watcher in order to open its secret heart and scatter beautiful insights all over the humble explorer. To learn the secrets of any physical system, we need to learn its language and interact with it accordingly; correspondingly, the fact that playing on planes and walls of buildings is a prerequisite for our endowment with higher knowledge about these objects tells us that even the most massive and inert edifices we could think of still possess a light, summery beat somewhere deep inside them. For, even the stillest objects around us incessantly dance with their interiors, as a physicist could remind us, while a painting or a drawing in which a movement is depicted constantly invites the viewers to move and dance accordingly, as a visual artist could tell us, and the Earth’s deep crust, mantle and core, along with earthquakes shaking the surface, are not seen, but heard as acoustic vibrations, as geologists who explore these seemingly still, but in fact incredibly lively crafters of life on Earth by leaning their ears thereto could remind us. The same can be said for the words impressed at this very spot. They have been let to spontaneously drop on the surface of my mind from the great, sublime heights, like teardrops of angels watching us from the stars above, as I withdraw myself into a meditative silence of my being and send white doves of prayerful beauty to freely fly from my heart and into the spiritual ether in which we are immersed. And then, as the words begin to flow, one after the other, my mind, searching for their magical sequence, begins to dance through this devout stillness, gracefully, like celestial muses that embody love and wonder in each twinkle, shake and sweep of their starry and ethereal silhouettes. Not only is then this inner vibe that traverses through the sea of my spirit involved in shaping these words, but music that inspires me and echoes through my head is also of crucial importance in defining their rhythm and flow, as much as the trends in musical expression of the given times in general shape the style of the written word on this planet, and *vice versa*, quite probably. Consequently, as each line impressed in this book originates from a subtle, soulful beat reverberating inside of the space of my mind and aims at producing a similar dance of spirits and angels all around us, these words could be seen as none other but an invitation to toss these words away from the celestial space of one’s consciousness and engage in a divine and rapturous dance with the spirit of the world.

In view of this, a question mark that I will now pose on the road in front of us is whether we should get off this road along which I attempt to shed starry pebbles of inspiring thoughts

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<sup>123</sup> See Havelock Ellis’ *The Art of Dancing* (1923). In: *What is Dance?* Edited by Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen, Oxford University Press, New York, NY (1983), pp. 478.

<sup>124</sup> See Steen Eiler Rasmussen’s *Experiencing Architecture*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA (1959), pp. 236.

<sup>125</sup> See Phyllis Richardson’s *XS Future: New Ideas, Small Structures*, Universe, New York, NY (2009), pp. 13.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

using words and language as the medium. Shall we stop this book right now, even though it has almost not begun at all? Is the rolling of this starry train of thought going to stop before it has reached its full speed?

No. For, just as Ludwig van Beethoven started whistling his immaculately simple Ode to Joy to people who thought that he was crazy by thinking that such a debilitating melody could ever become a part of a gorgeous and delicate musical piece, so could we do. That is, deprive the words of their capability to express truth and endow them as such with beautiful, unpretentious simplicity and unbound, cosmic optimism. When we do so, we would recognize that each word we articulate comes straight from the heart, as if falling like droplets of rain from a transparent blue sky of celestial chastity and candor that our mind incarnates at those moments. And when our acts find their roots in the core of our spirit rather than on the wordy surface of our communication with the rest of the world, whatever we deliver to it, be it boxing punches or flights of doves of peace from our lips, would turn into rays of genuine sunshine radiating from our soul, as insinuated by the following words of the former boxing world champ, Sugar Ray Robinson: “Every move you make starts with your heart, and that’s in rhythm or you’re in trouble”. This saying immediately brings to mind Arnold Schoenberg’s premise that “a good composition is playable in only one tempo”<sup>127</sup> and Igor Stravinsky’s confirmation thereof with a concordant belief that “any musical composition must necessarily possess its unique tempo (pulsation)”<sup>128</sup>. Holding on to the right rhythm in our performances, whether they are scientific lectures or dancing at parties or strewing stardust over a head that we wish to crown in cosmic glory, is thus of irreplaceable assistance to our rides on the waves of intuition towards a destination that is immaculately balanced composition and improvisation. And, as ever, this magical musical time, one and only, is to be dragged out from the greatest depths of our heart, in the fountainhead of which it clemently resides. Out there, on the stage of life, therefore, we should never cease to let the impulses of the heart spontaneously travel along the spinal stem of our being and be embodied in free movements that will unexplainably beautify the world with the celestial subtlety that they ingrain. For, only when our whole being starts to walk along the road whereon joyous spontaneities and deliberate reasonability, a child and a sage in us, are well balanced, standing in each other’s core, like Yin in Yang and Yang in Yin, do we get a chance to deliver crosses of divine beauty to the world, gorgeous punches that awaken earthlings in the midst of mental and emotional landscapes wondrously twinkling with stars, opening the gates that have blocked the release of the bursts of dazzlingly loving sunshine from their looks, infusing their worldviews with a lasting harmony thereby and letting their eyes eventually reflect the blue summery skies with shifts of attention streaming across it like seagulls sweeping the firmament with their graceful glide.

“Will you remember my reply, one finger parallel to the sky”<sup>129</sup>, asks James Mercer in the midst of an uppity tête-à-tête, showing us that living in a beautifully charming way rather than superfluously talking about fanciful living, hides the key that unlocks the most gracious doors of the cedar box of our chests and leads us to glimpse the infinite treasures of our soul. “Excuse me while I kiss the sky”<sup>130</sup> is then a style in which we may, likewise, impolitely interrupt the clichéd conversations of the world, spin around and start doing arabesques, plies

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<sup>127</sup> See Robert Craft’s *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky*, Doubleday & Company, Garden City, NY (1959), pp. 133.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> Listen to the Shins’ *Mine’s Not a High Horse on Chutes Too Narrow*, Interscope Records (2003).

<sup>130</sup> Listen to The Jimi Hendrix Experience’s *Purple Haze on Are You Experienced, Track* (1967).

and pirouettes, like a sanctified ballerina enthralled by the starry magic that the world hides in each and every one of its details, shining with a stunning simplicity that amazes and quietly inspires some beautiful eyes that lightly land like white and graceful birds on us at those moments. For, it is not *what* we do in this world, but *how* we do it, with what extent of shine of emotions and aspirations in our heart, that determines the beauty that we will breathe into this world of ours, each detail of which pulsates subtly with the melody and rhythm divine. Or, as Mother Teresa, the proponent of “the little road”, who saw herself as the “bridge between the Heavens and the Earth” and led the so-called missionaries of love, described once as mirrors of “the culture of life and joy, the art of love, the ethics and aesthetics of poorness<sup>131</sup>, the exotics and erotica divine, the most beautiful story of the Christianity in the last two thousand years”, unique as such in the world of religious followers of its times, claimed, “Only love can save the world, and it matters not how much we do for others, but with how much love and joy we do that”<sup>132</sup>. Even though she is remembered for her benevolent and selfless deeds, which were cited as the reasons for her becoming a Nobel Prize winner in 1979, she humbly pointed away from these palpable, essentially materialistic achievements of hers and into the sun-like heart of aspirations from which these deeds originated as the true source of her and other people’s goodness in the world. The Albanian-Indian saint who originated from the close vicinity of my Montenegrin ancestors, having imagined herself as a bridge that reaches out to Heavens and channels its lifesaving signals down to Earth, used to say that “in the final analysis, it is between you and God; it was never between you and them anyway”<sup>133</sup>, the words that are an explicit encouragement for the disregard of other people’s critiques and envies that inevitably fall on those who differ and who act in concord with the divine energies that stream through their souls, the reason for which she could be seen as gifted with the authentic art of the Way of Love, being all about meditative dwelling inside of the hub of one’s heart wherefrom incentives for creative action are sucked up to the surface of one’s being via the power of genuine empathy and not via the power of convention and the slavish respect of secular authorities, something that she abhorred all her life and that prompted her to leave the train to Darjeeling and her sisters on them on September 10, 1946, two weeks after her 36<sup>th</sup> birthday, and, despite their reprimands, sit with the poor on the streets of Calcutta and spend the rest of her life with them, and that may prompt me too to leave the train of words in this sentence, place a dot, sit on it wistfully and imagine it to be an Aleph with the whole Universe, with all its futures and pasts, reflected blissfully in it. And by seeing herself as one such dancing bridge between the sublime reigns above and the corporeal world of tangible things below, she touched the ancient alchemist equilibrium whereby

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<sup>131</sup> Listen to Larry Heard’s Theme from Guidance, e.g., and look for the line “I’m a poor man”, which stands for a message that instills humbleness and grace in us, makes us “poor in spirit” and thereby ingrains in us the potential for doing the deeds divine.

<sup>132</sup> See Nataša Marković’s Mother Teresa, Aesthetics of Poorness and the Erotic Divine, Politika, September 4, 2010, pp. 10.

<sup>133</sup> The following words, partially attributed to Kent M. Keith’s poem, Paradoxical Commandments, stand written on one of the walls inside of Mother Teresa’s home for children in Calcutta: “People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway. If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway. If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. Succeed anyway. If you are honest and sincere, people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway. What you spend years creating, others will destroy overnight. Create anyway. If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway. The good you do today will often be forgotten. Do good anyway. Give the best you have and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway. In final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway”. Quoted in Courtney E. Martin’s Do It Anyway: The New Generation of Activists, Beacon Press, Boston, MA (2010).

genuine Wonder sends our gazes to the starry sky above, bringing us closer to the thrones of gods, and the divine Love fills our mind with sparkly starriness that descends down on the creatures around us, blessing and infusing them with some brilliant, celestial energy. Though, she may have also inadvertently pointed at the bio-energetic balance intrinsic to every graceful glide of our bodies through space, which I have extensively written about earlier. According to it, on one side, all our moves and gestures should originate from our contact with the ground, as if we bounce off the earth with each impulse that leads to any movement of our bodies. On the other side, however, as we set our bodies to motion, we should feel a similar connection with the heavenly sky above us, as if we are kissing it with our spirit, the way the opening verse of this paragraph suggested. In such a way, juvenile liveliness and solemn gracefulness become blended and instilled in our dynamic appearance on this world's stage, enabling our heart to present a crossroad at which the forces of the Earth and the forces of the Sun will collide and produce bedazzling flows of energy that blesses and beautifies all things around us. And as we look back at the thread of thought with which this paragraph has begun, we may realize that we have appeared like a seagull that strayed from its presupposed path by flying carefree along fanciful circles, playing in its joyful connectedness via some invisible links with the divine essence of Nature. We may thence bring to mind Ulysses' journey from Troy to Ithaca that sent him back and forth across the Mediterranean Sea before he reached his destination, or Christopher Columbus' pioneering journey that led to the rediscovery of the American continent by the Europeans, whereby his fleet did not proceed directly, in a straight line, from the point of their origins to their destination, but stopped instead on one of the Canary Islands, allegedly due to a romantic affair of the Genoese sailor with the duchess that resided on the island, a detour quite like the one Odysseus had taken by spending a whole year with the nymph Circe on the island of Aea. The odyssey of my lifetime, my trip to the Netherlands while my home country and my hometown, with my family and friends in it, were bombed to pieces, similarly proceeded by journeying 200 miles to the south on various buses, then taking a ferry across the Adriatic Sea in the southwest direction, and only then taking the northward route, through Italy, France and Belgium, traveling on ten different trains. Hence my belief that without getting lost and wandering off the beaten path every once in a while, no truly exciting destinations could ever be arrived at. After all, as we travel along the road of the Glass Bead Game, the one reserved for thinkers who have aimed for the most sublime summits of human philosophies, of conjoining the analytical and intellectual rigor with poetic, imaginative flights of fancy, we should know that it is a game at the end of the day, and that lighthearted playfulness, such as that exhibited by a dolphin leaping smilingly from the sea surface on a gorgeous summer day, is an essential trait of successful runs of all the adventurers on Earth, be they exploring the outer spaces of their worlds or their inner, mental and emotional landscapes. In the end, to be lost and found is a vital precondition for every exploration in life to be finalized with arrivals at some magnificent treasures for the soul.

As we get back on the track of the train of thought that preceded this unexpected soaring of the birds of my thoughts into blue skies of fanciful thinking, ready to continue our adventure, wearing a straw hat and gazing at a dusty map, we should observe the following: should we mistakenly begin to believe that words can truly be the medium for the transmittance of true feelings and that we can consequently read the latter by merely interpreting the meanings of words that others proclaim in conversation, we would begin to live this life on map rather than on territory. Our search for the absolute, for emission of the glow of Love than no words could substitute for, for an always new flow of expressions that do not only present signposts pointing

at the Way leading to acquirement of the gift of divine qualities, but are the outcomes of living these very qualities out and transmitting them to another in the purest and most direct form possible, would thus be over and all the star of our soul could do from then on is to stare fixatedly at the blank walls of spiritual destitution. With one such fall from grace of our creative attention, we would inevitably remain blind to numerous details of the world that are perceivable only on the territory, even though they may or may have not been placed on their maps. People who have plunged into the silence and ineffable music of Nature after being disappointed in the hypocrisies and superficialities arising from finding final truths and meanings of our quests for sacred knowledge in language, as if realizing that not the metaphor of cream rising to the top but the one of dead fish sinking by means of surfacing with their belly up, leaving glistening pearls, ancient ships and sirens diving between the pillars of the foundations of Atlantis deep beneath, is the correct one in this context, may thus appear blunt or idiotic, but they may have, in fact, climbed to greater heights of perception with one such transition. For, “God is the friend of silence... We need silence to be able to touch souls”, as Mother Teresa further noticed. Those people may then resemble the rabbit drawn by Matt Groening, sitting tied in an insane asylum in front of a sketched heart, with voices heard from the outside saying “the little fellow just won’t respond to love”<sup>134</sup>. For, although the majority of people may keep on treading forward in their hypocritical appreciation of each other’s unutterable beauty, believing that the most profound qualities of ours can be ingrained and found in words, such a pharisaic stance is unsustainable in eyes of the truly wise ones who know that the silent shine of love from the inside may turn even the most blasphemous and profane words into flaps of the wings of angelic messenger doves.

It may be no wonder that the path of Lao-Tzu’s Tao-Te-Xing, the cornerstone of all the religious and moral philosophies embraced by the human race, has begun with recognition of impossibility of placing the essence of being into words: “A Way that can be marked is not the Eternal Way: Tao. A name that can be uttered is not the Eternal Name” (Tao-Te-Xing I). For, the moment we realize that the most essential features of reality, the music of the strings that vibrate with impalpable and ineffable qualities in which all things visible and describable are rooted, cannot be expressed in words is the moment in which we cross a million miles in our journey towards spiritual enlightenment. From then on, only occasionally, when we forget this vital principle that sustains us on the spiritual path and engage in fiery linguistic arguments do we need to be reminded of the old but timeless adage of Al-Ghazali: “Beautiful is only that which leaves languages silent when they try to describe it”. As a guiding star of a kind, this thought could drive us to conceive beautiful and selflessly graceful acts in communication with others, as opposed to those that aim at humiliating and denominating others on the account of celebrating our own self. As such, they would subtly and imperceptibly shed light on others, while charming and captivating the world that spins around our being that spins around the heart of Nature that spins around and around and around on this musical carousel that the creation is.

Early on I came to conclude that unlike painting, an art born from the desire to portray or provide a record of the worldly scenes, and unlike literature, an art born from the will to immortalize human thoughts, music at its point of origin had no sonic impression to emulate and at its most realistic it aspired to paint the world of human emotions, which itself is a task of unspeakably abstract and impalpable proportions. From the moment of this insight on, music has uninterruptedly carried the torch of the most sublime and absolute of all arts - its queen, as it were - in the flickering crown of my grungy head. The fact that no other art could move me nor touch equally unfathomable depths of my spirit has reinforced this fondness and ensured that no

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<sup>134</sup> See Matt Groening’s *The Big Book of Hell*, Pantheon Books, New York, NY (1990), pp. 134.

other art, not even cinema, could dethrone music from this seat in the clouds. And it was soon after I got enchanted by the beauty of music up to these profound levels, realizing that no amount of word crafting can ever come close to the absolute beauty conveyed through musical harmonies, that I began to play in a band and compose musical pieces for three guitars. Yet, how much I appreciated quietness, the beauty of which the greatest music should point at with its message, as I claimed, leaving in its aftermath listeners deeply plunged in the ocean of silence, as if lulled by its waves and fallen in love with it, is neatly conveyed by the name of the band in which I played: Silence by a Crescent Star. Insights that I came up with while creatively plunged into the seas and walls of sound were indeed incommensurably precious. Without being forced to arrive at any specific discoveries, as the traditional methods of teaching would have presumed, but by merely immersing me in the beautiful realm of music, I reached all those wonderful insights that redefined my outlooks and thoughts about the world from the very core of my being. With only wondrous curiosity and shiny aspirations aimed at enlightening the world through creating beautiful musical pieces, the road opened and led me to gorgeous little insights about the nature and purpose of my existence. And with these open views to the nature of my spirit and the world, the doors to exhibiting creativity never foreseen before opened too.

Later in the text I will pile up more of these insights I reached while playing guitar in a band, but in this particular context one of them is worth mentioning. Namely, a good song that will demonstrate its preciousness from an infinite number of possible angles of looking at it and interpreting it, and will always offer some novel sparkles of beauty to ornament the listener's mind with, has to be built from stable and magnificent foundations. Bright aspirations in terms of pining to bear a beautiful song that will water the eyes of many with soul-purifying tears present the first step, after which many hours of working, sharpening our technique and tapping in the dark arrive, and at the end of the long tunnels of roaming and searching, oftentimes without our even recognizing, a song that we have spent many, many hours, day and years dreaming of will have been born in its glorious shine and indestructible, eternally radiant beauty.

And then, suddenly, a song arises through this invisible well of shiny aspirations, a song rising skyward, like the most towering Doric pillars, in a bottom-up fashion, from the bases of our devotion to music to the vault of heaven, from the wishes to create something of lifesaving importance burning inside us to a blaze that sets the celestial spheres on fire. One such song will most often be playable in endless contexts and with all kinds of different arrangements, without losing an iota of its power to move the listeners and resonate with the deepest trepidations of their souls. This approach to musical creativity resembles building a house from its foundations and only then decorating its façade and polishing its windows. The other approach that many modern musicians and bands adopt is the opposite: building a song from the feelings that it will tend to evoke on its surface, that is, from its visible ornamentation rather than from the foundations. As a result, just as the Christ's final metaphor of his Sermon on the Mount suggested (Matthew 7:24-27), such a song may collapse and its quality will be degraded and shaken under the mildest of trembles upon its critical assessment. In other words, such songs with pleasant walls of sound, but based on trivial harmonies underneath, may sound beautiful on a sunny day, when we, as the listeners, feel youthful and shiny, as if the whole world is ours. However, on a dark and gloomy night, when our mind and body are challenged with worrisome weariness, which is what the old age typically brings about, the song will fail to deliver its spirit-strengthening punches and a sense of betrayal will dawn on us. On the other hand, songs that sound beautiful when played in the most modest settings can be arranged in millions of different ways, and stardust of signs of beauty and grace will be shed by them onto us every single time.

Eventually, one may realize that with such songs, no additional coats of sound are necessary and that playing them in the cheapest and least pretentious manner makes them shine with the greatest possible beauty. True Love Waits and Motion Picture Soundtrack by Radiohead immediately come to mind as examples, as the feeling is that any way of playing them is a guaranteed way of touching one's heart. Songs such as these will turn out to resemble the Buddhist "books that keep us from reading other books", precious and infinitely interesting guiding-stars-shedding stones that make us always discover new, previously unobserved messages and details therein, offering their guiding hands and mysterious friendship of a kind from now until the eternity. To sit in the silence of one's being, in a dimmed room on a starry night, one with one's guitar or piano, is thus an approach to creating beautiful songs by some of the most accomplished artists of this world, as opposed to beginning with colorful sounds and only then trying to deepen them with profound melodies and harmonies. Although the latter approach may produce enviable results every once in a while, in particular when the ornamentation of the sound and its harmonic deepening take place in synchrony, as they mutually inspire each other, this, today, is more of an exception than a rule. For, it would come as no surprise if I were to remind you that ours is a world in which surface value, the one that is immediately recognizable in objects and processes, is markedly more appreciated than the essential value that is dormant in the content and very often so deeply concealed in it that it requires hours, days and whole lifetimes of patient and perseverant examination thereof before one may glimpse the beauty of it in its fullest shine.

And still, nothing can be said to matter as much as the foundations of aspirations from which our creativity arises. No amount of technique could make up for the lack of great aspirations to enlighten the world with one's devotion to artistic or any other creation. When these aspirations are bright and shiny, even as simple and seemingly trifling expressions as that whistled by Beethoven would then be turned into classy and illuminative ones. For, context, which is partly created by the magical shine of aspirations radiating from our heart and is partly defined by the divine hat that the Universe as a whole places on top of things, is the one that endows all objects and beings with qualities, though, of course, in togetherness with the intrinsic structural propensities of these systems. This is why all things could be imagined as little shiny stars stretching the arms of their spirits towards the entire Cosmos, knowing that to scatter oneself in giving one's entire being selflessly to the world, to return to the stardust from which we have arisen, to explode like a creative supernova, in blasts of beauty, on the sky of the Universe, sowing innumerable sprouts of angelic ascents to the Heavens above and yet disappearing from it fully, showing to this world what the ultimate ethics of creative being is, is the way to enlighten one's tiny little self right here, right now. To obey Nietzsche's call, "Simplify your life: die!"<sup>135</sup> and, indeed, let one's tiny self wholeheartedly die, like the Biblical seed of mustard (John 12:24-25), thereby giving rise to all-encompassing emanations of Wonder and Love, the two centermost qualities of our celestial beings, is the only way to scatter the divine essence of one's spirit all over and fertilize every cosmic corner and apsis therewith. Like in Matt Spicer's parody on the superficialities of SoCal lifestyle, Ingrid Goes West, where the protagonist reaches the long-sought entry to the pantheon of popularity after she shuns all her cunning and pretentious ambitions and sets out to erase herself from the list of the living, the life that really matters is being spurred, not extinguished, when the ego is expelled and egoless truth embraced. To erase the borderlines of our ego and identify with every single piece of reality can thus be seen as a prerequisite for fulfilling our spiritual mission on Earth and reaching the highest

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<sup>135</sup> See Nicholas Rombes' A Cultural Dictionary of Punk, Continuum, New York, NY (2009), pp. 9.

vistas of happiness on it. For, since the relationships between a system and its environment define what the system truly is, the essence of each object and creature of the world is inscribed truly everywhere, which brings us over to the evangelical awareness that “we only have what we give”<sup>136</sup> and that if we crave to redefine the essence of our being, we should spread our creative hands and voices out in the attempt to redraw the world as much as we ought to be aware that the secret essence of our being, the roots of the tree of our cognition in terms of our deepest aspirations and emotions are what truly matters in our acts aiming to beautify the world, which makes us swirl between the insides and the outsides, all until we become dizzyingly intoxicated with helplessly incarnating the philosophy I have named the Way of Love, immersed in divine twinkles of the starry sky and touch the foundations of the immaculate grace of being.

We are all indisputably aware of how the same words and movements may produce thoroughly different effects and impressions depending on the contexts in which they are placed. “You do not change anything and everything will be changed”<sup>137</sup>, Jean-Luc Godard noticed, reiterating a line from John Knowles’ *A Separate Peace*, “the more things remain the same, the more they change”<sup>138</sup> and, as Corinne Bailey Rae might have added, “get strange”<sup>139</sup>; for, when contexts define the meanings of expressions and contexts, ultimately, encompass the entire Universe, even identical expressions will change their meaning from one second to the next in this constantly changing and evolving reality of ours. “You have not changed; the painting has”, says a character from Michael Curtiz’s thriller *The Unsuspected* and thrills the viewers thereby, with the meaning of his line being broader than expected, reiterating this idea that no object, in his case the painting, is ever the same because even when the object itself does not change nor the experiencer of it does<sup>140</sup>, the times around it have changed and with them the nature and the qualities of the object thanks to this contextual definition of its identity. It was this insight that prompted Gordon Pask to derive the “no doppelganger” edict<sup>141</sup>, as his own version of Pauli’s exclusion principle, in the course of developing the educational connotations of his conversation cybernetic theory, wishing to denote that no two products, be they physical objects or abstract concepts, can be the same because of their different histories and perspectives as contexts in which they exist and are observed, respectively. In elementary physics, we know now that the energy of a particle can be defined only in terms of its relationships with the environment in which it exists and through which it moves. Just as the material value of a chess piece must be supplemented with its positional value, which is dependent on the overall position on the board, before the real value of the piece can be derived, so is it with any physical entities, for their exact physical qualities can be inferred only after taking into account the total state of their environment at the moment of the measurement. Given that this environment never adopts the same state twice, a hypothetically identical elementary particle, static and inert, will exhibit a constant change of properties, even without accounting for the similar changes that the observer,

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<sup>136</sup> See May Sarton’s *A World of Light: Portraits and Celebrations*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, NY (1976), pp. 46.

<sup>137</sup> Watch Jean-Luc Godard’s *Histoire(s) du cinema – Chapter 1: Toutes les histoires* (1988).

<sup>138</sup> See John Knowles’ *A Separate Peace: Chapter I*, Secker & Warburg, London, UK (1959).

<sup>139</sup> Listen to Corinne Bailey Rae’s *Put Your Records On* Corinne Bailey Rae, EMI, London, UK (2006). The verse referred to goes, “The more you stay the same, the more they seem to change, don’t you think it’s strange?”

<sup>140</sup> This presumed constancy of the observer is, of course, purely hypothetic because in every real-life situation the cognitive and the biological makeups of the observer are everchanging and they never find themselves in the same state twice.

<sup>141</sup> See Gordon Pask’s *Interactions of Actors, Theory, and Some Applications*, retrieved from <http://www.cybsoc.org/PasksIAT.pdf> (1993).

who, as a measurement system component, co-defines these properties, undergoes. Along a sidetrack of my memories, this brings to mind the question I received from a statuesque laywoman who sat next to me with a baby in her arms during a plane ride to the Montenegrin seaside, “Why do people think that all electrons are the same?”, which I answered pointing out that since existential contexts that enfold all physical systems, subatomic particles included, define their properties in addition to their intrinsic, structural determinants, we can indeed claim that there are no two identical things in the Universe. From this proposition onwards, we could be prompted to muse over the inherent semantic flaws that learning to count embeds into the human brain. The idea about the redundancy and easy substitution of objects, let alone living creatures, with one another, for example, can be imagine to produce all kinds of negative spiritual repercussions in the life of its bearer. Conditioned by the acceptance of an illusory idea about the equality of objects that are always unique because of both intrinsic and contextual reasons, counting does have a practical significance because it helps us navigate through the experiential reality more effectively than it would be the case in a hypothetic calculus-free world, but along with numerical mathematical models in general, simple or complex, it evidently contains a dark side, a trait it shares with perhaps all helpful things in life. The classical composers may have intuitively felt that each physical system is only one of its kind at any given instance in the existence of the Universe when they ascribed the utmost lack of taste to expressions that literally repeat themselves in time and went on to set forth an essential principle in musical composition that demands every repetition of a theme to be infused with novelties that make it unique every time it is being played. You at the beginning of this sentence is not the same as You at its end nor You at any time before or after, let alone that You *per se* are one and only, unrepeatable even if gazillions of cosmoses were allowed to evolve for entire eternities, and that even the hypothetically identical You would be a different You had any two objects in the Universe swapped their places, thus altering your relations with all that there is that define You; or, as Jean-Luc Godard further noticed, “I” as in “I am” is different from “I” as in “I think”<sup>142</sup>. Henceforth, a perfect impulse that enlightens You, should there be any, must change from one moment of your existence to another – just when we think we have grasped it, it is bound to dissipate from our hands. As a matter of fact, even the simple statement of equality proclaimed every time we use the word “is” should be seen as inherently flawed; together with it, the verb “to be”, the present tense of the latter word, should be seen as inescapably mistaken, partly due to the erasure of an infinity of features that each conversion of experiential wholes into linguistic forms entails. And when we come to grasp the fundamental epistemological error committed every time we use this verb, it would not surprise us anymore why Alfred Korzybski found many mental disorders to be rooted in its excessive usage<sup>143</sup>. In the realm of physical chemistry we could then be reminded of how vibrations of atomic groups in molecules are often dependent on the dielectric properties of the medium in which these molecules are dispersed, given that the intensity of an absorption is proportional to a change in the dipole moment caused by the absorption. 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

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<sup>142</sup> Watch *Histoire(s) du cinema* directed by Jean-Luc Godard, Chapter 4a: The Control of the Universe (1998).

<sup>143</sup> See Leo Widrich’s *The Psychology of Language: Why are Some Words More Persuasive than Others?* Life Hacker (April 2, 2013), available at <http://lifehacker.com/5993267/the-psychology-of-language-why-are-some-words-more-persuasive-than-others>.

more polar than the excited one<sup>144</sup>. Likewise, extension of the length of the aliphatic chain to which a photoactive group is linked entails red shift of its emission/absorption, owing to greater delocalization of excitable electrons, which lessens the energy required for the transition, and to a detraction effect and increased bond length along which the active group internally vibrates. Along a similar line, Stoicheff's rule tells us that the lengths of single and double covalent bonds between two carbon atoms "increase linearly with an increase in the number of adjacent bonds"<sup>145</sup>. Atomic radii, moreover, are not fixed and independent of 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, causing a lot of issues to physical chemists, like myself, attempting to create a standard method for measuring them. For, to measure anything, interaction is needed, to which end an isolated atomic entity must be placed in a physical context, wherein, however, its properties, including those as fundamental as the geometry, will change depending on the electronic configuration of the atom and the features of the environment that it has been placed in, such as the polarity of the liquid medium, coordination number and the type of bonds in a crystal lattice, *et cetera*. And since not all atoms can be stably measured in a single environment, multiple types of atomic radii have been derived, the values of which are comparable only with a large dose of reservation. In the realm of classical chemistry, then, 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. Moreover, in the domain of synthetic chemistry, it has been widely known that the choice of a liquid<sup>146</sup> or gaseous<sup>147</sup> medium has a crucial effect on the structure of the materials formed in them. Molecular biology then teaches us that the same molecules may have drastically different effects on different cells as well as that the same genes code for different proteins, whereas different genes may have identical functions. Moreover, recently it was discovered that not only do some genes play their role in encoding for protein sequences, but some of their exons simultaneously act as enhancers of expression of nearby genes. Then, 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<sup>148</sup>. 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

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<sup>144</sup> See John R. Dyer's Applications of Absorption Spectroscopy of Organic Compounds, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ (1965), pp. 8.

<sup>145</sup> See Vladimir Mastryukov's Remembering Stoicheff and His Rule, Physics Today 64 (4) 10 (April 2011).

<sup>146</sup> See my article titled Insights into Morphological Nature of Precipitation of Cholesterol, Steroids 73, 356 – 369 (2008).

<sup>147</sup> S. Laketić, M. Rakin, M. Momšilović, J. Ciganović, Đ. Veljović, I. Cvijović-Alagić – "Laser-induced chemical and morphological changes of the titanium alloy surface under different irradiation parameters", In: Twenty-third Annual Conference YUCOMAT 2022 & Twelfth World Round Table Conference on Sintering XII WRTCS, Program and Book of Abstracts, edited by D. P. Uskoković, Materials Research Society of Serbia, Belgrade (2022), pp. 92.

<sup>148</sup> See M. J. Bissell, W. C. Hines – "Why Don't We Get More Cancer? A Proposed Role of the Microenvironment in Restraining Cancer Progression", Nature Medicine 17, 320 – 329 (2011).

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. Then, solid state physicists have known for quite some time that condensed matter is far more consistently described as concerted vibrations of different modes than as classical assemblies of inherently isolated particles, the reason being the significant effect of the system as a whole felt by each and every atomic nucleus and electron in it, and thus refer to quasiparticles and collective excitations, from phonons to excitons to plasmons to polarons to magnons and so forth. The transition to these models used to be a giant step forward to a quantum mechanical mean-field theory that treats each particle as an excitation of an underlying field and is the only theoretical framework that could accurately describe solid bodies, had it only been possible to solve the Schrödinger equation for systems composed of multiple electrons and nuclei, of course. For now, this is yet another sign on our ways that the material world in which we are immersed is a holistic symphony wherein a press of a button on a living room radio and a slightest shrug of the shoulders change the fate on the Universe for good. And just as particles are represented in quantum field theory as “arms” of relationships that connect them to the entire Universe and just as Christopher Alexander and his comrades at UC Berkeley in the 1970s attempted to revitalize the then traditional approach to architecture with a manifesto in which they argued that every object is to be seen as a sun of radiating relationships that connect it to adjacent entities<sup>149</sup>, human beings too can be drawn as similar suns of the soul, with spiritual sunrays incessantly radiating their essence everywhere, as if being cosmic radio-heads that fill the world with the waves of their spirit. Creatures made of cosmic music as we are, we could then recall that “no musical tone is sufficient unto itself; and as each musical tone points beyond itself, reaches, as it were, a hand to the next, so we too”<sup>150</sup> can be said to be instruments of God that radiate our divine essence not by our static and silent composure, but by the music of our soul that is always on a journey towards others. If we look deep inside of our hearts in meditation, we may thus realize a presence of real suns of spirit therein, which ceaselessly crave to illuminate the world with their cosmic lights. Consequently, each one of us can be said to be in contact with the entire world at any given time, as in accordance with the fact that one’s mind is a co-creator of each detail of one’s experience. “I am the world”, thus concludes Juliette from Godard’s 2 or 3 Things I Know About Her, as she sheds the skin of language and semantics and reenters existence in its purest, egoless form, unsurprisingly immediately following the realization that “objects are but relations that connect subjects in the world” over a cup of coffee in which the whole universe appeared to have been reflected. Human creatures aware of this connectedness to all things are able to absorb

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<sup>149</sup> See James Howard Kunstler’s *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America’s Man-Made Landscape*, Touchstone, New York, NY (1994), pp. 249 - 250.

<sup>150</sup> The quote is by Victor Zuckerkandl and could be found in Anthony Storr’s *Music and the Mind*, Random House, New York, NY (1992), pp. 172.

unimaginably great enlightening energies of the Universe as much as to give out incredibly immense outbursts of creative and healing energy, which is exactly what some sages, including the Christ, achieved, having transformed themselves into stars of spirit and sowing their divine essence all over the face of this planet. Each one of our bodies is, thus, like an energy field in which emotions and experientially programmed modes of acting in response to specific stimuli become engrained as nods that condition one's future responses. Wondering what comes first - an enlightening thought or a profoundly beautifying act - thus resembles the problem of chicken and egg. Beautiful thoughts purify our being, and any acts of ours, even seemingly the most blasphemous ones, rooted in devotion to another and permeated with the voice divine that rings with its melodies within our hearts produce blessing effects on the world and make us see it in an ever more beautiful light in return, leading to an incessant spinning of the wheel of our spiritual being, from wonderful to ever more wonderful seeing and acting, as the two hold their hands together. Our karmic flights through this and many other worlds that await us in distant galaxies are determined by the purity and lightness of the aura of spiritual energy that permeates us, which is why meditative rebalancing and harmonizing of this internal energy web is advised by many astral travelers and stellar sages. Yet, looking around and below the evolutionary vista upon which we stand, we could mostly notice the demonic outlines of greedy, self-centered strivings to reach the tops of the world while neglectfully stepping over the surrounding souls, the attitude that could be, unfortunately, attributed to the majority of the human race, which could be thus seen as literally that, a neo-Darwinian or Dawkinsian pursuit for the supremacy of the self, and that could hardly be fostering our free flights to more wonderful karmic realms present in this and other cosmoses than our own. Yet, if we direct our gazes high enough, we could realize that this spiritual gloominess is pervaded by the starry flashes of brilliant ethics and aesthetics of the theological teachings of humanity here and there, resembling the enchanting night sky that looms over our heads and lights up the way for our souls. And as indicated by the Christ's saying, "The last shall be first, and the first last" (Matthew 20:16), human praises and those falling on us from Heaven are frequently in diametrical opposition and complementary to each other. In other words, the sacred ethics often turns out to be an upside-down ethics of an ordinary human being. Hence, irrespective of the humanly praises that we might collect along the former way, whereby we look after elevating our own value in the eyes of the world, it could be imagined as sending us underground, into lower realms on the karmic tree of being, while the latter, godly way whereupon we do not only live and create solely for the benefit of another and the world as a whole but let every single thought of ours sprout from the empathic bliss of our altruistic self is the one that saves our souls and enables our ascents to stars. For this reason, Stevan Pešić, the Serbian writer who had been imprisoned as a political dissenter before he set off on a spiritual journey to the Himalayas, deliberately placed the following words on the lips of Nikola Tesla, who indeed thought that the Universe was alive and endowed with divine consciousness<sup>151</sup> and who claimed to have traveled all over the galaxy and found "a star which, if its light be dimmed, nothing would change", while realizing that humanity had a long way to go before reaching "the moral of the stars": "Our bodies are made of similar elements and souls are tied by unbreakable bonds. The incomprehensible sadness that sometimes overwhelms us means that somewhere, on the other side of the planet, a child or a gracious man died. The whole universe is sick during certain stages, of itself and of us. Disappearance of a star or appearance of

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<sup>151</sup> This is according to the insights into Tesla's unpublished work stored in the Museum of Nikola Tesla in Belgrade by Velimir Abramović, a cofounder of the Center for the Cosmological Studies 'Nikola Tesla'. Personal correspondence (2013).

a comet affects us more than we could ever bode. Bonds between creatures on Earth are even stronger; because of our feelings and thoughts a flower will scent more beautifully or silence. These truths we need to learn always anew to heal ourselves. The cure is in our heart and, just about the same, in the heart of the animal we call universe”<sup>152</sup>. Hence, polishing the mirror of our soul and brushing the dust of gruesome thoughts off the petals of the lotus flowers of our mind and heart, all until they become spotlessly white like the sail of a ship and blue like the deep sea, respectively, is how we set the foundations for brilliant being in this world. And yet, without acting in loving harmony with the world around us, the chances for our enlightening this energy field of ours will be nothing but bleak. Still, as the contextual nature of our being and of every detail in our surrounding suggests, our eyes of the heart need to spread out and grasp the entire Universe, and only then focus on crafting things on the fine scale. And then, as a miracle, anything we say with love twinkling inside of our heart will be seen as delivering divine lights to the face of the world.

Hence, it is love and wonder with which we say and do things that really matter, as I love to say. Not *what* we do, but *how* we do it, with what kinds of aspirations gleaming from our heart we do the things that we do is what matters most, the artist in me says. Invited to demonstrate his musical mastery to the Emperor, a sage stood in front of him and played a single tone on his flute, after which he bowed down, turned around and went away, a Zen story tells us. He clearly wanted to point out that it does not matter how virtuosic and technically sophisticated one’s performance is for as long as enlightening desires to endow the world with the beauty divine rest within one’s heart. Thence, even a single note is enough to shed the transcendent beauty onto the passing trains of crude reality, which the core ideas of rock ‘n’ roll, punk and other gems of the modern pop music have proven. Embracing this thought with the angelic wings of faith in our mind lets the famous Thomas Alva Edison’s guideline, which found its roots deep in the realm of the modern science, “Genius is 1 % inspiration and 99 % perspiration”, be gingerly dropped into the sea, for our knowledge matters at least as much as the shine of aspirations aimed at enlightening the world and the ocean of love that gently shimmers in our heart, from which the pillars of our creative acts arise. If the most touching of all works by the French painter, Henri Matisse, are his casual black and white drawings hung on the interior walls of the Chapel of the Rosary in Vence, the drawings wherein the master renounced color<sup>153</sup>, that device on which he based almost all of his mastery as the painter, then the tuning of the hearts becomes as or even more important than the training of the hands in striving to produce a magnificent piece of art. As it is said on the piece of stone that contains the oldest known writing in Hebrew, “You shall not do it, but worship the Lord”, telling us that not what we do but with what intentions we do what we do is what truly brings enlightenment to the world around us. For, “Man is made by his beliefs; as he believes, so he is”, as stated in Bhagavad-Gita, reminding us that when our heart is filled with the light that blesses and sanctifies the world with every breath of ours, no matter how blasphemous our words or acts may seem on the surface, they will still unstoppably spread the divine light all over the fields of the world. The famous story from the Gospels, in which Martha urges her sister Mary, who has been merely sitting and dreamingly enjoying the Christ’s presence, to help her in her housework, whereas the Christ stands in Mary’s defense, claiming

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<sup>152</sup> See Stevan Pešić’s *Tesla or Adaptation of an Angel*, a play wrote based on the interview Nikola Tesla gave to John Smith of the journal *Immortal* in 1889 in his lab in Colorado Springs, CO.

<sup>153</sup> The colors, intense, authentically Matissean, can still be found, but on the opposite walls of the Chapel, as if to point away from the artist’s art and to the world in one of the final and the most magnificent creative acts of the artist.

how “one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:42), can be seen in light of the Christ’s pointing at the inner world of visions, aspirations, thoughts and emotions of ours as the core of beauty of our entire beings. For, not the character of our sacrifices to the divine fountainheads of reality, but the purity of the heart with which they are performed is what most immensely determines the extent to which we will eventually be washed by the geysers of blissful praise from the heavens above, as demonstrated by the story of Cain and Abel and God’s looking not mainly at the nature, abundance or quality of the gifts offered to him by the two brothers, but at the way in which they were offered (Genesis 4:7), including, most importantly, the beauty of the music of devotion emitted from the two human hearts; “for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (Samuel I 16:7). Hence, even when our acts seem as unproductive and blasphemous, as they might appear to superficial but earnest creatures of this world, whatever we do so long as the light divine illuminates our heart will draw smiles from the gods that watch us from behind the sublime clouds of reality. Just like Bez, the legendary dancer of the Madchester music scene, played no instrument on the stage and uttered no singing notes, merely enjoyed circling around the inner sun of transcendental bliss with the spaceships of his attention, and danced, enlivening the stage and the onlookers thereby, prompting one of them to note that “in the beginning was Bez, who danced and created the universe out of sheer awesomeness”<sup>154</sup>, so do we need not say a single word to send tsunami waves of enlightening energy to wash the coasts of neighboring minds with, provided we stand on the pedestal of the balance of the Way of Love and had ourselves transformed into a lasting microcosmic sun on Earth. Lest we only spoil the experience of those on Heaven and Earth watching us glow in silence, like the derby-hat-wearing keyboardist, Eddie Stevens’ dancing magnificently to Róisín Murphy’s singing Sing It Back and taking over Moloko’s show at Later...with Jools Holland from the shadow, but then blowing it up with the spoken word<sup>155</sup>, we better not open our mouth despite the temptation to tell the world about what we see or how we feel and continue to “walk in silence”<sup>156</sup>, as if in an Ian Curtis’ dream, a dream darker than the night and, thereupon, lighter than the Sun. To say no word and watch the world with love, with the empathy of a burning star that dies to see the world through the eyes of another, is thus millions of times more valuable than uprooting these holy feelings inside us in order to utter the most mellifluous lines known to humanity. For, just as the Moon merely gazes at the Earth, seemingly possessing no function for sustaining life on it, but in reality exerting innumerable vital effects on it, from preventing the excessive planetary wobble to reinforcing seasons on Earth to mitigating climactic fluctuations to delivering various tidal effects, including the oceanic tidal flow that assists in conveying heat from the equator to the poles, to, last but not least, increasing the odds for spontaneous formation of nucleic acids on the primordial planet of ours from today’s perspective<sup>157</sup>, so could we be sure that simply watching others with gleams of love radiating from our heart, be it from the faraway

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<sup>154</sup> See samuraifoo’s comment on the Tops of the Pops performance of In the Name of the Father by Happy Mondays, available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbaMsukvPj4&feature=feedf> (2009).

<sup>155</sup> Watch Moloko perform Sing It Back at Live @ Jools Holland (June 20, 2003), retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIVBMfdCSQo>.

<sup>156</sup> Listen to Joy Division’s Atmosphere on a single released by Sordide Sentimental in 1980, whose title, Licht und Blindheit, meaning Light and Blindness in German, matches the continuation of the sentence in which this verse is quoted.

<sup>157</sup> See Bruce Dorminey’s Without the Moon, Would There Be Life on Earth? *Scientific American* (April 21, 2009); available at <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=moon-life-tides>.

cosmic distances or close proximity, can be enough to wash them with a lifesaving energy, which they may never glimpse nor grasp, owing to its exceptional sublimity and impalpability.

The ideology of minimalism, of forging as great and inspiring artistic treasures as possible with as little of resources, of lines drawn and of notes played, has thus always lived locked inside the deepest closets of my mind. Even today, my tilting at the world-weary windmills in the world of science and beyond include my trying fervently to infuse minimalism into the way in which scientists and affiliates of other disciplines express themselves and present their works at conferences, in technical papers and in other professional settings. Opposing the tendency of scientists to use pretentious and overly complicated terms, mainly so as to show how eloquent and knowledgeable they are rather than to express themselves concisely, this minimalist ideal stands forth in an unassailable greatness, importance and beauty in front of my mind. For, wherever the attributes of the beautiful and the analytical encounter, it is the ocean in which I will joyfully jump. Of course, as lucid childlike soul's eyes can easily notice, mediocre scientific minds with the tendency to confuse rather than to reveal resemble the grownup astronomers and stargazers from Saint-Exupery's story about the Little Prince<sup>158</sup>, who rejected the report of the discoverer of asteroid B-612 because he was dressed in a funny costume and because it "has only once been seen through the telescope"<sup>159</sup>, but who accepted the discovery once the discoverer changed his clothes, prompting the novelist to conclude that grownups "are like that, one must not hold it against them; children should always show great forbearance toward grownup people"<sup>160</sup>. Besides, "First come founders, then profiteers", warns us Mao Zedong in Alice Goodman's and John Adams' opera *Nixon in China*, and now that the empirical science has gone far beyond its formative stages, the greedy profiteers have multiplied like roaches on the account of the virtual disappearance of the romantic type of the scientist, the epitome of the renaissance founders sent either to academic isolation or to museums, to be gazed with curiosity as obsolete species extinct as of long time ago. These modern entrepreneurs in the sphere of science could be best recognized by their aversion to any philosophical or poetic inclinations as well as by the tendency to wrap their worldviews in glossy, rococo cloths, quite in accord with their tendency to value expensive suits and sugarcoated poses more than the intellectual essence concealed deep underneath. From the tuition fees of students entering the institutions at which they are tenured or tenure-tracked, paying tremendous amounts of money in return for the information they will be exposed to and an academic degree they might earn, to astronomical figures on their research grants and on honoraria given for invited talks and consultations, everything in their mercantile universe revolves around money and with money comes glorification of practicality that entails a disregard of Taoist impracticality, mysticism, poetry, philosophy, ethics and aesthetics<sup>161</sup> and, in fact, everything that money can't buy, but that, as the folk saying goes, numbers all the most beautiful things in the world, with no exception. One such commercial philosophy naturally breeds the dry grownups, the persons of distinction of whom the Little Prince said the following: "If you were to say to the grownups: 'I saw a beautiful house made of rosy brick, with geraniums in the windows and doves on the roof', they would not be able to get any idea of that house at all. You would have to say to them: 'I saw a house that cost \$20,000'. Then they would exclaim:

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<sup>158</sup> See Antoine de Saint-Exupery's *The Little Prince*, Bomoo, retrieved from [http://www.yoanaj.co.il/uploadimages/The\\_Little\\_Prince.pdf](http://www.yoanaj.co.il/uploadimages/The_Little_Prince.pdf) (1943).

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14.

<sup>161</sup> Hence the Serbian philosopher, Kosta Došen's comment that "science is no longer a temple, but a marketplace". Tijana Ćuk, personal correspondence (August 2017).

‘Oh, what a pretty house that is!’ Moreover, when one conducts one’s daily activities in the realms such as the academic or the ecclesiastical because of money, not because of higher intellectual and spiritual enrichment goals, then death, not life, speaks from one and one has no power to provide a profound creative stimulus and a type of inspiration that moves the sitter on the deepest seats of the soul. In short, “Money spoils people”, as the old Serbian saying goes and science is no exception to this rule, a domain where the traditional stereotype of a scientist as a Romantic soul, goodhearted and kindly, careless about the surface appearance and completely focused on the abstract, a soul sacrificing the comfort of living for idealistic love of science has been transformed into uniform breeds of moneymaking machines, nonimaginative robots, ravenous and haughty, pampered by persistent pleasures and patronizations, immodest and focused solely on their own wellbeing and stature. Skilled in the art of marketing their research and fundraising, they have emerged at the top of the academic pyramid, from which they pushed down the purer souls with a cordial affinity for the pursuit of knowledge, not money, and created a dangerous derangement of the hierarchy, whose devastating consequences will be for the countless future generations to reap. Enslaved by the ideals of heartless practicality and puritanical frostiness of the soul, while nurturing a deep aversion of anything poetical or philosophical on the backdrop of the positivistic disinterest in any moral or aesthetic connotations or foundations of the scientific thought, with their very existence they contribute to the conquer of the Renaissance, profoundly inspirational and artistic academic path with the dark shadows of the industrial, narrow-minded, commercial, product-oriented and prosaic mindsets, causing a systematic exile from the academic territory of all the genuinely Romantic scientists, who dare to ask fundamental questions and propose bold hypotheses, who pursue poetic visions and detest all things bourgeois and boring, who diligently analyze and freely talk about the contextual skies above and the metaphysical grounds below, under and upon which their science exists, respectively, knowing that the environment conducive to the growth of a particular fruit or a crop is always composed of the climate and the soil and so must it be with their science, who recognize morality and beauty as the vital guiding stars in voyages across the scientific universe, who strive to inspire the newcomers to the world of science as much as to conduct superb research, who are aware that science emerges from the unfathomable and mystical ocean of metaphysical ideas and submerges its paths back in them in concordance with Aleister Crowley’s maxim, “Our method is science, our aim religion”<sup>162</sup>, who know that secularism of science, having its origins in the icily glacial positivistic, protestant, puritanical thought on which the first American universities were founded, is a sin against the tradition of everything artistic, spiritual and moral - in a Kantian, starry sense of the word - that has pervaded humanity and enabled its survival over eons, a sin spreading like plague across the face of the planet, and so forth. As if knowing that “fish is best caught in murky waters”, as the Serbian proverb goes, these pied pipers on the podia of science typically try to profit on their pretense, mystifying their knowledge before others instead of transmitting it freely in all its simplicity. Yet, these false prophets, like many others the world over, try to earn or sustain the reputation of a prophet, so to say, by perplexing rather than enlightening, which is a defensive and self-celebratory approach that always results in dreadful demises of the Babylonian towers of their intellects. Behind the perplexities that they shed in front of our eyes, however, stands a grand insecurity with respect to their knowledge and paralyzing fears to show any gaps in it owing to an egotistic obsession with

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<sup>162</sup> See Simon Reynolds’ *Ecstasy is a Science: Techno-Romanticism*, In: *Stars Don’t Stand Still in the Sky: Music and Myth*, Edited by Karen Kelly and Evelyn McDonnell, New York University Press, New York, NY (1999), pp. 205.

their reputation. Over time, this obsession has eclipsed the sunshiny glow of selfless and altruistic exploration of the reality while standing on the shore where coasts of knowledge meet the endless ocean of the things unknown. And with such a stance of raising barbed wires and seemingly unsurpassable gates of knowledge around one in other people's perception thereof, no favor to science is being done. On the other side, by enwrapping the complex core of scientific endeavors in clothes of wonderful simplicity, an impression that science is light and amenable is given to others. Besides, truly gorgeous people have no desire to defend or elevate themselves in the eyes of another. They are too busy making plans for other people's ascents into the skies of spiritual bliss to look after their own standing. In such a way, at least as far as the arena of the modern science is considered, the ideal of minimalism and a starry-eyed beauty of being seem to go hand-in-hand.

Despite that, every simplicity hides an underlying complexity, and *vice versa*, as I have loved to point out ever since. For example, reality is described by physicists in terms of dizzyingly complex numerical equations, which are on the other hand built using plain numbers and relatively simple basic rules of math. Yet, if we were to accept the universal correctness of Goldbach's conjecture, according to which every integer greater than 2 can be represented as a sum of two primes, we would come to conclusion that the building blocks of whole numbers (1, 2, 3...) are none other but prime numbers, mysteriously irregular in their sequence, as sometimes there is a single even number separating two neighboring primes and sometimes there are millions of them<sup>163</sup>. Hence, as we descend deeper and deeper into the substratum of reality, we could expect passing through the alternate layers of simplicity and complexity, as they both seem to be positioned in the very core of one another. This junction at which we have just found ourselves, this crossroad between simplicity and complexity naturally takes us to two crucial insights for the content of this book. One of them is the justification for the rather lengthy sentence structures, circumlocutory chapters and the flighty threads on which the thoughts presented here hang as well as for the fact that verbal and argumentative complexities in this book outweigh the minimalistic ideals drawn on its epistemological grounds and teleological destinations. The second direction in which this intersection takes us is the proposition that will be exemplified and elaborated over the next, believe it or not, one hundred or so pages of this second and by far the longest chapter of this book, acting as one of world's longest interludes. This proposition is as follows: the combination of opposites is the key to the appeal and captivating effect that magnificent works of art have on the human mind. This inference is derived from the fact that multidimensionality in songs, that is, the encounter of visions that seem incommensurate and blends of emotions that seem immiscible, have always been praised in the depths of my mind for its wittiness and lucidity. Even more so this has applied to albums as collections of songs connected by an invisible thread, especially those which take the listener's heart on a rollercoaster ride, up and down, shaking it so much that after a while it knows not anymore whether it has found itself on an emotional apex or its rock bottom, for the two, somewhere along the way, have merged into one. This also explains why I have always thought about modern music in the coordinate system of albums, not individual songs, from as early as I can remember to this very day, when the attention span of the average listener, sadly, can hardly span the duration of a popular radio tune. For, not only does listening to albums demand a darkened room, a quiet time and a whole lot of introspective insight, giving thus a chance to the listener to reflect on his life through the monocular of music and become enriched by its means more profoundly than by listening to a single tune on the run, but the extended time and space on

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<sup>163</sup> See Apostolos Doxiadis' Uncle Petros and Goldbach's Conjecture, Plato, Belgrade, Serbia (1992).

them allows the artist to structure the emotional contrasts in more versatile ways. In turn, this gives the listener an opportunity to meet the multiple sides of the artist's musical personality and become acquainted with a more comprehensive picture of what the spirit standing on the other side of this communicational bridge is being made of, feeling in the end almost as if he has spent a day together with him in a most intimate of settings, to which end a single insightful encounter with his art becomes more enriching for the soul than thousands of years of superficial social gatherings with "creatures who lock up their spirits, drill holes in themselves and live in their secrets"<sup>164</sup>, creatures whom ETs in Thom Yorke's frisky eyes and, perhaps, the listener too, following his eye-opening musical experience, would pity from some celestial heights of their elevated minds, having found home "on high, in another land, so far away – up in the heaven"<sup>165</sup> through the fulfillment of their sublime, artistic senses. In any case, be it songs, sonnets, symphonies or long play records, like the Sumatran tiger from Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Tropical Malady*, combining dullness and alertness, fervency and sluggishness, peacefulness and aggressiveness, obtuseness and depth, curiosity and drowsiness, down-to-earthiness and sublimity and a whole lot more in its stance and look, the most masterful compositions are obliged to comprise inextricably tangled antagonistic emotions and energies in my musical universe. This nature of inspiring musicality Miles Davis summed up in a simple principle that guided his improvisations on the stage, impelling him to always strive to fill the space not with more of the same, but with a spirit that is different and complementary to the genies released into the atmosphere by the other jazzmen in his ensemble from the magic lamps of their instruments: "Don't play what's there, play what's not there". Therefore, if you listen to some of the West Coast jazz standards performed by Miles as well as the likes of Dave Brubeck, Bill Evans and Gerry Mulligan, for instance, you may discover a blend of a cool, distant dreaminess on one side and of joyous, playful and spontaneous intimateness on another, as if pulling the listener both ways, inside and outside at the same time, dreamily focusing him on his centerpiece of consciousness and yet lovingly opening him to the world around, thereby subtly touching the essence of the Way of Love too. Or, if you spin any of the four jazz records cosigned by Miles Davis and Gil Evans, from *Miles Ahead* to *Sketches of Spain*, you might hear Evans' relentlessly superimposing dynamic chord changes upon a static, modal harmonic substrate set by Miles<sup>166</sup>, thus producing an aural conflict between stillness and movement that enlivens the human soul. Also, if you listen to albums by Miles' second quintet in its acoustic and early electric phases, the first of which started with *E.S.P.* and ended with *Nefertiti*, the record in whose opening track he reversed the traditional approach and made the rhythm section improvise while the soloists repeated the same lines over and over again, the first impression may be that of the quintet's bold renunciation of any specific emotion by embracing them all at once, proposing an "interchangeability of emotion – or else dispassion"<sup>167</sup> and thus arriving at an expressionist state of nirvana, unassociated with any sentiment in particular - in line with the advice by "the man down at the tracks" from *Television's Marquee Moon*, the song about "a kiss of death, the embrace of life"<sup>168</sup>: "Look here junior, don't you be so happy and, for heaven's sake, don't you

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<sup>164</sup> Listen to Radiohead's *Subterranean Homesick Alien* on *OK Computer*, Parlophone (1997).

<sup>165</sup> Listen to Van Morrison's *Astral Weeks* on *Astral Weeks*, Warner Bros (1968).

<sup>166</sup> See John Litweiler's *The Freedom Principle: Jazz After 1958*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, NY (1984), pp. 110.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 126. According to the author, "Woody Shaw was speaking for his whole generation of modal players when he said: 'I don't like to stay outside too long and I don't like to stay inside too long. I like the music I play to go in many different directions and take on many different colors'" (pp. 119).

<sup>168</sup> Listen to *Television's Marquee Moon* on *Marquee Moon*, Elektra (1977).

be so sad” - and unattached to the transiency of life, floating freely through it, yet being devotedly in love with every instance of it. Similarly, listening to Pet Sounds by the Beach Boys, perhaps the most important piece of pop music ever made, one may get an impression that it presents a concoction of innumerable human emotions, aside from being recorded with the use of multiple exotic instruments and voices, and at certain moments it feels as if ultimately joyful and chaste cellars of one’s dreamy childhood and the darkest dungeons of one’s fears and depressing visions have opened in one’s mind in parallel, wrapped up together in the fascinating flight of fancy that the sound of this record engrains. In fact, recollecting the words of Claude Lévi-Strauss with which Anthony Storr began his treatise on tremendous effects music has on flourishing of our minds, “Since music is the only language with the contradictory attributes of being at once intelligible and untranslatable, the musical creator is a being comparable to the gods, and music itself the supreme mystery of the science of man”<sup>169</sup>, we could be instigated to consider musical pieces that push this dialectical encounter of opposites, e.g., of mysterious and moving, inherent to music *per se* as those that have succeeded in elevating the spirit of sound waves in which we are all immersed to higher grounds and be worthy the epithet of truly magical. Moreover, as we know that the rise of music, as drifty and dreamy as it can be, is conditioned by the relative rigidity of materials that produce it, be they tight strings of guitar or piano that tend to quickly return to their initial state after being plucked, or narrow tubes in wind instruments whose unyielding strength lets the air waves resonate when passing through, we can observe the following: the more floatingly and light-footedly music travels through space, while still powerfully rolling like a train, carrying forth pulses that impel us to dreamingly sink into meditative slumber and at the same time deeply moving us to arise in the great shininess of our spirits and bless the world with this inner light, the more it embodies the dialectical nature woven into it and the more awesome, in the genuine sense of the word, it can be said to be.

Numerous songs could be used to illustrate the idea that bringing together emotions and perspectives that appear hardly compatible at all is what endows artistic pieces with the ability to captivate the listeners and sustain them in prolonged states of awe and amazement. Innumerable are also complex songs that require sophisticated ear to perceive how their expansion on a single emotional landscape is infused with subtle tones or instrumental lines that splendidly contradict this basic emotion and thus contribute to the captivating multidimensionality of the song. As an exercise, select a musical piece that you are fond of and look for a striking instrumental section that leaves you breathless and blissful upon its appearance and, as a rule, you will find it to stand in partial opposition to the emotional content of its background. Building musical works of art with this guideline in mind results in pieces in which each instrument has a personality of its own; in a multidimensional collision of their multitude are stellar bursts of artistic beauty produced. On one, creative side, this perspective at the aesthetics of arts explains why some of the greatest artistic minds have been naturally endowed with bipolar clashes of blissful and gloomy states of mind. On the other, interpretive side, if our own tendency to be naturally impressed with such dialectical confrontations in music tells us something, it must be the need to fully embrace the entire creation with our heart, to learn to love both the good and harmonious forces in life and those that tend to bring disarray and destruction, bringing them all together into a grand sense of oneness within our heart, which then turns into a stellar core in which billions of elements are fused together, releasing phenomenal bursts of spiritual energy outwards. For, if the dialectical and thermodynamic natures of the evolution of life and knowledge clearly point at something, it is an equal vitality of synthetic, peacemaking powers and antithetic, aggravating

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<sup>169</sup> See Anthony Storr’s *Music and the Mind*, Random House, New York, NY (1992), pp. IX.

ones, as well as orderly and entropic ones, respectively, for the progress of our beings on all planes imaginable.

Furthermore, if we were to grasp the fact that harmonious movement is characterized by the balance between tension and freedom from a systemic perspective, so that every type of movement, from the vibration of a guitar string to the tremble of cypress branches in the wind to the quantum oscillations of electromagnetic waves landing on our retinas straight from the stars, is implied therein, we could easily come up with the conclusion that the moving potential of human expressions, including the artistic ones, has got to be based on an encounter of antipodal emotional, mental or physical forces. Indeed, many are musical pieces that openly confront waves of emotions that appear antithetic to each other. As such, they may present particularly good examples at this point of the discourse, and I will pile them one after another, in the order in which remembrance thereof randomly sprung in my head. To start with, I will head back in time to early 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the rise of Romanticism via the music of Ludwig van Beethoven. Although his early works were strongly influenced by those of his Classical predecessors, by dialectically confronting this inherent lightness and sanguinity of the Classical period with sounds evocative of darkness, passion and emotional tempests, starting with the now famous ominous and tense descent from the E-flat major to C sharp via D natural already in the second measure of the first movement of the third symphony, he slowly emerged on a new shore, which we now call Romantic. Examples that “reveal the double foundation of Beethoven’s music (as of all art) and the union of the two”<sup>170</sup> and illustrate “the unexpected juxtaposition of contrasting styles and topics (that is) fundamental to the music of Beethoven, (that) upsets, hits hard, and holds tight, and were it to be expressed as a physical gesture, it would hurt”<sup>171</sup> are, of course, countless, sometimes immaculate as in the Pastoral symphony, when he was guided by “the larger the stream, the deeper the note”<sup>172</sup> principle, as well as in the Appassionata, the angelically demonic adagio of the string quartet No.12, La Malinconia theme of the string quartet No.6 or during the mesmerizing apposition of the violent theme and the lyrical theme of the final, seventh movement of the string quartet in C sharp minor, Op. 131, and sometimes short of it, as in certain parts of the Missa solennis and Fidelio. As it is often the case that relatively minimalistic works open ways to new trends in artistic expression, one can argue that Beethoven’s exceptionally simple opening movement of the Moonlight sonata, Op. 27 II, a piano piece he composed in 1801, with its showoff of murky moodiness, atypical in the times of light Classicism, was the “still small voice” (Kings I 19:12) that opened the groundbreaking door to the era of Romanticism in full blast. Knowing that the sonata form by definition implies the contrasting of two opposing themes against one another, here it could be argued that alongside this intrinsic minimalism, the pairing of the contradictory sentiments is what underscored and triggered this monumental phase transition from Classicism to Romanticism. This brings us to yet another simple song that marks the Romantic period and in which the thunderous awe and the sunshiny radiance seem to be mixed in an even more remarkable manner. It is Ellen’s Third Song, nowadays known as Ave Maria, composed in 1825 by Franz Schubert, the oldest famous composer associated solely with the Romantic era from the beginning to the end of his rather

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<sup>170</sup> See Paul Mies’ *Beethoven’s Sketches: An Analysis of His Style Based on a Study of his Sketch Books*, Translated by Doris L. Mackinnon, Dover, New York, NY (1929), pp. 154.

<sup>171</sup> Ted Libbey’s *The NPR Guide to Building a Classical CD Collection*, Workman Publishing, New York, NY (1999), pp. 312.

<sup>172</sup> See Paul Mies’ *Beethoven’s Sketches: An Analysis of His Style Based on a Study of his Sketch Books*, Translated by Doris L. Mackinnon, Dover, New York, NY (1929), pp. 154.

short musical career, spanning no more than a decade and a half. With its pop song structure, it still stands as one of the earliest monuments to simple expressions that could be spun over and over throughout centuries and never lose their relevance nor become boring. This is not surprising considering that it was composed by a musical mind that to this day epitomizes innovativeness emerging from a zealous person unrecognized for his greatness during his life and never being sponsored by the large state funders, royal courts or patrons, but rather being forced to create in solitude, with little means, thus creating “works that are characteristically domestic, earnest, personal, and experimental - rather than public, performative, grandiose and formal”<sup>173</sup>. Not only did Schubert during his short-lived career grow into a master of modulation and the crafter of more atmospheric and thus more modern orchestral pieces, having a lesser emphasis on melody than in the music of Beethoven, let alone in Classicism, but he also developed a brand new song-writing style, where piano was no longer a passive accompaniment to the vocals, but rather as expressive as the voice itself. This opened the door to powerful contrasts between the piano, the voice and the poetry and thus to whole new levels of musical expression in the song format. For example, whenever I listen to U2’s Joshua Tree and divorce my ears from Bono’s unbearably megalomaniacal vocals so as to immerse my senses solely into the finesse of Edge’s guitar work and Eno’s overall instrumental arrangements, it is Schubert, partially, who ought to be thanked for that. Now, listening to this marvelous song with a zest of imagination, one could visualize a celestial creature carrying infinite beauty and love in its arms and appearing from behind thunderous clouds, evoking a concoction of feelings that are ominously awesome and clemently devotional at the same time, as if the artist managed to capture the brief moment in time in which the storm ceded its place to the rays of sunshine and produced a gorgeous rainbow in the audio landscapes of our soul with this clash of infinitely sad and overwhelmingly joyful. Should an occasional listener finds the song mainly elating, skipping to notice the gloomy and awe-inspiring feeling that traverses its background, he could be reminded that the song was originally a part of an epic poem by Walter Scott. In it, a girl or a gamine, Ellen, escapes from the turmoil and impending revolution in her land and finds a sanctuary in a goblin’s cave. As the hero walks towards the top of a mountain, he contemplates returning to the safe harbor of his home and resigning from the battle that awaited him. However, after catching Ellen’s song from the distance and hearing in it a heavenly voice sending prayers to the Virgin Mary and calling for help, he continues his voyage to the top of the mountain full of vigor and determination. As such, this song could be seen as providing a brief window to heavenly peace and beauty to a world bordering mayhem, as if refreshing the spirit of a warrior of light before yet another battle in which he will sacrifice his life for the sake of defending the sacraments of human justice and heavenly love. “No sacrifice is too great for a chance to immortality”, Humphry Bogart said in Nicholas Ray’s noir *In a Lonely Place*, offering a line that could be reshuffled and rephrased to “no immortality is achievable without a great sacrifice”, the awareness of which poses in the martyr’s head the visions of a pending Golgotha, dark and gloomy, and of an everlasting, paradisiacal glory, brighter than the Sun, side by side, musically seizable only via similar juxtapositions of emotions that may seem not combinable at all at the first sight. An essential trait of a martyr’s spirit is the ability to be rooted in one such schismatic chasm that divides doom from triumph and this majestic tune highlights this authentically heroic mood, schizoid in its essence, in a masterly manner. This historic musical moment when the prayerfully pure Schubert’s melody started to echo over the mountain hills and valleys, sending

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<sup>173</sup> See the comment by Sensibility on Sawallisch’s conductance of Schubert’s Great Symphony in C major, No.9 (September 8, 2020), retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yyw5OHUDHh4&t=2946s>.

the heroic spirits in homeward directions throughout the mist of the atmosphere of impending havoc, has had its diametrical opposite in the song of the second French revolution beginning to quietly reverberate across the walls of the church as Jean Valjean, the hero of *Les Mis*, in utmost peace imaginable, hand-in-hand with his shorthaired angel, makes steps away from this world, to be with God forever and ever, at the moment when the bottom of the bucket of water breaks, if we were to refer to the famous Zen parable, and we turn into a shaky blob soggy with tears. Aural antagonisms similar to the awing encounter of the ominous and the blissful in Ave Maria could be heard in other Schubert's songs, from alternation of the idyllic instances of tranquility and the moments when "the storm breaks out... the skies become overcast, the wind whips up the waves and the seagull cries"<sup>174</sup> in his homage to the sea, *Am Meer*, to *Litanei* wherein a chromatic shift of the bass notes into the deep is paired to the rising melody of the voice so as to invoke a sense of ethereal balance and harmony, to the coupling of the calming vocal passages and the dramatic piano sequences evocative of the rolling waves of a turbulent sea in *Lied eines Schiffers an die Dioskuren* and *Nachtstück*. Neither do Schubert's late piano sonatas and chamber pieces, with their "unique affective combination of turbulence and tranquility", the blending of "lilting enthusiasm" with "dreamy pensiveness", and the frequently "ambiguous stance halfway between major and minor"<sup>175</sup>, as in the finales of the sonata in B $\flat$  major and the string quintet in C major, stray stylistically far from these compositionally complex songs where mixed emotions collide as commonly as "good day", as the Serbian saying would have it. Josquin des Prez, yet another composer of a hail to Maria, created in his early 16<sup>th</sup> Century's *Mille Regretz* probably the most intense aural downward drag known to human music by then, plunging the listener straight onto the rock bottom of a greatest sadness imaginable, yet, miraculously, having him emerge on the other side of the tunnel and be bedazzled by the bliss of an ethereal, otherworldly joy. A century or so after Schubert's Ave Maria was given birth to, Dmitri Shostakovich's thrilling Fifth Symphony exemplified what had come to comprise by then the classical approach to raising tension and seizing the listeners within its clutches: juxtaposition of diametrical opposites. In this case, one could hear two themes dominating the first movement, the first one ominous and gloomy, sharply dotted and played in canon for the first few bars, and the second one "beautiful and poetic... a ray of hope, like a little strip of azure-blue sky between dark clouds"<sup>176</sup>. As for the second movement, the entwining of major and minor keys is evident in a scherzo that is both savage and sensual in nature and that combines inauspiciousness with humor, the latter of which went so far as to let bassoons imitate laughter and the orchestra exhibit clownishly wobbly rhythmical irregularities. As for the third and the fourth movements, they both begin in a minor key and end in a major one, alongside placing "expressionistic etching of petrified fright (that) gets perilously close to naturalistic screeching and yelling"<sup>177</sup> and "the color of resignation and pallor of death"<sup>178</sup> side by side with the sound of elation, hope and heartwarming lyricism, as in accord with the composer's own vision that underlay this marvelous work: "Its basic ideals are the sufferings of man, and optimism. I wanted to convey optimism asserting itself as a world outlook through a series of

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<sup>174</sup> See Alec Robertson's *The Songs*, In: *The Music of Schubert*, edited by Gerald Abraham, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, NY (1947), pp. 171.

<sup>175</sup> See Ted Libbey's *The NPR Guide to Building a Classical CD Collection*, Workman Publishing, New York, NY (1999), pp. 408 - 409.

<sup>176</sup> See Jon-Roar Bjørkvold's *The Muse Within: Creativity and Communication, Song and Play from Childhood through Maturity*, Harper Collins, New York, NY (1989), pp. 307.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 315.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

tragic conflicts in a great inner, mental struggle”<sup>179</sup>. No one should be surprised then that Shostakovich, who was claimed to be an epitome of a “dual creative persona” and who therefore naturally found his niche in symphonic music, for “the creative friction of dualities is the very stuff of symphony”, when asked in an interview if he could pinpoint some essential guidelines in his aesthetic microcosm, replied that “his aesthetic included both Bach and Offenbach”, hinting thereby at the juxtaposition of “profundity and levity”, of “a Dostoyevskian capacity for tragedy and a Gogolian capacity for satire” that his music embodied, of “the power to strike tragedy and the ability to etch a gothic grotesquerie across the heavens in its witty, zig-zag calligraphy”<sup>180</sup>, the same quality that crystallized over a century or so in the lineage of composers spanning from Mussorgsky to Prokofiev as authentically Russian in style. Shostakovich is also said to have found an inspiration in Jewish folk music, specifically in its “ability to build a jolly melody on sad intonations”<sup>181</sup>, a method that he grasped and wholeheartedly utilized to reflect his own inclination for “the juddering juxtaposition of the lighthearted with the profound”, which was “an apparent contradiction that marked his compositions from the very beginning”<sup>182</sup>. As it usually happens, the internal clashes of personal demons inside of the artist’s soul become intensified by the dialectical pulls imposed on one by the social milieu in which one creates and Dmitri Shostakovich was all but an exception to this rule, having experienced a constant antagonism between his own inclination to pathos and fatalism and the demands for optimism and elation coming from the proletarian voices to which he reluctantly conformed throughout his entire career. A critic thus found an analogy for the latter in “a tightrope-walk between opposed temptations, whether those of *Proletkult* and the avant-garde, as in the early Leningrad years, or between private musing and public display, as so often in the middle-period symphonies”<sup>183</sup>, seeing in the composer an exemplar of “a dissociation of identity very like that suffered by the protagonist in tragic drama” brought about by the ideological tension that was tearing apart his whole being from the inside. Should we fast-forward in time for almost yet another century, arrive swiftly in 2010 and give a listen to Salem’s *King Night*<sup>184</sup>, we might hear a similar clash of tonal colors as that intrinsic to Shostakovich’s Fifth Symphony: the horror of frightening drums that resemble falling bombs and whizzing warplanes, although blended with angelic melodies sung in the background. An analogous theme could be found in the song *Murmurs* recorded four years later by the band *Hundred Waters*<sup>185</sup>, with ambulance sirens hearable in the van in which the band did the recordings, echoing the fear and the wonder sensed by two-year-old Theo every time he’d hear their strident tee-no-nee-no squeal<sup>186</sup>, making it impossible for the listener to draw a line between the frightening cacophony in it and the soothing aural waves of motherly comfort evoked to counteract these primordial fears. Likewise, when Tracey Thorn

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<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 316.

<sup>180</sup> Everything quoted in this sentence comes from Ronald Stevenson’s *The Piano Music*, In: *Shostakovich: the Man and his Music*, edited by Christopher Norris, Marion Boyars, Salem, NH (1982), pp. 81 – 103.

<sup>181</sup> See Elizabeth Wilson’s *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (1994), pp. 268.

<sup>182</sup> See Mark Wigglesworth’s *Symphonic Overtures: On Shostakovich’s First Three Symphonies*, retrieved from <https://www.markwigglesworth.com/notes/mark-on-shostakovich-symphonies-nos-1-2-and-3/> (2012).

<sup>183</sup> See Christopher Norris’ *Shostakovich: Politics and Musical Language*, In: *Shostakovich: the Man and his Music*, edited by Christopher Norris, Marion Boyars, Salem, NH (1982), pp. 170.

<sup>184</sup> Listen to Salem’s *King Night* on *King Night*, IAMSOUND Records (2010).

<sup>185</sup> Listen to *Hundred Waters’ Murmurs* on *The Moon Rang Like a Bell*, OWSLA (2014).

<sup>186</sup> One day, when I, old and wrinkly perhaps, become transported in one such tee-no-nee-no squealing ambulance car, may I think of a soul, pure and full of Wonder, watching me from above, just as Theo did, enraptured by its passing. For, if I do, smiles, I know, will overcome fear and peace will install its flag on the territory of pain.

sings about protection, about safety and about comforting another by “standing in front of you, taking the force of the blow and putting my arms around you”<sup>187</sup>, her angelic voice stands mingled with the rhythmic synth sound that resembles the frightening whir of helicopter blades, concealing the secret to the song’s timeless beauty. In fact, since British pop artists of the 1980s, from the Smiths, whose mood is “bleakly beautiful”<sup>188</sup> and whose “every song is hummable and melancholic in equal measure”<sup>189</sup>, to the Cure to Depeche Mode to Siouxsie & the Banshees to Soft Cell to early Cocteau Twins, the band whose “greatest ability was to be very frightening and very pretty at the same time”<sup>190</sup> and whose songs “supply an air of dreamy melancholia that both chills and warms”<sup>191</sup>, to innumerable other examples, found the blend of darkness and dreaminess captivating, many have embraced this transfixing duality of ominously dark and delightfully dreamy in the pop music arena. This affinity of mine to rejoice in the aural clashes between the dark and the dreamy explains why my favorite soundtrack for driving through Los Angeles and its suburbs in 2020 was not something that reiterated its sunniness, but rather something that contrasted it with grim and gloomy tones, albeit gentle and graceful, as in the record *Punisher* by this city’s native, Phoebe Bridgers, “a set of folk and bedroom pop that’s at once comforting and haunting, a refuge and a fever dream”<sup>192</sup>. The Beach Boys’ *Pet Sounds*, which was also given birth in this city of eternal sunshine, being the first and the foremost pop record that disobeyed the attribute of entertaining and came unprecedentedly close to that of classical, the one which was neither “a song concept album” nor “lyrically a concept album”, but was “really a production concept album”<sup>193</sup> in the words of its creator, Brian Wilson, from which the mainstream musical producers of the last fifty years, to whom “pump it up” has been the first and the foremost criterion that guided their corrupt creative forces, have a whole lot to learn, offers an especially striking example of this concoction of the dark and the dreamy. When people in the 1960s went to music from the pop rock genre for swing and for kicks, *Pet Sounds* pushed this genre in the opposite direction, downward as it were, forcing the listener to find the source of amusement in the anticlimactic and the quiet, which presented a natural soundscape for this blend of darkness and dreaminess melting and mingling in the record’s core. *Rubber Soul*, a record that presented a turning point in the oeuvre of the Beatles and offered a similar mix of spirited and dismal, presented a great inspiration for Brian Wilson in the making of this epic collection of songs: “The arrangement demonstrates the stark use of contrasting tones and textures – elements Brian used to maximum advantage in designing the instrumental arrangements for *Pet Sounds*”<sup>194</sup>. At its pinnacle, the song *God Only Knows*, which, like the tallest cypress tree in a garden at night, majestically towers over the rest of the record, three voices overlap, each declaring godly love for Thee, and “if we were to freeze any given moment in that vocal tag, we’d likely hear a major-minor chord”<sup>195</sup>, serving as an example of this blend

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<sup>187</sup> Listen to Massive Attack’s *Protection on Protection*, Circa (1994).

<sup>188</sup> See Tony Law’s *The Smiths: Not Like Any Other Love*, BBC Arts & Culture (May 14, 2013), retrieved from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/0/22442676>.

<sup>189</sup> See the Apple Music note accompanying the Smith’s *Hatful of Hollow*, Rough Trade (1984).

<sup>190</sup> See the description of Cocteau Twins’ record *The Pink Opaque*, 4AD (1986) on Apple Music (2017).

<sup>191</sup> See the comment by Chuck Campbell on the song *Evangeline* by Cocteau Twins in the Wikipedia article on this song retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangeline\\_\(song\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangeline_(song)) (1993).

<sup>192</sup> See the Apple Music description of Phoebe Bridgers’ *Punisher*, Dead Oceans (2020).

<sup>193</sup> See Charles L. Granata’s *Wouldn’t It Be Nice: Brian Wilson and the Making of the Beach Boys’ Pet Sounds*, Chicago Review Press, Chicago, IL (2003), pp. 235.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 177.

of elating and saddening within a single aural pot. Pyramid Song by Radiohead<sup>196</sup> is another example we may pick from the endless catalogue of modern music that fills the listener with twinkly speckles of fear and sparkles of joyous stars at the same time. It plunges the listener into an amnesiac sea of meditative blankness and yet lets the antique archetypical memories astoundingly emerge on the surface of her mind like mermaids and pearls from the mysterious depths of the ocean of her mind. With its medley of staggering fear and uplifting love, it never fails to impel myself to reminisce and feel in the air the first feelings of swimming in the sea of my mother's womb, as if hearing the quarrels over whether the pregnancy should be aborted and I given a lethal dose of table salt or I should be born and loved the way I would turn out to be, while I kicked and tumbled inside, making prenatal summersaults in celebration of life and love for all things the way they are. That I would appear in the sunlight in the year of the Dragon and at the strike of noon, with the Sun at its highest, and that I would find myself 38 years later standing on the staircase of the Confucius Temple in Taipei, leaning tenderly on its front columns with fiery dragons on top, listening to a casual trio play Taiwanese folk songs and hearing in them for the first time a concoction of peacefulness and neutrality of their Oriental pentatonic predecessors and of the seedlings of Fado melancholy left behind the Portuguese mariners in their longing for this "beautiful island"<sup>197</sup>, though sweetened with mariachi riffs and son-style harmonic transitions, recognizing in it a perfect combination of meditative slowness and empathic dynamism, glimpsing the goddesses of the Way of Love reflected therein and then beginning to spin in circles in the autumn rain on a 38-hour long Sunday on which I'd come to write these words, longer than this unending sentence, stretching far beyond the space occupied by these letters, was beyond even the wildest dreams of the unborn spirit of mine as it swam in the celestial ocean of my mother's womb. The road inside, toward the inner source of beautiful being in the world, and the road outside, toward merging of one with another, disappearing in bliss and becoming all that is, becomes open on the wings of such music in which absorbed placidity and eruptive emotionality are combined to just about the same degree. "The very best thing for you is not to be born, not to exist, to be Nothing", Silenus said to King Midas in Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*, while at another place the German poet and philosopher, who had deemed himself "no man, but a dynamite"<sup>198</sup>, talked of the need for the man to transcend the man and become the superman<sup>199</sup>, and so has the most inspiring music in my universe of thought carried sunrises of blissful births and sunsets of dying in beauty merged in it to the point of not knowing anymore where one begins and the other ends. As for Salem's song that opens the record on the cover of which a white cross rests, a neat symbol of the dialectical nature of all transcendent pieces of art highlighted herein, with giving a sense of timeless beauty to the song by tearing apart what would have appeared as a clichéd and lackluster choral tune, it has neatly demonstrated how sometimes sentient destruction can be a key to brilliant construction in this world wherein dying and being born are inextricably entwined. It is as if letting sounds turn into a dizzying breakdown-buildup cycle turning into itself, all at once, giving out an impression of fixedly glued ingredients of our mind collapsing and rearranging into something more wonderful and enchanting, has been the artistic purpose from which the tones of this and similar songs have

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<sup>196</sup> Listen to Radiohead's Pyramid Song on Amnesiac, Parlophone (2001).

<sup>197</sup> The Portuguese named the island of Taiwan *Ilha Formosa*, meaning A Beautiful Island, upon sailing by it in 1544.

<sup>198</sup> See Friedrich Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One is*, Translated by R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin, New York, NY (1888).

<sup>199</sup> See Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, translated by Thomas Common, retrieved from [eserver.org/philosophy/nietzsche-zarathustra.txt](http://eserver.org/philosophy/nietzsche-zarathustra.txt) (1883).

arisen. A plenty of contemporary musicians, from Stay+ to Tom Krell to Burial, have adopted a similarly deconstructive approach to remixing ordinarily bright and cheerful pop songs into ghosted layers of trippy, viscous, murky and shadowy sounds permeated with bristling falsettos and mournful sighs, turning overly clichéd and predictable expressions into catchier and more captivating songs. In the minimalistic spirit of pop art, these and other artists on the same line tend to distill the limitless spectrum of moving sounds recorded by humanity into a bittersweet tonic, a nectar quick sips from which are in this ultramodern age just about enough to produce starry sparkles of miniscule enlightenments in the listeners' heads. As such, together with King Night, they remind us of how encounters of opposites, such as building emotional towers in the listener's mind while simultaneously yielding an impression of their being crushed and crumbled, or launching things up in Wonder but softly bringing them down in Love at the same time, hold the magical recipe for attaining the most sublime peaks of artistic and spiritual creativity. Quite along this line of thought, the thrilling song What Else is There<sup>200</sup> combines Royksopp's spacey synthesizer sounds and soft drumbeats that have an uplifting effect on the listener with the melancholic and downing Karin Andersson's voice, as if dragging the listener in both directions, sublimely up and depressingly down, producing an enchanting multidimensional and mind-opening effect thereby. Another landmark aural site wherein the strong cohesion between the deepest emotional downs and the most elated emotional highs could be sensed lies impressed in the grooves of Big Star's record Third a.k.a. Sister Lovers, explaining why a Rolling Stone critic said that "to listen to it is to be plunged into a maelstrom of conflicting emotions"<sup>201</sup>. In fact, when a Pitchfork Media journalist, Jeremy Gordon described A Sunny Day in Glasgow's song In Love With Useless (The Timeless Geometry in the Tradition of Passing) as "the stuff Buddhist koans are made of: a song that conveys both weight and weightlessness, floating like a butterfly while punching like a prizefighter"<sup>202</sup>, I wondered if he was aware that the exact same description could apply to most tunes that profoundly exalt the spirits of contemporary youths. For, just like gravity and grace were combined in Simone Weil's vision of the Universe<sup>203</sup> and like apologetic graveness and lighthearted elatedness are blended in every word and gesture of my amiable Mom, so are some of the most impressive tunes of the modern music built around heavy downward drags into the dark wells of deep depression, while at the same time lifting the listeners up into the air by the lightness of their angelically touching the empyreal side of the emotional palette of our beings. And if the former Serbian prime minister, Zoran Đinđić was correct when he said that "Serbs are cheerful folks, who also cherish pessimism because they regard it as solemn and noble"<sup>204</sup>, evoking the unique habit of Serbian people to sing the songs of joy with faces appearing as if they are in pain and would burst in tears at any time, then my compatriots and I may be intrinsically predisposed to find solace at these points of intersection of diametrically opposite influences in arts and beyond. Commonly declared by the critics as the best Yugoslav record, *Odbrana i poslednji dani* by *Idoli*, for

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<sup>200</sup> Listen to Royksopp's What Else is There? on The Understanding, Wall of Sound (2005).

<sup>201</sup> See Parke Putterbaugh's Third: Sister Lovers, *The Rolling Stone* (March 19, 1992), retrieved from <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/albumreviews/third-sister-lovers-19920319>.

<sup>202</sup> See Pitchfork Media's The Year in Music 2014: The 100 Best Tracks at <http://pitchfork.com/features/staff-lists/9555-the-100-best-tracks-of-2014/3/> (2015).

<sup>203</sup> See Simone Weil's Gravity and Grace, Routledge, London, UK (1942).

<sup>204</sup> See Slaviša Stepanović's Kad svi dignu ruke, *Večernje novosti* (March 19, 2005), retrieved from <http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/drustvo/aktuelno.290.html:167834-Kad-svi-dignu-ruke>.

example, owes its strength, according to the band members<sup>205</sup>, to being “*ni na nebu ni na zemlju*”, that is, “neither in the sky nor on the earth”, as the traditional Serbian proverb goes, combining “Saint Sava’s gentle hand and pubes lux”<sup>206</sup>, along with other seemingly disparate spiritual and secular themes. However, rarely ever is this juxtaposition of a downward drag into depths of depression and an elated opening of the heart to the endless beauty of the Universe as pronounced in the classical realm as in the music of Gustav Mahler, widely praised for it s immaculately embodying a blend of seemingly not combinable musical elements, such as “the intimacy of solo songs and the grandiosity of symphonic music, a sublime musical language with the simplicity of folk melodies”<sup>207</sup>, or the tempestuous anger of gods and the holy clemency of motherly lullabies, evoking distantly “guns buried in flowers”<sup>208</sup> that Robert Schumann heard in Chopin’s etudes and nocturnes, or the merged spirits of sunrises and sunsets of human lifetimes, awakening a point where beginnings and ends of our exploring melt into one and where enlightening T. S. Eliot’s “knowing the place for the first time”, the utmost instance of cosmic wonder, becomes magically sparked inside of the aural sphere of the listener’s mind. His Ninth Symphony, for example, possesses a sundry of such entwinements of mutually antipodal emotions, be it the alternation of the sublime syncopated theme that opens the first movement and the antithetic, dark, loud and gloomy one, all until they merge into one at about four-fifths of its course, or the ballroom *ländler* suggestive of romance intercepted with cavalry-like sounds evocative of battleship in the second movement, or the third movement that begins with an elfish leap of curiosity and then allows the downward drag of stringency to be blown into it, or the fourth, final movement wherein the *esterbend* flows of eternity-evoking tranquility clash with the climactic rises into impassionate heights, that is, with the “rage, rage against the dying of the light”, as Dylan Thomas put it in one of his poems. As another example, the third and last stanza of his song *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen* is orchestrated so that it sinks into an abiding quietness and placidity<sup>209</sup> in synchrony with the singing voice delivering a triumphant punch line that lifts the song from the abysses of a sense of permanent loss and an eternal inability to find one’s way to a sudden arrival at the doorsteps of heavenly happiness and the way that leads to the light at the end of the tunnel, outside of the gloomy cave of outshined reason. This insight reminds us that the modern pop song form<sup>210</sup> offers innumerable opportunities for such dialectical confluences of auditory associations where lyrics would pull the listener one way, while the music exerts a push in an antithetic direction, producing a dazzling flash of

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<sup>205</sup> See the interview with Srđan Šaper: O Divljanu, Krstiću i „odbrani“, Blic (May 17, 2018), retrieved from <https://www.blic.rs/kultura/vesti/saperova-prica-o-idolima-o-divljanu-krsticu-i-odbrani/z2qd3q2>.

<sup>206</sup> Listen to Idoli’s Kenozoik on Odbrana i poslednji dani, Jugoton (1982).

<sup>207</sup> The description of Gustav Mahler’s Symphony of a Thousand given on the occasion of its upcoming performance in Belgrade’s Sava Center, July 26, 2012.

<sup>208</sup> See Ted Libbey’s The NPR Guide to Building a Classical CD Collection, Workman Publishing, New York, NY (1999), pp. 235.

<sup>209</sup> *Gänzlich ersterbend*, translatable as “dying away completely”, is the phrase Mahler used to describe such eloquent sinking in sound, which he tended to couple with rapturous cries for love and beauty, as in the ending of *Das Lied von der Ende*, one of the most moving musical pieces ever composed, in my opinion, as well as during the very finale of the Ninth Symphony.

<sup>210</sup> The traditional challenge for a pop song has been to convey both a profound message with its lyrics and a moving energy on the wings of its waves of pressure that journey through the air and heal or harm all things and souls that they crash into. Yet, just as stereo vision, seeing in depth, arises due to the overlap of perceptual signals from a pair of eyes, so do some of the most important qualities of a vocal pop song appear along the intersection of the emotional and visionary spaces lanced by the song’s lyrics and those co-created (in togetherness with the listener) by its tonal harmonies.

enlightenment in the listener's head and oftentimes leading him to comment along a similar line of thought as that shared by an anonymous person on Portishead's *Roads*<sup>211</sup>: "This is the type of song you want to cry to, to kiss to, to make love to, and slice your wrists too all at the same time; so many emotions in this song"<sup>212</sup>. As for Mahler's *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen*, it naturally invited a music critic to notice how "a divinely serene and deeply sad melody runs throughout, at which you will both smile and weep"<sup>213</sup>. For, although antithetic clashes of opposites *per se* are, remember, no guarantee for successful artistic endeavors, the witty stylishness of this blend, on which the artistic quality of the overall piece will come to depend, rarely turns out to be a failure when these two angelic states of mind, cosmic joy and compassionate sadness, are fused together in our expressions, whatever they may be. Hence, when Mahler paid his only visit to Sigmund Freud in Holland during the last year of his life, the famous psychotherapist concluded that the composer's thirst to produce "the conjunction of high tragedy and light amusement (was the reason) why his music has always been prevented from achieving the highest rank through the noblest passages, those inspired by the most profound emotions being spoiled by intrusion of some commonplace melody"<sup>214</sup>. On a different note, other critics have found exactly this "juxtaposition of profundity and apparent banality one of the things that makes Mahler so fascinating"<sup>215</sup>. If you listen, for example, to the famous *Trauermarsch*, the opening movement of Mahler's Fifth Symphony, sounding as if Eshu, himself, the deity of crossroads, composed it right after he had made his famous walk through a village wearing a hat that was white on one side and black on the other, causing the villagers to engage in a fiery quarrel over what color the hat really was, wishing to teach them that even the diametrically opposite insights can be both truthful at the same time, you would have a hard time deciding whether the march was triumphant or a funeral one or draw the line where the optimistic gazes upward, into the heavens end and the downward looks of deep depression, into the darkest existential abysses begin and *vice versa*. The composers of national anthems have leant their ears on to aural walls built from a similar amalgam of tear-jerking feelings that evoke suffering of heroically sacrificial spirits and bright and elated optimism that borders pure playfulness. In the most successful cases, the example of which could be the French anthem, *La Marseillaise*, yielded was the impression of levitating in the thin air between pathos and heavenly lightness, somewhat like Icarus during the successful part of his journey between the Sun and the sea, that is, prior to his approaching the former too close and letting it melt the wax off his wings, resulting in his plummeting into the sea, the fall from grace that still carries an immensely valuable message of warning to all those who would wish to erase the element of graveness from their artistic creations made to inspire the masses on the account of accentuating merely their jolly and uplifting features. The music of yet another exponent of the spirit of Romanticism in music, Felix Mendelssohn was widely criticized exactly because of one such neglect of the emotionality and spiritual voids into which it inevitably drags those enwrapped in its heavenly quilt on the account of an overemphasis on light fancifulness<sup>216</sup>. The most admired

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<sup>211</sup> Listen to Portishead's *Roads* on Dummy, Go! Beat (1994).

<sup>212</sup> See the comment by punkarchy1 on [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQYsGWh\\_vpE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQYsGWh_vpE) (2011).

<sup>213</sup> See Stephen E. Heffing's *Aspects of Mahler's Late Style*, In: *Mahler and His World*, edited by Karen Painter, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (2002), pp. 202.

<sup>214</sup> See Stephen Johnson's *Mahler: His Life & Music*, Sourcebooks MediaFusion, Naperville, IL (2007), pp. 181.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 182.

<sup>216</sup> See Friedrich Niecks' *On Mendelssohn and Some of His Contemporary Critics*, In: *Mendelssohn and His World*, edited by R. Larry Todd, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (1991), pp. 384. If I had to pick a single composer who would epitomize the diametrically opposite case, that is, a complete absence of fancifulness on the

traits of his musical work came from the subtle blends of the sprightly and the gloomy, the vivacious and the grave, though only in rare moments nearly as intricate and moving as those accomplished by his predecessor and the gold standard for what Romantic music should sound like: Ludwig van Beethoven. One of the typical juxtapositions of contrasts in Mendelssohn's music came from the composer's habit of placing a tranquil terminus at the end of heroic phrases, as exemplified by *Andante* and *Rondo Capriccioso*, Op.14, where not only is the first and the slower segment of the piece composed in the major E key, while the faster one proceeds in the minor E key<sup>217</sup>, when the other way around would have been naturally expected, but the slower of the two phrases comprising the melody from the intro ends with a crescendo, while the more energetic one ends tranquillo. This counterintuitive reversal of the sentiments may have paved way for the famous reversal of the theme in the first movement of his last orchestral work, the *Violin Concerto in E minor*, Op.64, played by the violin at the beginning and by the orchestra at the end, leaving the violin busy filling fast the lines initially played by the orchestra and suggesting what may happen to an artist who brings something truly original to the world at the dawn of his career: the world will have absorbed his message by the end of his life, if not beginning to sing his melodies conspicuously, while the artist, himself, has been driven mad. Additionally, the transition from the soft melody of the opening of *Andante Capriccioso* in E major to a dramatic C major passage followed by a climactic return to E major is such that the diminished sevenths are left as remnants of this transitory passage, darkening the otherwise bright mood of the major key. This brings us to another element from the repertoire of Mendelssohn's artistic mastery, which is the imposition of contrasting countermelodies, be they the elating passages that intercept the ominous melodic flow of the Beethovenian second movement of the *Italian symphony*, the countermelody played by the cellos against the main theme upon its reiteration towards the end of the somber first movement of the *Scottish symphony*, or the bassoon-colored part accompanied by a "marvelous chromatic descent"<sup>218</sup> appearing twice, suddenly, in the course of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* overture, three minutes into the opening and three minutes before its tranquil ending that symbolically takes the listener back to the beginnings. In fact, compared to the modern music for the masses, whose emphasis on sheer entertainment makes it akin to drugs that stop the symptoms of depression for a while, but then restore them with many times higher intensity when the music subsides, the classical music has rarely ever been the display of one-sided emotions. Usually, if there is ecstasy, there is also a grain of doubt peeking from the back; if there is flow, there is also restraint on the edges; if there is fright, there is usually, but not always, a flicker of hope hearable in the distance or sometimes making its way to the forefront of the soundscape; and so on. Intrinsic to the classical sound, this juxtaposition of a variety of emotions, naturally streaming through the human spirit in togetherness, creating harmonies that stupefy and bedazzle, that hinder or move, helps the listener rebalance his versatile emotional makeup and become a whole, healthy and sapient human being.

Be that as it may, we should always keep in mind that despite my celebration of dialectics in music with these very lines, it is not the nature of opposites juxtaposed in the artistic domain that ensures the inspirational potency of the resulting work; rather, it is the subtleness of their

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account of emphasizing emotion and emotion only, it would be Robert Schumann, historically the greatest defender of the musical style and accomplishments of Felix Mendelssohn.

<sup>217</sup> See Philip Radcliffe's *Mendelssohn*, Collier Books, New York, NY (1954), pp. 164 - 165.

<sup>218</sup> See Claudio Spies' *Samplings*, In: *Mendelssohn and His World*, edited by R. Larry Todd, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (1991), pp. 101.

intertwinement that hides the key to success. That is, as ever before, *what* we do and *how* we do it can be said to matter equally when it comes to producing a thrilling piece of art. Still, the welding of joy and sorrow has ever since stood forth as the greatest ideal to be grasped and brought down to earth to the visionary artistic minds. Dedication to immingling (a) the feelings of melancholy born through compassion with human life stories, each one of which is tragic in its own way, and (b) outpours of happiness, as if our soul is a child whose whole world is a sunny smile of the Divine that holds us like droplets of water on the lotus flower of reality and who teaches us to awaken the same love and care in our own endeavors and attitude, and yielding fantastic blends thereof, as captivating as the sky painted by Francesco Guardi over the church of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice, simultaneously bright and gloomy, radiant and somber, can be thus said to have flown through the veins and excited the aesthetic senses of innumerable artistic minds that have inhabited this world. From the image of a god carved as the crown of the Gateway of the Sun at the archeological site of Tiahuanaco, in the vicinity of Lake Titicaca, the presumed runway for spaceships of extraterrestrial origin in the heads of many believers in ETs being diffused among us<sup>219</sup>, with the sunrays of celestial happiness radiating from it and two immense teardrops hewed out in its stony cheeks, to the frescoes of the Holy Mother decorating the walls of Orthodox Christian monasteries, with both an infinitely saddening compassionateness and heavenly joy emanating from her facial expressions and postures, to Keith Haring's Life of Christ, the off-the-wall altarpiece in the Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, showing festively dancing figurines shining with happiness alongside heart-shaped balloons melting into tears, the most sublime pieces of art findable on this planet Earth have pointed at the fusion of sadness and joy as the emotive ladder along which the earthly ascend to become the Divine. And if you have ever wondered why the contemporary British pop music has had a far greater ability to truly touch human hearts than the American one (with notably rare exceptions, of course), you can find the clue in the starry twinkles flashing in the eyes that sympathize with the former, Britpop sound, undoubtedly sparked by the magic blend of petulant melancholy and boyish exuberance found in it, a concoction that is largely foreign to the traditional American lineage of insistence on lollipop amusement, fun and more fun, pervasive since the early days of polka, ragtime and jazz to this very day, taking a big fat toll on the moving potential of music crafted on this continent, unprecedented in the performance precision, arrangement professionalism and sound quality and yet deprived of the aesthetic essence, all due to following the linear emotional path and avoiding exciting dialectical confluences described here at all costs. Yet, "I wanted everything to be a contradiction: the pants baggy, the coat tight, the hat small and the shoes large"<sup>220</sup>, says Charlie Chaplin in his autobiography in an attempt to reveal the creative process behind conceiving the most memorable character in the history of cinema: the Little Tramp. Indeed, looked at from any given angle, this brilliant character, "the greatest of all"<sup>221</sup>, as Jean-Luc Godard, yet another devoted flirt with counterpoints<sup>222</sup>, called him, a tramp and yet a gentleman, as others might notice, reveals a face that is a concoction of opposites, be it agility and sloppiness, elegance and raggedness, dreaminess that touches the clouds and destituteness that rolls in the dust, ingenuity and sweet slow-wittedness, narcissism and selflessness, naturalness and awkwardness, panicky perplexity and lighthearted courage, or,

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<sup>219</sup> See Alan and Sally Landsburg's *In Search of Ancient Mysteries – Did Man Begin on Earth, or Was He Sent Here from Other Worlds?*, Bantam Books, New York, NY (1974).

<sup>220</sup> See Charlie Chaplin's *My Autobiography*, Penguin, London, UK (1964).

<sup>221</sup> See Godard on Godard, edited by Jean Narboni and Tom Milne, Da Capo Press, New York, NY (1968), pp. 202.

<sup>222</sup> Watch *The Image Book* directed by Jean-Luc Godard (2018).

more than anything, joy and sadness, that is, an ability to bring on both a knee-slapping laughter and tears of compassionateness to the watchers. “Charlie is his own Don Quixote and his own Sancho Panza, a knight and a knave, a fool both damned and divine”<sup>223</sup>, are only some of the words of film critics who raved over the ambivalent nature of Chaplin’s characters. Looking at his wobbly walk as an epitome of the beauty of uncertainties as the essence of all angelic in us, I am made to recall the adage that free-spirited Susan repeatedly utters to Dr. David’s ears in Howard Hawks’ classic, *Bringing Up Baby*, “Love impulse reveals itself as a conflict”, internally and behaviorally, handing us the secret behind the choreographic authenticity of the Little Tramp, clumsy yet lovable, and prompting us to envision every profound emotion arising in us, Love, the greatest of them all, included, as nothing but a cross to be born. It should, therefore, not surprise us when we hear a parent refer to the following contradictory feelings arising in him in the wake of his awakening the strongest of all loves, the love for a child, deep inside his heart: “Fatherhood has made me more of a person. I’m happier than I’ve ever been, and sadder. I’m more aware of the moment and more anxious for the future. I’m angrier and more content. I’m more patient and more frustrated, much more mentally stimulated and a lot more bored. It’s a very long shopping list of contradictory emotions often experienced simultaneously”<sup>224</sup>. Yet another famous comic character who illuminated the cinematic realm with his spirited appearance, Jacques Tati, whose *Monsieur Hulot* has been considered a body language antipode to the Little Tramp, for unlike the latter, who would lean backwards during his trademarked ducky walk and jerkily stomp the ground with his heels, the springy glide of Mr. Hulot proceeded by his leaning forward while walking almost on tiptoes as well as not in long trousers, but in overly short pants<sup>225</sup>, can be said to have owed success to his ability to couple complete gestural opposites in his captivating pantomime: courageous curiosity and concerned timidity, elegant bodily fluidity and a whole lot of clumsiness, “anything goes” nonchalance and meticulous attention to detail, being insubordinate and yet apologetically polite, careless and careworn, and so forth. Yet, despite his success in interlacing an ordinary slapstick with the threads of a delicate sentiment and creating deeply aesthetical cinematic embroidery thereby, I often find myself in agreement with George Bernard Shaw who claimed that the art of cinema has produced a single authentic genius in a bit more than a century of its existence: Charlie Chaplin. In fact, occasionally, when I am being asked to name three of my most favorite movies, depending on the situation, I may recite, “*City Lights*, *Modern Times*, *The Great Dictator*”, all of which were starred in by Chaplin and the first two of which were stories of the Little Tramp, the cinematic character that serves as the greatest symbol of blended joy and sadness in the realm of animated arts, having prompted millions of hearts to leap with emotional excitement that Irène Jacob transfused to words when she astoundingly exclaimed, “Chaplin’s films took my heart; they made me laugh and cry and awakened me to my feelings”. That Chaplin’s cinematic visions arose from a belief that angelic eyes are able to recognize smiles and tears mingled in each and every detail of reality prove his following words: “Life is a tragedy when seen in close-up, but a comedy in a long-shot”<sup>226</sup>. The Italian comedian, Roberto Benigni correspondingly observed that “to laugh and to cry comes from the same point of the soul... the crux of the matter is to reach beauty, poetry, (and) it doesn't matter if that is comedy or tragedy; they're the same if you reach

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<sup>223</sup> See Andrew Sarris’ *The Most Harmonious Comedian*, In: *The Essential Chaplin: Perspectives on the Life and Art of the Great Comedian*, edited by Richard Schickel, Ivan R. Dee, Chicago, IL (2006), pp. 56.

<sup>224</sup> See Andi Watson’s *Little Star*, Oni Press, Portland, OR (2006), pp. 147 - 148.

<sup>225</sup> See David Bellos’ *Jacques Tati: His Life and Art*, The Harvill Press, London, UK (1999), pp. 169-170.

<sup>226</sup> *Watch My Dad is 100 Years Old*, a movie about Roberto Rossellini, directed by Guy Maddin (2006).

the beauty”<sup>227</sup>, having used his art as a means of building tragicomedy trails, the travelers on which would laugh and cry at the same time, thus engaging in an act that is genuinely “God-like”<sup>228</sup> in nature. The Serbian folk wisdom emerging from the Romani singer, Džej’s advice “not to trust people who do not cry because they cannot smile either”<sup>229</sup> does not stray far from these semantic grounds, as it insinuates that the more we cry in life, the more smiles there will be for our soul to rejoice in too. Having known that “none yet e’er drank a honey’d draught unmixed with cup of bitter gall, and cup of gall for honey equally doth call, that so, the mixture one may easier drink”<sup>230</sup>, and that joy is best absorbed after compassionate sadness has softened our senses, or, as Kahlil Gibran phrased it, “The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain”<sup>231</sup>, the Little Tramp adeptly used tragedy to augment the comicality and the other way around. And with joy and sadness being so tightly entwined at the profoundest level of our being, as if telling us that one without another cannot be sustained in us, the trick we could always use to make the audience cry more is to infuse the tragic elements of our storytelling with a little bit of comicality, whereas making the listeners laugh so sweetly and affably is best done when compassion and cordiality are sparked in their hearts through sympathizing with tragedies that human lives so often turn to. Thus, let it not surprise you when you hear comical and heartrending musical scores alternating with one another, as, for example, in Charlie Kaufman’s directorial debut, *Synecdoche, New York* or in Jill Bolte Taylor’s seminal TED talk, *My Stroke of Insight*<sup>232</sup>. Now, when I listen to Astrud Gilberto sing about watching the statue of the Christ on top of Corcovado from an open window of her room, wistfully and musingly, under the tranquil blanket of stars<sup>233</sup>, the ET antennas of my ears receive the same reminder that the expressions of carnival joy not embedded in the silent sadness of the heart do not comprise the way to touch the blue skies of genuine happiness in life. I still remember the first day of a mid-90s spring when I, an anti-Samson of one and only kind, sitting on her balcony, holding a gorgeous eucalyptus tree in view and having my hair cut by her frail hands, heard *Girl From Ipanema* sung by João and Astrud Gilberto and accompanied by Stan Getz on sax for the very first time; that the magic of the moment when soft Portuguese words were sent in the air from a dusty old gramophone like a ghostly carpet to lift me up to elevated vistas of the mind, from which I could glimpse the sunrays of divinity emanating from this unaffected cocktail of joy and sadness, was shared by other earthlings attest the concordant feelings experienced by an Astrud’s devotee upon hearing her voice for the first time: “That voice, that song, that tune. As soon as I heard it, something happened to me, something so plainly spiritual that it feels funny to say it. I transcended space and time and reality and my problems and cares, and got ejector-seat launched straight into a place no drug or God or pleasure of the flesh has

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<sup>227</sup> See Brian Logan’s *Does this man really think the Holocaust was a big joke?* *The Guardian* (January 29, 1999), retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/1999/jan/29/awardsandprizes>.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>229</sup> See Luna Lu’s *Dorcolizmi, Nova* (December 13, 2020), retrieved from <https://nova.rs/kolumne/pise-luna-lu-dorcolizmi/>.

<sup>230</sup> See Petar Petrovich Nyegosh’s *The Mountain Wreath*, rendered into English by James W. Wiles, George Allen & Unwin, London, UK (1846).

<sup>231</sup> See Kahlil Gibran’s *The Prophet*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY (1923).

<sup>232</sup> Watch Jill Bolte Taylor’s *My Stroke of Insight*, TED Talk, Monterey, CA (February 2008), available at [http://blog.ted.com/2008/03/12/jill\\_bolte\\_tayl/](http://blog.ted.com/2008/03/12/jill_bolte_tayl/).

<sup>233</sup> Listen to *Corcovado (Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars)* on the epic record by Stan Getz and João Gilberto, recorded in 1963 and released by Verve in 1964.

ever delivered me”<sup>234</sup>. The thrilling luster of the song, of course, springs from the musicians’ and Astrud’s own confronting a very rhythmic and lively tune with soft melancholy resembling autumn leaves softly falling to the ground or sea waves shimmering and splashing with quiet joy over a pebbly coast on a summer afternoon. Along the same thread of thought, when Yim Yames of My Morning Jacket, a rock band from Louisville, KY that has done a great favor to the American country sound by rejuvenating it and enabling its escape from the lackluster birdhouse it is caged in with the psychedelic mellowness that they infused it with, sings about a knot coming loose inside one’s heart<sup>235</sup>, in the distance one could hear a joyful melody played by the piano confronting a sad, sad voice, distantly evoking “the honky-tonk sounding tack piano buried deep within the ‘sometimes I feel very sad’ theme”<sup>236</sup> in the lamenting tune from the Beach Boys’ Pet Sounds, I Just Wasn’t Made For These Times, hereby descending note by note on the scale and exemplifying one such encounter of contrasting emotions: disheartening sadness on one side, blissful joy on the other. Remotely, this pairing of (a) the saddening downward glide of the vocalized notes on the scale and (b) the jollily hoppy piano melody calls to mind the Kooks’ See the Sun and the miniscule magical moment in it when the vocalist utters “I see the sun rising but all you see is its fall, fall, fall”<sup>237</sup>, with every subsequent “down” being sung at a lower pitch while the song simultaneously transitions into a mini-climax, prompting us to consider each musical masterstroke as essentially a crossroad whereby various ups and downs or lefts and rights are being synchronously invoked. Depression and elation strived to be concocted in the music of the Stone Roses too, and the band saw the blend of bubblegum pop softness and punk rock hardness as one the progenies of this marriage between ups and downs, the reason for which they had settled on “stone roses” in search of a name for both themselves and their eponymous debut record, commenting years later that it “doesn’t mean anything, it’s hard and soft, which is sort of what we are”<sup>238</sup>. The oeuvre of Steve Reich reached glistening heights at the moment when he managed to combine the sheer rhythmic splendor that he accentuated over years, quite spiritually deadening *per se*, with its dialectical opposite in terms of melodious ejaculations of emotions, producing blends of evocations of profoundly painful sadness and childish squeaks of satisfaction and happiness thereby, as in his Octet or Music for 18 Musicians. Radiohead’s No Surprises<sup>239</sup> consists of Thom Yorke’s sad and weary singing superimposed on top of joyous twinkles of the lead guitar and light rocking of the boat of harmonies left and right, similarly producing a magical blend of jumpy joyousness and dispirited melancholy, which prompted an anonymous online commenter to conclude how “this song is so great: it is sad when I am sad and happy when I am happy”<sup>240</sup>. If one leans one’s ears and heart even closer to the rocking boat of emotions that this song is, swinging freely between the moods of elatedness and dispiritedness, one may not be able to tell if its harmonic base rolls lazily through a single chord, modally, or

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<sup>234</sup> See Joey Sweeney’s Desperately Seeking Astrud Gilberto, *Philadelphia Weekly* (June 5, 2002), available at [http://www.philadelphiaweekly.com/news-and-opinion/cover-story/desperately\\_seeking\\_astrud\\_gilberto-38350599.html](http://www.philadelphiaweekly.com/news-and-opinion/cover-story/desperately_seeking_astrud_gilberto-38350599.html).

<sup>235</sup> Listen to My Morning Jacket’s Knot Comes Loose on Z, ATO (2005).

<sup>236</sup> See Charles L. Granata’s Wouldn’t It Be Nice: Brian Wilson and the Making of the Beach Boys’ Pet Sounds, Chicago Review Press, Chicago, IL (2003), pp. 128-129.

<sup>237</sup> Listen to the Kooks’ See the Sun on Konk, Virgin, UK (2008). Wayne Coyne similarly sang of those who “see the sun go down but they don’t see it rise” at the aural pinnacle of Flaming Lips’ record At War with the Mystics, Warner Bros (2006).

<sup>238</sup> See Simon Spence’s The Stone Roses: War and Peace, St. Martin’s Griffin, New York, NY (2012), pp. 40.

<sup>239</sup> Listen to Radiohead’s No Surprises on OK Computer, Parlophone (1997).

<sup>240</sup> See the comment by ninjakitty88 on an unplugged version of No Surprises played by Radiohead and available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uI9X-WXTBfE> (2006).

flows through a standard progression thereof or both, a harmonic effect that lies at the core of the song's schismatic blend of monotonousness and movingness, directly contributing to concocting the cocktail of melancholy and merriment in its aural content. Like John Keats, crying "O Melancholy, linger here awhile"<sup>241</sup> one moment and "O Melancholy, turn thine eyes away"<sup>242</sup> another moment in his elegy on the death of Isabella, or the Pot of Basil, alternately embracing and shunning sadness and making way in and out for the light of joy inside his and the reader's mind, producing a sense of holy bedazzlement thereby, so does this song sway one's boats on the sea of melancholy, under the starry sky of joy, creating a narrow, but infinitely lasting pathway to beauty that is truth and truth that is beauty, as the English poet deemed it in his Ode on a Grecian Urn. One such concoction of cosmic joy and heavenly sadness, the former springing from the sparkly astonishment arisen in my eyes by realizing the miraculous nature of the divine creativeness inscribed in every detail of our experiential reality, which palpitates with the rhythms divine, be it alive or inanimate, and the latter driven by compassionate unison with the eyes of another, reflecting the meeting of Wonder and Love that I have extensively written about, has stood forth as my ideal in composing music, composing which has ever since been done in partly preconceived and partly improvisational manner, rendering my musical works to be creative pieces of me and Nature together, as is otherwise in concert with the co-creational thesis which stands as pillars of the foundations of my philosophical worldviews, and as keeps on rolling, endlessly, just as this sentence, in my desire to tell it all to the world, to grasp it all, the wondrousness of the most distant stars and the beauty of what is right here, right now, inscribed in the smallest details of the Universe, and deliver it devotedly on the palms of my hands to you. In one of the songs that spreads like a monument through my complete oeuvre, a monument not static and statuesque, but playfully rolling on the ground and leaping in joy and ecstasy, *The Way*, the rhythm guitar plays a part that evokes a train elatedly rolling through the air, but is accompanied by a tremolo of the lead guitar that is lapsing by milliseconds, thus giving an impression of gently slowing down this resolute train ride of one by wrapping arms around one's shoulders and inviting one to spin around, like a ballerina, producing a dichotomy that is captivating for the listener. Via this being late, like the maracas in Phil Spector's and the Ronettes' *Be My Baby* or Erroll Garner's famous right hand, an impression of lingering on the past impressions, as if being so much in love with the rest of the orchestra and the world around one that one wants to go back to hug them all and stay with them forever, paying no heed anymore to one's own slipping behind and being reprimanded for that by the conventional audiences, for love is always such: it trips and blunders, being labeled but as an error in this world, albeit the most graceful of them all. A walk that is wobbly, trippy and sloppy, whereby one stumbles every once in a while and yet always finds one's way through, being in rhythm of the song only when the glistening Ab-E-Ab-E-Ab-E part is played, is evoked by this tremolo that, I remember, stylistically appeared almost greater than life when I first conceived in it my head. Alternately losing the beat a bit, falling off the line of rhythm and yet finding the way back, on the accord of my own heart, resulted in a unique blend of precision and imprecision, intentional and yet natural, a gingerly and bungling tonal walk resembling a spiral in its streaming forward while incessantly drifting rearwards and winding on itself. As such, this tremolo reflects the spiral shape of our galaxy and of each pattern of progress whereby firm and faithful forward streams are always entailed by wondrous and cautious spinning around, making a step backwards every now and again. Without these precious steps away from the direction in

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<sup>241</sup> See John Keats' *Isabella, or the Pot of Basil*, In: *Poems*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY (1821), pp. 148.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 151.

which we are traveling, our sole streaming forward would sooner or later be hindered, as the Little Prince, himself, pointed out by noticing how “by traveling only frontward, one does not travel afar”. The fact that pieces of art that ingrain synergies of emotional forces that drag us in opposite directions appear unexplainably thrilling to us might serve as an evidence of such a nature of progress whereupon we could imagine ourselves standing on the moving train and wistfully looking backwards, while recounting the famous words of Gertrude Stein in our head: “The view is beautiful, but I’d prefer having my back turned to it”. For, like goddesses resting on the pinnacles of the Corinthian pillars at the entrance to the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco, facing away from the enterer and into the heart of the edifice that they protectively oversee, a consciousness that streams forward supersonically, conceiving of the forms of being more advanced than the world has ever seen, always has a part that wistfully looks back, and the same could be said for every utterly inspiring piece of art – it is akin to a glorious crossroad whereon forward and backward directions intersect and fertilize each other. Another female figure I imagine standing on the seat of a roofless, convertible car on a moonless summer night, with the breeze blowing through her hair, emerges from the aural vibe of Bruce Springsteen’s sign-of-the-time piece, *Racing in the Street*, the tune whose charm is intrinsically related to its coupling the slow and deferred drift of the song to a bursting energy that car races of James Dean and other rebels without a cause evoke. It thus appears as if blending qualities that could be seen as antipodes to each other, like Yin and Yang, lying as far from each other as we could imagine them to be apart, but which, together, make up for an immaculate complementary whole, bringing us closer to Gustav Mahler’s idea of art as “ambiguity made a science... a paradise of double meanings”<sup>243</sup> and the aspiration to compose symphonies that would sound “like the world – they must embrace everything”, as if the “whole universe began to ring and resound; there are no longer human voices, but planets and suns revolving”<sup>244</sup>; for, the dialectical nature of the evolution of the world on all of its planes may have subconsciously preconditioned our cognitive apparatuses to be spontaneously enlightened by expressions which combine what seems not combinable at all and which thus have it all, the whole wide world, in them, so to say. “Brains are machines made of conflicting parts... the brain is best understood as a team of rivals”<sup>245</sup>, claims the American neuroscientist, David Eagleman, provoking the thought of naturalness with which sensual impulses composed of dual elements and acting as amalgams of diametrical opposites manage to pass through the protective shell of our mental makeup and touch its deepest and most soulful essence. It could be then that in this world of ours in which the most precious things arise from unions of seemingly irreconcilable opposites, the enlightening transformation of the core of our mind into an ocean wherein versatile streams of influence come together is what is accomplished by the most fabulous pieces of art, which, themselves, epitomize middle Ways celebrated by countless sages all the world over in their being built around the embracement of mutually antipodal sentiments. Try, for one, to tell a most trivial story by fearing to go through contradictions, avoiding conflicting views and following a linear trail instead - your storytelling would be all but captivating, usually on the so-called preachy

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<sup>243</sup> Watch *Death in Venice* directed by Luchino Visconti (1971).

<sup>244</sup> See the Wikipedia article on Gustav Mahler’s Eighth Symphony, the *Symphony of a Thousand*, available at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony\\_No.\\_8\\_\(Mahler\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._8_(Mahler)) (2011), and Stephen E. Hefling’s *Aspects of Mahler’s Late Style*, In: *Mahler and His World*, edited by Karen Painter, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (2002), pp. 199 - 223.

<sup>245</sup> See David Eagleman’s *Incognito: The Secret Lives of the Brain*, Vintage Books, New York, NY (2011), pp. 108-109.

side<sup>246</sup>, able only to frustrate the leader or the listener with its intrinsic arrogance, but not also to engross her in a magical web of words and truly illuminate her inner corridors of thought. Rather, to wonder out loud, to freely contradict oneself and to separate single worldviews into polarized opposites and place them side by side before creating conditions for their blissful unison seems to be a prerequisite for producing enchanting narratives and discourses with bedazzling trains of thought. It is for this reason that I see every truly moving artistic piece and enriching human expression in general as an epitome of Ghiberti's Gates of Paradise whose identical copies now decorate both their original location, the walls of Florence Baptistery, and the front façade of the San Francisco Grace Cathedral on whose steps and in whose shade I spent innumerable hours thinking of how to unlock the secrets of this Universe and arrive at the treasures from which all life could benefit. Namely, the tiny relief sculptures on one wing of this bronze door are perfect antipodes to those on the other, which gives us a reason to believe that only the expressions and states of mind that combine emotions and mental streams that are the complete opposites of one another into an enchanting oneness could give us the glimpse of a Paradise. In light of this insight, Nicholas of Cusa claimed that sheer rationality, irrespective of its richness and intricacy, could never attain vistas of the most supreme knowledge in life and that mixing this logical knowledge with the right dose of its complete opposite in terms of *de docta ignorantia*<sup>247</sup>, a spiritual ignorance, produces an enlightening union of opposites, commonly referred to by alchemists and other mystics in the Middle Ages, and clears the sky of our mind, enabling the ascent of the starships of our attention into cosmically sublime realms of thought. On one, religious side we could first reconsider Franz Rosenzweig's perception of the Christian way as a crossroad at each and every point and Christians as cognitive centers wherein mutually opposing forces intercross and do not annihilate, but interbreed each other<sup>248</sup>. Immediately thereafter, we could bring to mind the symbol of the Christ on the Cross as a metaphor of inspiring artistic pieces as themselves metaphors of the dialectical nature of the progress of human thought and being, which itself, in this endless train of analogies, might be seen as a metaphor of the universal principle recognized by Aristotle in 4<sup>th</sup> Century BC, according to which "harmony is a blend or composition of contraries"<sup>249</sup>. For, as we see, inherent to the most moving pieces of art can is always a cross of a kind, stretching one arm of our spirit in one direction and another arm into its opposite, thus producing a crack inside of the center of our being, onto which our mind will carefully bow itself and from which the rays of divine light will find their way through to fill our body and soul with its refreshing spiritual energy. The latter can be visualized in terms of waves of omnipotent divinity that permeates it all, which the Serbian-American scientist, Nikola Tesla, summed up using the following words: "The Universe has a core from which we gain all the powers, all the inspiration, which attracts us forever, and I feel its power and value that it emits throughout the Universe to keep it in harmony; I have not penetrated to the secrets of this core, but I know that it exists and when I wish to ascribe a material attribute to it, I think of it as of light, while when I try to comprehend it spiritually, I think of it as beauty and grace". Hence, on another, scientific side we could draw a sketch of Nikola Tesla's alternating current motor in the sand, just as he did in a Budapest park in the

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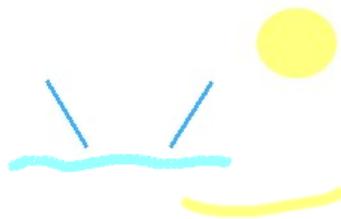
<sup>246</sup> See Graeme Shimmin's What's The Best Way to Start Writing a Great Short Story? *Quora* (December 29, 2013), retrieved from [www.quora.com](http://www.quora.com).

<sup>247</sup> See Nicholas of Cusa on Learned Ignorance, translated by Jasper Hopkins, Minneapolis, MN (1440).

<sup>248</sup> See Béla Hamvas' *Anthologia Humana: 5000 Years of Wisdom*, Dereta, Belgrade, Serbia (1948), pp. 281.

<sup>249</sup> See Aristotle's *On the Soul*, Book I, Part 4, Translated by J. A. Smith, retrieved from <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/soul.1.i.html> (350 BC).

enlightening moment when the idea of it arose in his mind<sup>250</sup>, and call to mind its superiority over direct current power generators, and the fascinating character of these very words, if invoked in the reader, could likewise be seen as caused by their standing between these two main streams of human thought throughout the past millennia, the scientific and the theological one, spreading arms to and drawing inspiration from both rather than following the course of a single one while discarding the other. Back on the religious coast, we could recall that no theological tradition surpasses Orthodox Christianity, from which the spirituality of both Nikola Tesla and I arose into the worldly airs, in terms of splendor and magnificence of the accomplished unification of opposites. For, in no religion is the inextricableness of the entwinement of suffering and happiness on our way to salvation so pronounced as in Orthodox Christianity. Thinking of it, it as if we could hear the chimes of the timeless question asked by David Gilmour in Pink Floyd's Wish You Were Here, "So you think you could tell Heaven from Hell, blue skies from pain; can you tell a green field from a cold steel rail, a smile from a veil, do you think you can tell?"<sup>251</sup>, ringing in the back of our mind, along with the answer, No, that the song itself, combining dull bluesy riffs that bleach the emotionally colorful landscapes of the soul with heartrending sadness, enormously emotive in its essence, subtly hands out to the listener. For, according to the core Orthodox Christian teachings, only on the waves of compassionate sadness and divine melancholy could we attain the shores of cosmic joy and *vice versa*: only via flights on the wings of celestial childlikeness could we develop the powers of empathy that heals and rejuvenates human hearts around us. Having firmly believed in the vital role of this blend of angelic joy and cosmic sadness in ensuring our safe ascents to stars ever since the first sprouts of spiritual starriness were enkindled in me, not only did I conceive my musical pieces with it in mind, but I also drew the following symbolic drawing in pastels for the front cover of my first book in order to embellish it with the belief that the doors of Paradise open only in front of one who has brought saddening empathy and boundless joy into a vibrant unity within oneself. In this image, which distantly evokes some of Alexej von Jawlensky's Abstract Heads, a series of saintly paintings, one of which decorates the walls of the Albertina museum in Vienna, one could discern one eye widely open, resembling a sun in its radiant eruption of endless glee, and another eye appearing closed, a thin, bluely waved line reminiscent of the surface of the sea above which two arms stand triumphantly raised like the upper half of the Orion constellation, or is it merely a sea of tears emerging from it onto the surface of this perfectly balanced, celestial being wherein Heaven and Earth are brought into a grand oneness praised by Oriental philosophers and Western alchemists alike?



And just as the spiral-shaped patterns of progress of anything we could conceive of suggest, every time we find ourselves journeying only straight ahead, narrowing our vision as if

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<sup>250</sup> See Marc J. Seifer's The Life and Times of Nikola Tesla: Biography of a Genius, Citadel Press, New York, NY (1998), pp. 22.

<sup>251</sup> Listen to Pink Floyd's Wish You Were Here on Wish You Were Here, Harvest (1975).

passing through a tunnel, we should look aside, spin around in wonder and sympathy with the world, while whenever we realize that we have spent too much time on these sides of the road, replenishing drives of our creativeness and fueling the solar source of energy of our spirit, we should go back on the linear track, which is what we are also to do after this short and refreshing detour into gardens of thought where a few neat systemic and philosophical insights awaited us. Hence, our recollection of musical examples of dialectical confrontations of theses and antitheses whereupon grand emotional syntheses are reached does not stop here. A reviewer of *Protest Songs* by Prefab Sprout praised Paddy McAloon's songwriting for producing songs that are "incredibly dreamy, yet a certain tension is always broiling just beneath the surface, just enough to keep the listener on his/her toes and (make sure that) it never really succumbs to laziness or excessive languidness"<sup>252</sup>, explicating the dialectics that permeates the deep aural layers of tunes by the North England's favorite 1980s band. The most notable place in its oeuvre is occupied by *Steve McQueen*, a masterwork made halfway through the band's journey from solitary punks to would-be mainstreamers; namely, whereas the preceding record, *Spoon*, felt claustrophobic and tensed, lacking Thomas Dolby's sense of aural spaciousness, everything that came afterwards is often labeled as somewhat cheesy and commercial, albeit beautiful, the reason for which this magnificent record can have a powerful cleansing effect on one's soul, as it takes the listener on a ride from road rage to spins of seraph and saints. Public Enemy's rap chef-d'oeuvre, *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* owes its genius to one such idea to create sounds that would be tense but also thrilling, shrilly but also sprightly, disquieting but also elating, unsettling but also danceable, transmitting thereby the urgency for something revolutionary to happen while moving people in joy and positivity in that direction, alongside, of course, embodying a balance of vocal opposites in the form of Chuck D's mountainous strength, seriousness and stability on one side and Flavor Flav's frivolousness, flightiness and sprightliness on the other. Cut by the sharp blade of the disparity between critical praise and commercial failure following the release of the *Big Star* debut, #1, a combination of disappointment and joy spilled out of the music on the following releases of the band, the next of which the critics described as "an ever-deepening work that is at once funny, sad, and frightening... miraculously treading the line between credible naiveté and jaded satire"<sup>253</sup>, starting a trend that culminated for many in Chris Bell's *I Am the Cosmos*, the record over which a critic mused while weaving the following thread of words around it: "Records I like have a lot of Yang and a lot of Yin. You know, I like for things to be the way batteries work. I like the idea that *Cosmos* would be on one side and *Sister* would be on the other"<sup>254</sup>. Returning to the sound of Radiohead for a brief moment in time, we could reemphasize its bursting with anger and bitterness in parallel with awakening angelical softness and grace, evoking in the distance the very teaching style of the Christ, presumably captivating for centuries due to its blend of seemingly diametrical opposites: fury and grace, anger and love. Listen to Thom Yorke from the *Bands* era, sending out angry outcries through gnashed teeth, though combined with shrill sublimity of the sounds emerging from his throat, and you will be teleported to vistas pervaded by greatly elevated aesthetical senses, prayerful and aerial, feeling as if standing face-to-face with the snow-white statues of Greek goddesses, while at the same time being infused by the furious powers that thrill and propel your spirit swimming in these

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<sup>252</sup> See Jason Ankeny's AllMusic review of Prefab Sprout's *Protest Songs*, CBS (1985).

<sup>253</sup> Watch *Big Star: Nothing Can Hurt Me* directed by Drew DeNicola and Olivia Mori (2012).

<sup>254</sup> The critic refers to Chris Bell's 7" single having *I Am the Cosmos* on one side and *You and Your Sister*, later beautifully covered by This Mortal Coil, on the other. Watch *Big Star: Nothing Can Hurt Me* directed by Drew DeNicola and Olivia Mori (2012).

aural waters upwardly and allow it to grittily explode with the treasures held inside in all directions. Fiercely repelled from the stiff and phony world of grownups, as if wishing to distance himself as far as possible from it, an impression is that he has returned to the stage of an emotively eruptive infant, vocally and emotionally, whereon cranky cries of sheer frustration have become blended with a sense of soft and soulful squatness inside of the mother's warm womb or embrace. At the very mention of little fury things, the wheels of my memory begin to retrace a critic's fascination with the overlap of a scream that "means abandon, the loss of control" and a guitar sound marked by "remarkable restraint, with gripping rhythmical playing and searching harmony that demand closure"<sup>255</sup>, tightly wrapped up around each other in the glaring opening of the ageless album by Dinosaur Jr.: *You're Living All Over Me*. As one starts to roll down its aural slides, one brings to mind the image of a girl that pops up somewhere in the midst of it and who, as "the lights exploded stood burning in front of me, ripped my heart out and gave it to me"<sup>256</sup>, symbolizing this blend of being superbly caring and yet utterly careless, all at once, and defining the middle ground between angst and kindheartedness on which the hearts of a whole generation of western kids in the decades to come would stand. Eternally concocting ardor and angst inside the magic pots of their hearts, they may find inspiration in sonics like those captured on Fleetwood Mac's most celebrated record to date, *Rumours*, which owes its mesmerizing vibe to exactly this cross-fertilization of sweet and sour; or, as a music critic pointed out once, "what distinguishes *Rumours* - what makes it art - is the contradiction between its cheerful surface and its anguished heart; here is a radio-friendly record about anger, recrimination, and loss"<sup>257</sup>. These musings on mysterious ways by which love inspires anger and anger ignites love may prompt us to start to whistle Jamie T's *Sticks and Stones*, the song that succeeds in enthraling the listener by coupling stirring choruses and arousing synthesizer sounds to a raw and destructive energy which would all alone appear uninteresting and off-putting; however, by confronting two emotional antipodes in our head, a dialectical drag in opposite directions is produced, having an enlightening effect on the listener. Having brought to light the meritorious nature of blends of soothing grace and healthy eruptions of fury, no doubt caused by disgust over unrighteousness that has spread its sickening roots everywhere, I am free to invoke one of the most fascinating historical examples of cocktails of this type in the pop music realm: Iggy Pop's 1977 record, *Lust for Life*. Namely, how could one explain that this compilation of songs by the rock 'n roll iguana has stood million miles higher on the scale of achievement compared to any of his works with the Stooges or any earlier or later solo works other than that it is due to the record's having arisen from the collaboration with David Bowie who was described by Lee Black Childers at the time as "a wimpy little south London art student", unlike "a Detroit trash bag"<sup>258</sup> that Iggy was, and who was able to infuse just about the right dose of charming far-flung softness to the robust and raw powered approach to sound creation and live performance of Iggy alone, helping to produce a captivating encounter of complementary opposites whereby each of them brilliantly fills the gaps generated by the other. Speaking of Bowie's sound *per se*, it does too combine the angst of a dissenting deserter from the deadening

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<sup>255</sup> See Nick Atfield's *You're Living All Over Me*, Continuum, London, UK (2011), pp. 54.

<sup>256</sup> Listen to Dinosaur Jr.'s *Raisins on You're Living All Over Me*, SST Records (1987).

<sup>257</sup> See Patrick McKay's *Fleetwood Mac – Rumours*, *Stylus Magazine* (August 14, 2007), retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20071116053654/http://www.stylusmagazine.com/articles/diamond/fleetwood-mac-rumours.htm>. Cited in the Wikipedia page on Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours* at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rumours\\_\(album\)#cite\\_note-74](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rumours_(album)#cite_note-74).

<sup>258</sup> See Legs McNeil & Gillian McCain's *Please Kill me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk*, Penguin, London, UK (1997).

obsoleteness of the modern world with the soothing flows of stargazing grace, and his *Life on Mars*<sup>259</sup> could be invoked as an excellent example thereof; namely, from the moment when mummy pulls our heroine with the mousey hair one way while the daddy pulls the other way to the one where she sits in a cinema, both innocently adsorbed in the beauty of images displayed on the silver screen and keenly finding them repulsively silly and phony, the song abounds with aural signs that secretly mean to tell their explorers how releasing constrictive contempt to serpentine whirl around the expansive shine of the spirit of limitless devotion to it all, despite their seeming oppositeness and incompatibility, is the way to create truly fascinating impressions. All in all, our propensity to be naturally impressed by the fabulous dialectical encounters of opposites in pieces of art and philosophical precepts handed to us as instructions for profound living may be a training for our minds on how to understand the signs of the times that our reality is made of and navigate through it flawlessly during the odysseys of our lives. The imperative of the 20<sup>th</sup> century American activist, Grace Lee Boggs, has thus been to “think dialectically”<sup>260</sup>, for only in such a manner can the contradictions that drive the evolution of reality be grasped, and every time our hearts become touched and minds illuminated by leaning our ears close to the sophisticated musical creations of humanity, we ought to know that we have also become a bit more attuned to the cosmic harmony sustained by the balance between Yin and Yang and that the capacity of the bottles of our brains has become expanded by a little bit more, for a few more teardrops of the infinitely vast ocean of being to find a temporary solace in them.

In fact, everywhere we look, the world of arts seems to be filled with creations that are either exclusively dark and depressing or solely hip and joyous. However, the most sublime artistic accomplishments are tied to combining the two to the right measure and creating fabulous concoctions of heavenly grief and cosmic joy, nectars from which gods and angels will gladly drink from. The Serbian essayist, Isidora Sekulić exemplifies a thinker who had reservations about the “dominance of extremes”, who was “haunted by contrast” and who valued the “subtlety of equilibrium... a mighty law common to all ideologies and systems, philosophies and faiths as the precondition for the existence of the material and the spiritual world, of logic, of music, of morality”, and who, for this reason, praised the famous collection of poems for children by the Slovenian poet, Oton Župančič, having recognized in it a counterbalance to the “pure playfulness” of the “absurd-nonsensical-grotesque-comical” style of anglicized poems and songs for children by infusing them with shadows, with gravity, with “peers beyond the edge of the fairytale and the children soul”, seeing in them the incarnation of her own “reservation toward both the nonsensical and sententious in the literature for children... a poetry able to make laugh, unleash, engage in play, but also give rise to wonderings, to teach, to provoke spiritually, intellectually and emotionally, to hint at the complexity of the world and man’s existence... a poetry equally respectful of the naïve-fantastic-frolicsome childhood needs and the ethics and the lore shaped by an adult perspective”, wondering in the end who that poetry, “deprived of commodity”, is for: “For children? For grownups? Powerful poetry connects the extremes”<sup>261</sup>. To succeed in this grandiose endeavor of “connecting the extremes”, of course, one has to sense and transmit the vibe of the deep, grave abysses of existence when expressing cheerfulness, but also contain an everlasting sparkle of joy inside one even in the melancholiest and most

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<sup>259</sup> Listen to David Bowie’s *Life on Mars?* on *Hunky Dory*, RCA (1971).

<sup>260</sup> See Scott Kurashige’s Introduction to Grace Lee Boggs’ *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA (2011), pp. 5-6.

<sup>261</sup> All the quotes in this sentence are from Snežana Z. Šarančić Čutura’s *Od uspavanke do uboda u srce. Župančičev Ciciban u čitanju Isidore Sekulić*, UDKČ 821.163.09.4, retrieved from [hrcak.srce.hr-file-253013](http://hrcak.srce.hr-file-253013) (2014).

dispirited states of mind. In music, both of these negative examples are abundant everywhere we turn our heads, including smooth, elevator jazz and the voice of Dave Gahan on Violator or later records by Depeche Mode, respectively. What makes the music of Radiohead special and different from the lame and merely downing sound of plethora of the band's indie followers is a phenomenal ability to couple this depressing pull downwards with uplifting outbursts of inner strength and optimism, giving the latter a whole new, deeper dimension, as if suns of spirit reborn to save the world are made to illuminate one's insides, sending sunrays of thrillingly moving energy all around one, at the same time as one's heart spills its content in infinite sadness and despair, as if it has fallen into a black star of a kind, the concoction hearable on practically every song on *The Bends* and *OK Computer*, the two records that stand forth as gemmed crowns of the band's space rock phase. As for Radiohead's *OK Computer*, considered by many to be the epitaph to the classic concept rock album, innumerable dialectical crisscross pulls lie engraved in the record's grooves<sup>262</sup>, securing its place as an irreplaceable sign of the times in the musical library of our civilization, from the opening notes that evoke collision of the feelings of crashing and vanishing on one side and ascending, subliming, being "born again" and pining to "save the world"<sup>263</sup> on the other, to the chopping and piercing progressive sound of paranoia heard alongside its opposite in terms of placidly peaceful tonal colors resembling droplets of divine love plucked from the angelically white clouds on which rainmaking Gods overseeing the Earth reside<sup>264</sup>, to the mishmash of otherworldliness and alienation from the uptight terrestrial social niche on one side and an openness of the heart and mind to the entire Cosmos and millions of planets and stars teeming with life in it on the other<sup>265</sup>, to the dizzying ascent of our mind along stairs of sublime sentimentality coupled to feeling as if our consciousness has been "crushed like a bug in the ground"<sup>266</sup> into an incoherent swarm of stars in our head, yielding "a rapturous, cathedral-like tribute to utter misery"<sup>267</sup>, to the cryptic electronic voice of Fitter Happier that declares a list of things to be done in what appears to be an inseparably ambivalent concoction of sympathetic benevolence and cold remoteness, leaving the listener unsure whether the guidance to become a superbly creative and happy individual or a miserably fitting screw in the social machinery sends its echoes to his ears<sup>268</sup>, all sauced with the outcry, "I go forwards, you go backwards, somewhere we will meet"<sup>269</sup>, to the blending of the identities of the delinquent, intrusive and mentally rapist climbing-up-the-wall "I" and panicky, scared-of-otherness-to-the-

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<sup>262</sup> See Tim Footman's *Radiohead - Welcome to the Machine: OK Computer and the Death of the Classic Album*, Chrome Dreams, Surrey, UK (2007), pp. 46. There are, of course, exceptions to immaculateness of this dialectical juxtaposition of opposites throughout the record too, with *Electioneering* and *Climbing Up the Walls* being two immediate examples that come off the top of my head and the two weakest points of the record from a personal point of view. *Paranoid Android* wherein the most intense antipodes are not imaginatively blended, but sequentially connected, presents another instance of mild artistic fallacy, as if the musicians have not learned enough from similarly failed examples present on their former record, including *My Iron Lungs*, *Just* and *(Nice Dream)*, wherein similar outbursts of anger appear as if cutting through a silky flow of harmony with strange and unappealing suddenness.

<sup>263</sup> Listen to Radiohead's *Airbag* on *OK Computer*, Parlophone (1997).

<sup>264</sup> Listen to Radiohead's *Paranoid Android* on *OK Computer*, Parlophone (1997).

<sup>265</sup> Listen to Radiohead's *Subterranean Homesick Alien* on *OK Computer*, Parlophone (1997).

<sup>266</sup> Listen to Radiohead's *Let Down* on *OK Computer*, Parlophone (1997).

<sup>267</sup> See Tim Footman's *Radiohead - Welcome to the Machine: OK Computer and the Death of the Classic Album*, Chrome Dreams, Surrey, UK (2007), pp. 73.

<sup>268</sup> Listen to Radiohead's *Fitter Happier* on *OK Computer*, Parlophone (1997).

<sup>269</sup> Listen to Radiohead's *Electioneering* on *OK Computer*, Parlophone (1997).

bone and hidden-behind-the-facade-of-a-warm-home “You”<sup>270</sup>, to the mood of depression, despair and claustrophobia, all depicted by Thom’s submerging himself under water in the video clip for No Surprises, blended with an outburst of joy that touches stars in its boundless uplift, yielding “a ravishing, soothing melody coupled with downbeat subject matter”<sup>271</sup>, “a bitter lyric bundled up in a gorgeous tune”<sup>272</sup>, as if joy and sadness are made to hold their hands together and endlessly spin in orbit around each other<sup>273</sup>, to the sound of terror and war, of helicopters hovering over our heads and trembling face-down plunges into muddy trenches mixed with the heroic rise into sublime planes of being whereon love and peace sovereignly reign<sup>274</sup>, as if fulfilling the central aim of ancient Chinese musicians to aurally draw a space wherein Heaven and Earth meet<sup>275</sup> while “standing on the edge” wherefrom these visionary landscapes could be seen, to the very closing lines of the record where a sense of unstoppable streaming towards supersonically stellar realms of being confronts simultaneous letting of the “slow down”<sup>276</sup> cry of our soul to slide down the kaleidoscopic slide of our consciousness with graceful nostalgia, to love/hate relationship with robots and computers that subtly emanates from behind each corner of the record’s captivating soundscape. Even the title of this record that surprisingly quickly<sup>277</sup> established itself as an etalon to compare other albums against in the critical milieu insinuates a blend of opposites, of sympathetic humaneness and a robotically cold mode of being; or, as articulated by Tim Footman, “The two words – the informal, cheery ‘OK’ (perhaps accompanied by a thumbs-up) and the cool, mechanical ‘Computer’ (suggesting unemotional analysis and calculation) – make an unlikely pairing; but that, in a way, is what the album’s about: the flawed, flesh-and-blood human, trying against the odds to achieve happiness, or at least OK-ness; pitted against the megalithic power of industry, electricity, ones and zeroes”<sup>278</sup>. We have yet to recall how in the times dominated by emotionally linear, one-dimensionally sounding singers, the originality of Thom Yorke’s singing style derives from a touching combination of slacken downiness, disheartened lethargy and unpretentious weariness on one rail along which the train of his vocal expressions journeys and yearning for beauty, tear-jerking passion and radiant fervor on another. As such, the singer appears as if he is not trying hard to impress anyone and, at the same time, as if he is trying his best to dig out the voices of unearthly beauty and deliver them outwards so that many glistening eyes of the world could be adorned with it, thereby producing a dialectical clash that has inconspicuously touched many sensitive hearts and has served as a

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<sup>270</sup> Listen to Radiohead’s Climbing Up the Walls on OK Computer, Parlophone (1997).

<sup>271</sup> See Tim Footman’s Radiohead - Welcome to the Machine: OK Computer and the Death of the Classic Album, Chrome Dreams, Surrey, UK (2007), pp. 109.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 110.

<sup>273</sup> Listen to Radiohead’s No Surprises on OK Computer, Parlophone (1997).

<sup>274</sup> Listen to Radiohead’s Lucky on OK Computer, Parlophone (1997).

<sup>275</sup> See Mickey Hart’s and Fredric Lieberman’s Spirit into Sound: The Magic of Music, Grateful Dead Books, Novato, CA (1999), pp. 56.

<sup>276</sup> Listen to Radiohead’s The Tourist on OK Computer, Parlophone (1997).

<sup>277</sup> Although it is a rule of thumb that gaining ultrafast and unambiguous critical acclaim is a sign of inflated value of the critically assessed object, some may add that exceptions prove rules in question. Yet, knowing that deeds that invoke unequivocal praise ought to be seriously questioned for their value and ethical flawlessness for which they are worshipped, Jonny Greenwood, the lead guitarist of Radiohead, left a cautious comment on countless laurels of wrath that were placed from all sides on OK Computer immediately after its release: “Journalists like it, which is always ominous”. The quote was found in Tim Footman’s Radiohead - Welcome to the Machine: OK Computer and the Death of the Classic Album, Chrome Dreams, Surrey, UK (2007), pp. 177.

<sup>278</sup> See Tim Footman’s Radiohead - Welcome to the Machine: OK Computer and the Death of the Classic Album, Chrome Dreams, Surrey, UK (2007), pp. 141.

voice of an entire generation. Befuddled at first, the critics and the audiences gradually accepted the blends of opposites intrinsic to the signing style and the personality of Thom Yorke; or, as a Pitchfork Media critic, Ryan Dombal, noticed while musing on Yorke's never-ending door-opening walk through an imaginary world spanning sunlit seacoasts and frozen mountain slopes, space elevator rides and dark caves, being unable to untangle whether he is now lost or found, or both at the same time, "Does it show a content middle-aged man who's never met a knob he couldn't turn, or someone terrified of the choices he's made? Is it willfully perplexing or deservedly complex? The answer to all that and more, of course, is yes"<sup>279</sup>, *i.e.*, an attempted unity of all sentiments and worldviews under the Sun into an expression as great as the Cosmos, an expression for which the same group of music critics said that "if it were an ice-cream flavor, it would be every flavor mixed together"<sup>280</sup>. For, as I was impelled to conjure up while listening to the charismatic, yet virtually unknown Russian band, Motorama, when one merges wintry gloominess with warmhearted cordiality in one's expressions, the former pulling one inside, like a black hole of a kind, and the latter opening oneself up, like a sun, the end result can be nothing short of success. The making of the follow-up record by Radiohead, *Kid A*, was immensely influenced by the music of Charles Mingus, yet another perfect exemplar of the captivating blends of anger and tranquility. Not only is he being taught in jazz conservatories for his art of playing a musical instrument "softly as well as strongly"<sup>281</sup>, but everywhere in his oeuvre one digs, one finds such concoctions of mellowness and aggression that later epitomized the sound of Radiohead too. For example, like a newborn, one moment screaming uncontrollably and the next moment being calm like an angel, so do moods spanning cheerfulness, despondence, vehemence and relaxedness shift in *Los Mariachis* on Mingus' record symbolically titled *Tijuana Moods*. Then, *East Coasting* is a Mingus' record famous for the contrast created by the "free-floating, richly inflected, airy bop fantasies"<sup>282</sup> of the trumpet player, Clarence Shaw, who spent no longer than a single summer with the band<sup>283</sup>, and the suppressed anger displayed by the rest of the orchestra. One of the key members of Charles Mingus' band in 1960 was Eric Dolphy, an alto saxophonist, bass clarinetist and flutist known for his arrhythmic, free jazz virtuosity, who based his style on free-association solos in which "each element contrasts vitally with all other elements"<sup>284</sup>. Then, Mingus' perhaps most beloved of all records, *The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady*, was proposed to be compliant with Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of *carnevalization*, where "opposites come together, look at one another, are reflected in one another, know and understand one another"<sup>285</sup>, given that the sound of the record embraces "multi-toned narration, the mixing

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<sup>279</sup> See Pitchfork Media's 25 Best Videos of 2016, retrieved from <http://pitchfork.com/features/lists-and-guides/9979-the-best-music-videos-of-2016/?page=3> (2016).

<sup>280</sup> Watch Pitchfork's A Brief History of Radiohead, retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q87pwu\\_pZMA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q87pwu_pZMA) (2017).

<sup>281</sup> See John Litweiler's *The Freedom Principle: Jazz After 1958*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, NY (1984), pp. 29.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26.

<sup>283</sup> This was due to Mingus' inability to keep a single group of musicians together for longer periods of time, partly owing to his perfectionist and confrontational personality and partly owing to the relative unpopularity of his music at the time and the rare chances his bands got to play in clubs (jazz record sales were at that time bringing symbolic earnings to the musicians; most of the profit from their sales was collected by the record companies).

<sup>284</sup> See John Litweiler's *The Freedom Principle: Jazz After 1958*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, NY (1984), pp. 79.

<sup>285</sup> See Mikhail M. Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN (1984), pp. 176.

of high and low, serious and comic... a mixing of prosaic and poetic speech”<sup>286</sup>. If you decide to refresh your memory of *A Love Supreme*, according to many the most significant jazz album ever recorded, a captivating concoction of “anger, joy, sadness, ecstasy, tragedy and triumph”<sup>287</sup>, just like his subsequent, freer masterpiece, *Ascension*, and a stream of improvisations wherein the guru of champagnesquely crisp blackness, as I have christened *Trane* once, showed to the world that a simplest melodic line, resembling a random repetition of two notes, could be taken into our hands and turned into eternal guidance for the soul, putting an end to the music as we had known it until that point, towards the end of it, when the climax has been passed and the unfolding of the resolution has been well underway, you might not be able to tell anymore if it is the sound of a summer rain that you hear or all around you is but a blazing sun, as your hair stands on end due to thrilling tensions that multiply in the air, while at the same time, fascinatingly, everything descends into a state of everlasting peace and fades away into the all-encompassing ocean of divine spirit. Here, aside from Elvin Jones’ asymmetric and polyrhythmic percussions characteristically contrasting with their complexity Coltrane’s straightforwardly rhythmic and harmonically simple passages, whose centrality is the reason why *Trane*’s performances in the 1960s are often dubbed by jazz musicologists as “tenor-drum duets”<sup>288</sup>, one could hear perpetual “multiphonic lines that turn upward”<sup>289</sup>, suggestive of spiritual yearning, “mingling with downturning phrases”<sup>290</sup>, suggestive of acceptance and consolation. When it comes to Coltrane’s fellow tenor saxophonist, Sonny Rollins, his style was also applauded for its amalgamation of various sentiments, from blues to swing, with *Blue 7*, the final tune on his most popular album to date, *Saxophone Colossus*, being particularly praised for using the relaxed tone of the song, brimming with laidback feelings, as “freedom that pushes the song to great heights”<sup>291</sup>, thus showing “how moving one can be without being overly aggressive”<sup>292</sup> and how simplicity can be the route to stellar senses. Making a sudden turn toward an electro pop sphere, a similar dialectical drag in the opposite directions could be heard in the repetitive lines hidden in the background of slushy Eric Berglund’s *Come With Me*<sup>293</sup>: “Keep it real” and “Do it”. Posed side by side, these two cries blend a low-key-profile naturalness and down-to-earth spontaneity with the blasting heart of a spiritual superman, in which supersonic wishes to save humanity that strayed from the divine path are burning, thus creating “the crossing of blessed and alkaline”<sup>294</sup> and transcending both the dreadfully lame and futile hipster-like unpretentiousness and the inhumanly remote, frozen, jittery and wearingly stressful flights of

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<sup>286</sup> See Will Ainsley’s Reissue of the Week: Charles Mingus’ *The Black Siant and the Sinner Lady*, *The Quietus* (November 19, 2021), retrieved from <https://thequietus.com/articles/30848-charles-mingus-black-saint-sinner-lady-review>.

<sup>287</sup> See Top 25 Jazz Albums of All Time, *The Jazz Resource*, retrieved from [http://www.thejazzresource.com/top\\_25\\_jazz\\_albums.html](http://www.thejazzresource.com/top_25_jazz_albums.html) (2015).

<sup>288</sup> See John Litweiler’s *The Freedom Principle: Jazz After 1958*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, NY (1984), pp. 96. This centrality of sax-and-drums duets in Coltrane’s 1960s sound culminated in Coltrane’s renouncing piano and bass and soloing alone on a tenor sax, accompanied only by the polyrhythmic, at times pan-rhythmic drumming of Rashied Ali, on his last record, *Interstellar Space*, recorded on February 22, 1967.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 99.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>291</sup> See the Daily Guru’s Sonny Rollins, “Blue 7”, retrieved from <http://thedailyguru.blogspot.com/2011/10/october-5-sonny-rollins-blue-7.html> (October 5, 2011).

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>293</sup> Listen to ceo’s *Come With Me* on *White Magic* (2010).

<sup>294</sup> “Alkaline” is supposedly used here as synonymous with “basic”. Listen to R.E.M.’s *How the West Was Won* on *New Adventures in Hi-Fi*, Warner Bros (1996).

spirit deprived of sincerely intimate and heartfelt communicational easiness. Lady Gaga rocked the pop music arena as she brought together and reconciled what seemed hardly reconcilable at the time: the gloomy moodiness of the hipster and the superficial appeal of the commercially brainwashed dance clubber. Selling herself as a diva and a parody of a dive at the same time, somewhat similar to another one of her showbiz contemporaries, “hot ‘n’ cold” Katy Perry, she managed to appeal to both the alternative aural scene and the commercial listener. Listening carefully to Joanna Newsom, one of the most distinct new voices of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, one could hardly discern where the witchy voice of an old enchantress ends and where the beatific cries of an infantile child begin, together, however, producing flights of angelic devotion and emotional majesty. Sue Tompkins, the talk-singing vocalist of the now dismantled Glasgow band, Life Without Buildings, similarly strikes the listener with the blend of harsh insolence and soft wonder as she sings of “looking in your eyes”<sup>295</sup>, making it impossible to discern whether it is impertinently staring at an imaginative yuppie with whom she happened to share an elevator ride or gazing at the eyes of a beloved creature as mountains of wonder tumble down into the ocean of her soul that she had in mind. It is as if thunderbolts of angst and gentle waves of love simultaneously radiate from her eyes, yielding a blend so incomprehensible that it naturally places the listener in a state of an all-illuminating paradox. Patti Smith is another female vocalist that has embodied a similar paradox by being crucified between the religious beliefs inherited from her mother and atheism learned from his father<sup>296</sup>. She consequently claimed that “people are raised to be polarized”<sup>297</sup> and tended to transfuse these internal conflicts into her music wherein she “crunched visions of teenage rebellion into snarled prayers and cooed accounts of spiritual communion through a cast of misfits and outlaws”<sup>298</sup>, finding ultimate peace in mental and emotional struggle and shrieking irritation in uttermost placidity and quietness, as if reflecting the conflict between reason and faith to which many thinkers attributed the essence of creativity. Artists, needless to add, have always stood forth as social stereotypes of minds and souls that require the internal conflicts of antipodal emotions or beliefs - typically causing large variations in mood from one hour to the next and from one day to another - in order to fuel their creativeness, the reason for which the American musicologist, Donald N. Ferguson stated that “ambivalence is one measure of artistic stature”<sup>299</sup>. Among female singers, then, Cindy Lauper naturally comes to mind with her captivating skyward screams of ecstatic joy and tear-jerking cries evoking sobs of heartrending sadness blended into one. Right next to her in the Pantheon of female voices, one finds “dazed, beautiful and bruised”<sup>300</sup> Cerys Matthews, standing straight in front of us in a picnic skirt covered with soil and mud due to her dreamily hopping from one paddle to another in the spellbound forest of the city of our times, sending forth sky-tearing shouts in which infinite, teary-eyed indignation is evened out with its antidote in terms of elating outbursts of equally tearful love and devotion, as encouraging and uplifting as it can be, leaving an impression that fragrances of both Earth and Heaven, like the groans of trombones and the whistles of flutes in the Hostias of Berlioz’s Requiem, lie flawlessly blended in this fairy’s heart. The child in us, with its fears of the dark and the unknown, and an angel out of this world, full of

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<sup>295</sup> Listen to Life Without Buildings’ New Town on Any Other City, Tugboat Records (2001).

<sup>296</sup> See Michael Bracewell’s When Surface was Depth: Death by Cappuccino and Other Reflections on Music and Culture in the 1990’s, Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA (2002), pp. 330.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 334.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 339.

<sup>299</sup> See Donald Nivison Ferguson’s The Why of Music: Dialogues in an Unexplored Region of Appreciation, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN (1969), pp. 163.

<sup>300</sup> Listen to Catatonia’s Dazed, Beautiful and Bruised on Equally Cursed and Blessed, Blanco y Negro (1999).

euphoric optimism, symbolizing the beginnings and the ends of our roads, respectively, so to say, stood immaculately blended in the voice of Judy Garland that inspired many, especially in the times dominated by overly uptight and standardly phrased vocal performances. The voice teacher and SF native, Peter Elkus described her singing style by stating that “one could sense that she was very much on the edge, desperate, vulnerable and ‘out there’; all of this was expressed through a throat that was open in vocal terms and affected by the tiny contractions of the fear that lay within her”<sup>301</sup>, subtly highlighting the encounters of opposites in her, of fear and of “the ability to express what she felt”<sup>302</sup>, that is, of the contractive force of gravity and of the dissipative force of explosive expressiveness, finely balanced in every star of Heaven and Earth alike. Macy Gray huskily singing the heartrending Still or I Try, one of the rare tunes in which modulation to a higher key sounds impeccable, charms the listener with a blend of the cool and the energetic, exerting a pull both ways, down to Earth, tranquilly, and up, into the sky, effervescently. The music of Molly Nilsson, blending depression and aerial lightness, is equally Icarian, flying through the air, inspirationally, thanks to the finely balanced upward and downward pulls, which are neatly summed in her own brief description of one of her records: “Dispatches from a troubled world, wrapped in melodic, lo-fi synth-pop”<sup>303</sup>. In that sense, to be a star on Earth, I am always reminded, one, as implied by the name of the band in which I played in my youth, Silence by a Crescent Star, indeed need be a “half-star”, a star like the star of Bethlehem imagined in the ruminations of Saint Basil of Caesarea: “It was an unusual star. In fact, the stars originally created were either perfectly motionless or are constantly moving. But this apparition seems to have possessed simultaneously these two features: she moved, but was also motionless... this star had both properties: motion and peace”<sup>304</sup>. Mitski I do not recall in this context because of the color of her voice or the singing style, but because of a line from her song that is a homage to the erasure of the ego and to the becoming of Nobody through which one becomes You with a big Y in the heavenly eye inspecting us with a magnifying glass<sup>305</sup>. “I’ve been big and small and big and small and big and small again and still nobody wants me”<sup>306</sup>, she says in this verse, insinuating the appeal that comes from being on a rollercoaster ride between highs and lows, whatever they may be, the approach that I have followed in everything in life, from behavior to art to career, in a desperate attempt to become one such magical I that is all about You, in each and every aspect of my being. This mercurial sail across sonic seascapes resonates with what Caroline Polachek, another singer with the drive to mix the unmixable, said about her music: “Beauty is often a combination of pleasure and melancholy. Very strong emotions are involved, such as joy, sadness and confusion. The things that possess these contrasts are the ones that move me the most when I look at them, so I try to recreate that in a certain way in my music”<sup>307</sup>. Then comes my fellow upstate New Yorker, Natalie Merchant,

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<sup>301</sup> See Peter K. Elkus’ *The Telling of Our Truths: The Magic in Great Musical Performance*, Peter K. Elkus (2007), pp. 85.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>303</sup> See the description of the record 2020 by Molly Nilsson (2018), Apple Music (2018).

<sup>304</sup> Personal translation from Russian of Святитель Василий Великий Слово на Святое Рождество Христово, Newsletter of the Nativity of Most Holy Theotokos Serbian Orthodox Church, Orange County, California, USA (January - March 2018), pp. 17-19.

<sup>305</sup> Watch the video for Mitski’s Nobody, retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qooWnw5rEcI> (2018).

<sup>306</sup> Listen to Mitski’s Nobody on Be the Cowboy, Dead Oceans (2018).

<sup>307</sup> See Violaine Schültz’s interview with Caroline Polachek, Numéro Art, retrieved from <https://www.numero.com/en/musique/caroline-polachek-interview-beyonce-charli-xxc-christine-and-the-queens> (2023).

stepping out of the dark and lonely landscape of the soul, archetypically Montenegrin, as some may say, having found in it the only niche wherefrom she could spread the wings of joy and emerge like a lotus flower, all in white. This blend of opposites that she couches she depicted in the kitschy booklet of her elegiac record *Ophelia*, posing in the miniature album of photographs contained therein both as a sinner and a saint, a hooker and a nun, a smoker and a sportswoman, a stripper and a bookworm. It is also featured in the title of her solo debut, the record titled *Tigerlily*, being a reference to a personality and a musical sentiment that is “both fierce and delicate”<sup>308</sup>. “What makes it even more cool is the ambiguity of the message — is this conveying happiness? tenderness? anxiety? desperation? horror? a little bit of everything? who knows?”<sup>309</sup>, the music critic, George Starostin noted during a contemplation on her singing in *Eat for Two*, a traditionally children-oriented opening track of a *10,000 Maniacs* record, in this case legendary *Blind Man’s Zoo*. “An idiosyncratic punch at once grating and soothing, melodic and dissonant”<sup>310</sup> is, then, how a critic described the sound of the Canadian singer and songwriter, Grimes, whose excited and impulsive voice on and off the camera can come only from an equilibrium between a centripetal force that spins one’s rapidly revolving spirit toward the center of one’s being, wherefrom all the creative impulses emerge, and a centrifugal force that tends to dissipate one’s energy and essence all across the world, the magical beauty of which acts as an outward magnetic pull, as maddening and chaotic as it can be. Capturing the mental derangement and synthetic schisms of New York City and blending them with the inner cravings for a saintly peace of mind that her stage name, *St. Vincent*, insinuates, the singer whose songs were described as brimming with opposites, as “radiating and reveling in paradox – vibrant yet melancholy, cunning yet honest, friendly yet confrontational, deeply personal yet strangely inscrutable”<sup>311</sup>, and whose self-titled record the singer, herself, described as “a party record you could play at a funeral”<sup>312</sup>, can also be said to combine the best of the vibes of the two worlds: the earthy and the ethereal. In the realm of voices that have stood midway between Heaven and Earth, as all sublime spirits should do, the Icelandic diva, Björk ought to be credited too for the combination of an extraterrestrial ethereality and exceptionally touching down-to-earth naturalness in her magical appearance and voice, alongside the ecstatic staccatos, bordering spiritual hysteria, and the affectionate softness, evoking soothing lullabies, that are encompassed by her singing style. A proof that Björk was wholly aware of the need to tune her voice to this and millions of other medullas, too many to be counted here one by one, to incarnate a sound that moves like a maelstrom of the divine seas comes from one of her interviews wherein she touched the deepest secrets of the *Way of Love* too: “There are periods when I am an extrovert and there are periods when I am an introvert. It’s a very natural progression, in and out, kind of like the tide.... So I try to be somewhere in the middle; there is no one answer. You have to tightrope walk all the time, to keep yourself open enough to communicate and retreat enough to plant new

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<sup>308</sup> See the Wikipedia article on Natalie Merchant, retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natalie\\_Merchant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natalie_Merchant) (2016).

<sup>309</sup> See George Starostin’s *10,000 Maniacs: Blind Man’s Zoo* (1989), retrieved from <http://only-solitaire.blogspot.com/2011/03/10000-maniacs-blind-mans-zoo.html> (2011).

<sup>310</sup> See the description of the record *Visions* by Grimes (2012), Apple Music (2019).

<sup>311</sup> See the description of *St. Vincent’s Masseduction*, Loma Vista (2017) at Apple Music.

<sup>312</sup> See Amy Phillips’ and Evan Minsker’s *St. Vincent Announces Self-Titled Album, Shares "Birth in Reverse"*, Pitchfork, retrieved from <https://pitchfork.com/news/53057-st-vincent-announces-self-titled-album-shares-birth-in-reverse/> (December 9, 2013).

seeds and grow”<sup>313</sup>. Yet other Icelanders, the band Sigur Ros, produced music that had a stunning effect on me, from this perspective owing to its concoction of thrillingly orphic, awe-inspiring and mildly fearful marches of sound on one side and angelically blissful, aerial and uplifting threads of notes on another. The secret of our bedazzlement by blends of such nature may be lying in the fact that opening the gates of fearful awe in our soul is the first step in our reaching out to grasp the fruits of our dharma, the sacred knowledge which is in the Yogic tradition thought to be equal to an inner bliss that one is to follow at all times. The Bible itself could remind us of the same with its verse “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Psalm 111:10). Hence, just as shoveling, the act which probably horrifies and hurts the soil, is vital for the seeds to be sown and secured deeply in it, by placing these delirious messages within genuinely *awesome* packages that thrill our spirit with a sense of mild fearfulness and mysticism, an effective penetration of the listener’s psyche is achieved and these artistic seeds of beauty are thus able to find a lasting solace in the soil of his mind. The Latin verb denoting the act of shutting up, *arcere*, is derived from the word for chest, *arca*, and it appears that this inward pull, most effectively produced by sensing something arcane and numinous is vital for pushing us outwards, for invigorating us with powers that are to blissfully bounce us back from this deepest core of our heart and out to the world, yielding an elated explosion of our starry spirit. Some may notice that a same concoction of awe that entombs us in place and airy sublimity on the wings of which we are raised to transcendent states of mind is embedded in the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. With its delicate mishmash of a smell of dark, underground cellars and passageways and light and beatific voices and melodies, one may have a sense that the composer was well aware of how astounding the listener by shedding stardust of fearful awe all over him is a prerequisite for capturing his attention and thus enabling a fantastic transmission and delivery of inspiring unearthly feelings. Fear, after all, is a great awakener, the reason for which it has presented an emotion of essential evolutionary importance ever since the first animals appeared on this planet, following in step the growth of their sentience. In fact, the more complex a form of life, the more comprehensive are the fears thriving in its species’ hearts, which is to say that without seeds of fearfulness, no truly complete musical expression of human being would be possible. For example, so many times did I carry baby Theo on my chests into the Saints Peter and Paul church in San Francisco’s North Beach, the one having the opening of Dante’s *Paradiso* carved all across its front façade, saying *La gloria di colui che tutto move per l’universo penetra e risplende*<sup>314</sup>, all so that we could have our eyes fixed for a few minutes on the statue of the blue-belted Holy Mother in a chapel on the far right, a sublime figurine standing in a dark cave and holding a heavenward gaze at the rigged rock hanging over her head, as if she was there to tell us that the darkest spaces are to be entered and the deadest things are to be placed before our views and illuminated with the sunlight of our divine attention, for the sake of putting to test the continuation of the verse covering the church’s southern wall<sup>315</sup>, proving it wrong with a smile on our face and concluding that everywhere, verily everywhere God’s grace resides in an equal, infinite amount. After spending some time inside this dim chapel, I noticed that the dark

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<sup>313</sup> See Mike Diver’s interview with Björk: DiS Questions Björk about *Volta* and *Beyond*, *Drowned in Sound* (April 24, 2007), retrieved from [http://drownedinsound.com/in\\_depth/1900868-dis-questions-bj%C3%B6rk-about-volta-and-beyond](http://drownedinsound.com/in_depth/1900868-dis-questions-bj%C3%B6rk-about-volta-and-beyond).

<sup>314</sup> Translated to English, this incomplete verse says “The glory of Him who moves everything permeates the universe and is resplendent”. What is missing from it is the last, *in una parte piú e meno altrove* part, which suggests that God’s glory “is resplendent in one part more and in another less”. See Dante Alighieri’s *Divine Comedy: Paradiso*, Canto I, lines 1-3 (1321).

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*

mystique of the its interior would make Theo slightly scared, widening his eyes and thus making him intensely receptive to the messages of love and peace that were floating in the air or any other stimuli that would have been bestowed upon him at that moment. It was then that I realized that fear, indeed, is like a trigger that ignites the blaze of our wonder and that no curiosity-driven explorations of Nature would have been possible without it, let alone that our vigilance and alertness, the keys to our survival in the ruthless web of life for eons, would have been put to sleep in its absence too. Consequently, any time Theo's eyes would widen as we passed through a dark tunnel or the rumble of a trolley intercepted his leisured dreaminess, I knew it was the moment when his curiosity was maximized and the right one to overwhelm him with enriching impressions to absorb. In a similar fashion, fear in a song can be a wonderful opener of the space in our soul for an inflow of more cosmic harmonies and some of the most dazzling musical moments from the history of humankind have been therefore those wherein a thrilling sense of awe and a blissful shine of love were wittily wedded and merged into an inseparable whole.

Sad and shadowy, grievingly confessional melodies coupled with lush percussions and rhumboid drumbeats cheerfully rattling in the background is what makes the iconic A-side of Marvin Gaye's record *What's Going On* sound so fabulous, captivating and ageless<sup>316</sup>. Despite an enormous amount of music produced on our planet each day, it is quite possible that the world has yet to hear of an equally striking musical way of coupling a talk about "too many of you crying, too many of you dying"<sup>317</sup> to luscious dance beats, whereby the latter do not dilute and diminish, but accentuate and reinforce the former message of compassion and the former do not dissipate and drive to standstill the dancing vibe of the song, but deepen it instead. Floating on the carpet of soft and unfathomable harmonies flowing like a river through the air upon our listening to this timeless record, we could recall that one of the most exciting feelings conveyed by modern pop songs is of enchantingly riding through flashily colorful, fluorescent tunnels with our face smeared in astonishment over the backseat window of a taxicab, as rock 'n' roll iguana, Iggy Pop, would have had it, like a celestial tourist on a psychedelic ride through this world, living up to the mission given to Mary of Bethany by the Christ (Luke 10:38–42), to love and wonder and do nothing else, and to the mysterious illiterate girl Momo by her creator, Michael Ende, to save the world by speaking none and listening to it all, and be unsure at the same time whether such an aural dream of a lustrous joyride would have ever been creatable had it not been coupled to its diametrical opposite in terms of a punctuating drumbeat. Gimme Shelter, the song that opens the Rolling Stones' classic record, *Let it Bleed*, enralls the listener with its sense of a soul's screaming and frantically trying to break the beat permeated with a vexing, humdrum sweetness of the leisured rock sound of its times, confronting the counterfeit happiness of the latter with helpless cries for help, with aural eruptions of mental labyrinthitis and confounded

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<sup>316</sup> Marvin Gaye's *What's Going On* is only one of many records that lose the momentum as one progresses from their A side to the B side. They include the Rolling Stones' *Let It Bleed*, Neil Young's *Rust Never Sleeps*, Manic Street Preachers' *This is My Truth*, Tell Me Yours, Mercury Rev's *Deserter's Songs*, New York Dolls' eponymous debut, the Cult's *Sonic Temple*, the Velvet Underground's *Loaded*, the Cure's *The Head on the Door*, Sonic Youth's *Sister*, Roni Size & Reprazent's *New Forms*, EKV's *S' vetrom uz lice* and *Zabranjeno Pušenje's Dok čekaš sabah sa šejtanom*. It is, of course, more artistically pleasing when records start off a bit boringly and then gain the emotional intensity as they approach the end, and one example comes from R.E.M.'s *Up*, in which case the B side of the record is far more exciting to listen than its A side. Other examples may include Elvis Costello's *King of America*, which gets more absorbing the closer one gets to the end of it, and the Beatles' *Abbey Road*, a record that has gained universal acclaim from the critics in spite of the fact that its B side sounds significantly better than the rather disconnected and at times harmonically clichéd A side.

<sup>317</sup> Listen to Marvin Gaye's *What's Going On* on *What's Going On*, Tamla Records (1971).

cravings to curl oneself up into a shelter wherein permanent solace, or everlasting depression, await one. Another tune by the Rolling Stones, marvelously closing the Dionysian fiesta that their record *Exile on Main St.* is with a look into the heart of the heavens and at the angels “with smiles on their faces and a gleam right in their eyes”<sup>318</sup> resting on its clouds, couples a piccolo gospel-like chorus and an untainted call to “shine a light” with Jagger’s boisterous singing with the voice of a devil, a stadium hooligan or a hollering hulk, if you wish, thus providing a crucial contrast that endows the song with a potential to strike and spotlight the deepest seabed of the human soul to its earthly eyes. Next, *Baby Don’t Cry*, a song by INXS, sounds so appealing despite its lackluster repetitiveness because, lyrically, it is a lullaby for a baby, yet such that it, ironically, has the sound of this baby’s wrecking all around her noisily, creating a hardly digestible contrast that, as such, lingers on and subconsciously impresses the listener. Then, what makes the music of Morrissey and the Smiths so illuminatingly exciting is the fact that clever cynicism and sincere sentimentality, quite opposite in their essence from each other and seemingly irreconcilable as such, are mashed to such an extent in it that one cannot anymore recognize where one begins and the other ends. Similarly to the way mellifluousness of the voice and the jagged satire of the lyrics are blended in the singing of another popular English singer of the era, Paul Heaton, one cannot draw a line with certainty as to where cynicism and pretense with a thorny appearance begin and where sincere lyricism gliding on euphonious waves end in Morrissey’s vocals. Hence, in his analysis of the musical reflections of the cultural ripples and streams in England at the dusk of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Michael Bracewell linked Morrissey’s status of a superstar, spanning over almost three decades now, with his “presentation of himself as a living contradiction – terminally romantic yet hopelessly unlovable”<sup>319</sup> and went on to claim that “the conflation of opposites and the use of paradox is a fundamental aspect of Morrissey’s writing”<sup>320</sup>, while referring to “Morrissey’s extraordinary understanding of the artistic power of paradox: if you describe alienation in the voice of a conquering hero or the comedy of hopelessness in the soaring refrain of a love song you create a dynamic of romanticism that triggers immediate empathy through a comic reversal of comedy itself”<sup>321</sup>. His voice is so enticing because it resembles an emotional pot in which a little bit of everything, from the best to the worst, is found: gentleness and prickliness, inspiration and desperation, mellowness and destitution, kindness and hate, exaltation and apathy, humbleness and egocentric megalomania, bonding one to all things social while simultaneously shoving them off. Naturally, thus, fans get exalted and depressed at the same time by listening to Morrissey, whose lyrics “sought to tease, amuse, comfort and confront”<sup>322</sup>, and yet always return to his voice for guidance, attesting to the allure of the encounters of antipodes in this life, which the harder it is, the more beautiful it is too, and, conversely, the easier it is, the emptier it gets, while the more we are dragged into the vortices of compassionate melancholy, the greater the chance the orbits of our thoughts will be bounced into the realm of heavenly joy, where angels sing their odes to “love that moves the sun

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<sup>318</sup> Listen to the Rolling Stones’ *Shine a Light* on *Exile on Main St.*, Rolling Stones (1972).

<sup>319</sup> See Michael Bracewell’s *When Surface was Depth: Death by Cappuccino and Other Reflections on Music and Culture in the 1990’s*, Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA (2002), pp. 120.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 120.

<sup>322</sup> See Tony Fletcher’s *A Light that Never Goes Out: The Enduring Saga of the Smiths*, Random House, New York, NY (2012), pp.7.

and other stars”<sup>323</sup>. Listening to Morrissey’s *Everyday is Like Sunday* from *Viva Hate*, for example, with its legendary line “every day is like Sunday, every day is silent and grey”, has a stupefying effect on our aesthetic senses because they have a hellishly hard time discerning whether the song is a celebration of the Sunday spirit of joy and emotional *laissez faire* portrayed by the Velvet Underground<sup>324</sup> or it is a hymn to squatting in the corner and letting the goddesses of depression fold the wings of our exhilarating spirit, wind it in and out and then magically open the door to expressions that come straight from the bottom of our soul and that are heart-meltingly honest. The music of Oasis, another cult band from Manchester, England, echoing a walk along a thin line between cockiness and coolness, I believe, had a captivating effect on the listeners owing to its two-way push, towards its empowering message that went beyond mere lyrics and away from its prickly and peevish performers, producing the same effect as that which John Lennon wished to achieve when he referred to heads in the Albert Hall as Lancashire holes<sup>325</sup>, repelling the fans and instigating their independent thinking as opposed to fictile and easily exploitable idolatry. The lyrics of the song closing the band’s album recorded at the peak of its radiance, (What’s the Story) *Morning Glory*?<sup>326</sup>, describing a ghost “slowly walking down the hall, faster than the cannonball”, before finding oneself “caught beneath the landslide, in a champagne supernova in the sky”, all accompanied with the characteristic production making high notes sound acerbic and low notes gravelly, directly evidence this inclination toward being crucified on the cross of opposites. And so, when Liam Gallagher, the lead singer of the band, with his characteristic “swagger, simian gait and delicious insouciance”<sup>327</sup>, calls his brother “love” and “a sad f\*\*\*” in a single sentence<sup>328</sup>, he subtly reveals the secret to the (super)sonic power of the band’s sound, lying along the thin and sharp line whereat love and hate, two diametrically opposite feelings, meet and coalesce. Liam’s voice did draw oases in juvenile heads with its blend of grainy and hoarse, breathtaking rebelliousness on one side and pampered, overindulged and sophisticated, aristocratic girlishness on the other, as much as the one of Van Morrison, the musical guru that elated many spirits of this world, has charmed with its blend of tonic angriness and soul-soothing softness and warmth, conciliation of which, as many sages would confirm, is all but a cakewalk. His boldest and most innovative of records, *Astral Weeks*, the making of which bore much in common with Miles Davis’ improvisatory conduction of an orchestra composed of individual improvisers in his fusion, jazz rock phase, was described once as “one of those albums that seemed to be about everything and nothing, the past and the now, the vital and the fleeting, and that somehow stood complete in its vision”<sup>329</sup>, that is, in its painting an intersection of every emotion under the Sun, the natural addition to which was Ivan’s soulful singing in a voice evocative of angry lions and prophets of peace, a voice wherein mystical restfulness and righteous unrest lay dormant to an equal extent. Dreaming of a granite

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<sup>323</sup> “*A l’alta fantasia qui mancò possa; ma già volgeva il mio disio e ’l velle, sì come rota ch’igualmente è mossa, l’amor che move il sole e l’altre stele*” (Paradiso, Canto XXXIII, line 145) is the last passage of Dante Alighieri’s *Divine Comedy* (1321). Retrieved from [http://www.letteraturaitaliana.net/pdf/Volume\\_1/t317.pdf](http://www.letteraturaitaliana.net/pdf/Volume_1/t317.pdf).

<sup>324</sup> Listen to the Velvet Underground’s *Sunday Morning* on the Velvet Underground & Nico, Verve (1967).

<sup>325</sup> Listen to the Beatles’ *A Day in the Life* on Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band, Parlophone (1967).

<sup>326</sup> Listen to Oasis’ *Champagne Supernova* on (What’s the Story) *Morning Glory?*, Creation (1995).

<sup>327</sup> See Dave Simpson’s *The Rebel Inside*, *The Guardian* (February 4, 2000), retrieved from [https://www.theguardian.com/friday\\_review/story/0,,240083,00.html](https://www.theguardian.com/friday_review/story/0,,240083,00.html).

<sup>328</sup> See Ben-Beaumont-Thomas’ *Liam Gallagher Attacks Brother Noel for Absence at One Love Manchester Concert*, *The Guardian* (June 5, 2017), retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/jun/05/liam-gallagher-attacks-brother-noel-for-absence-at-one-love-manchester-concert-twitter>.

<sup>329</sup> See Laura Barton’s *My Favourite Album: Astral Weeks by Van Morrison*, *Guardian* (August 3, 2011), retrieved from [www.theguardian.com/music/2011/aug/03/van-morrison-astral-weeks-review](http://www.theguardian.com/music/2011/aug/03/van-morrison-astral-weeks-review).

statuette wherefrom one such thrilling voice could originate, I bring to mind the angrily looking angel drawn on the cover of Sun Kil Moon's *Ghosts of the Great Highway*, similar in seriousness to the angel peering behind the cloud with arrows in his hands on Raphael's diaphanous painting, *The Triumph of Galatea*, and then recall how what makes this record captivating may be that via its quiet and placid vibe that evokes the emptiness of a sundrenched highway through a desert it offers us a story about the art of boxing. As if bringing forth recollections of the moment of serene echoing of Ave Maria through the mountainous air that precedes a heroic battle during which fireworks of beauty and benevolent bravery are to be shed all over the place, this record thus touches the secret doors of the Way of Love with its indicating that meditatively swimming in the ocean of silence and serenity conditions beautiful explosions of our creativity outwards. What made the musical globe start to spin with a new intensity in my head when I heard the Pixies for the first time as a 15-year old boy was their ability to flawlessly blend neurotic screams, yowling evocations of violence and extraterrestrial weirdness with surfing on the waves of untouched and polished harmonies, as if the desire to break their musical message bottle in millions of pieces clashed with their diligent and careful writing of the words of benediction and beauty on its notes, prompting us to realize that it is no coincidence that the photograph of a bare-breasted dame alluringly dancing next to a catholic cross, ala Buñuel's *Viridiana*<sup>330</sup>, made its way to the cover of their record that launched them to stars: Surfer Rosa. And when Black Francis sings possibly the most famous line in a Pixies' song, "If man is 5, then the devil is 6, and if the devil is 6, then God is 7"<sup>331</sup>, and his voice gradually grows from calm, poised and peaceful, epitomizing all the things usually ascribed to godliness, to angry, deranged and violent, epitomizing all the things usually ascribed to devilishness, all the while distancing himself from "the devil" and approaching "God" in the lyric, he creates a striking disparity in the listeners' minds that makes them feel as if they were hit by a lightning and paralyzed by daze. "At once a horror movie and a utopia, phantasmagoric and immediately recognizable... it's supposed to sound crazy"<sup>332</sup>, is the way Greil Marcus described Bob Dylan's 115<sup>th</sup> *Dream*, but the words could equally fit the description of pretty much any Pixies' song, from the band's Hispanic surf-punk rock beginnings to its space rock, path-to-OK-Computer-paving ends. The sound of Roxy Music, particularly on their second record, *For Your Pleasure*, epitomizes the aesthetic benefits produced by the clash of visions within a band, each pulling the creation into an opposite direction, notwithstanding that such antagonisms rarely last for a very long time. In the case of this English band, this polarity, which led to the seminal marriage between "nerdy art-rock and sexy glam-rock"<sup>333</sup>, emerged from the conventionalism and gregarious, retro, alpha-male persona of Bryan Ferry on one end and the avant-garde, futuristic and experimental musical style and introverted, queer personality of Brian Eno on the other, and it logically came to an end soon after this classic recording was released. Listening to Jam's *Going Underground*, one could distantly hear armies of joy solemnly marching dedicated to live in accord with the ideals of heavenly beauty on earth, side by side with legionnaires of anger over the oleaginous hypocrisies

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<sup>330</sup> Buñuel, it turns out, counts among the filmmakers who had a fetish for adding a cross to an ungodly scene, such as the one from *Los Olvidados* showing the young murderer, El Jaibo, entering the butchery to steal a silver knife and a large cross in the bottom right.

<sup>331</sup> Listen to Pixies' *Monkey Gone to Heaven* on Doolittle, 4AD (1988).

<sup>332</sup> See Greil Marcus' *Like a Rolling Stone: Bob Dylan at the Crossroads*, Public Affairs, New York, NY (2005), pp. 65.

<sup>333</sup> See 100 Best Debut Albums of All Time, *Rolling Stone* (October 13, 2013), retrieved from <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/lists/the-100-greatest-debut-albums-of-all-time-20130322/roxy-music-19691231>.

of the world, a couple of emotions so hardly meshed within a harmonious medley and yet so typical of the British punk movement as well as of a large percentage of popular songs that reverberate with a powerful political message and synchronously invigorate a sense of hearty heroism in the listener. Juxtapositions of opposites need not be always beneficial in terms of enriching each of the elements combined, of course, and an example wherein the very same poles of anger and joy encountered may be the classic record of the British punk movement, London Calling by the Clash: all the emissions of joy and humor in it merely diluted the revolutionary message and the heroic emotion that pervade it, making it indeed “a perfectly awful mish mash of musical styles”<sup>334</sup>... pitched to the American market<sup>335</sup> and threatening to put the band in the line of “upwardly mobile rock and rollers who coopted revolutionary slogans in order to gain market share”<sup>336</sup>. This record is often quoted as the last punk record to have been recorded, a statement that I could agree with only if I were to comprehend it in a very bitter way, no doubt by smelling in it the sellout indulgence in commerciality and humorous irony as forces that triumphed over calls for the awakening of genuine valiance and strivings for social equality and powerful political heraldry. Nonetheless, the brilliance of British and Yugoslav punk, although not exemplified by a large enough number of tunes, owing partly to the lack of interest in mastering musicality in a truly sophisticated manner among their creators and players, comes from the fact that one can distill from it the essence of the vibe of Pottier’s and Degeyter’s *L’Internationale* a.k.a. *Debout, es damnés de la Terre!*, with its calling for empathic embracement of all classes, though almost always blended with a strong aural incentive in the direction of self-independence, of thinking with one’s own head first and foremost rather than shadowing the trends and ideals served on our plates by the governing authorities, whoever they may be. The American indie music, having developed itself partly from the branches of musical expression that faultily placed themselves in the punk pocket<sup>337</sup> emphasized the latter, self-reliant and self-

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<sup>334</sup> Although being an even more versatile and less seriously approached mishmash of styles, the band’s subsequent record, Sandinista!, a triple album famously released for the price of a single record, bringing the band literally no revenue, may be even said to have stood the test of time better than London Calling, as it inseminated “revelation wrapped loosely in revolution” in a subtler, less affected and more laidback manner, fitting the band’s politics of unpretentiousness more than the forceful imposition of revolutionary attitudes. See Not4Prophet’s Culture Clash: From Brixton to El Barrio NYC, In: Let Fury Have the Hour: The Punk Rock Politics of Joe Strummer, edited by Antonio D’Ambrosio, Nation Books, New York, NY (2004), pp. 294.

<sup>335</sup> See Lennis Broe’s Clash and Burn: The Politics of Punk’s Permanent Revolution, In: Let Fury Have the Hour: The Punk Rock Politics of Joe Strummer, edited by Antonio D’Ambrosio, Nation Books, New York, NY (2004), pp. 164 - 165.

<sup>336</sup> See Joel Schalit’s Clash of the Titan, In: Let Fury Have the Hour: The Punk Rock Politics of Joe Strummer, edited by Antonio D’Ambrosio, Nation Books, New York, NY (2004), pp. 212.

<sup>337</sup> Although in 1979 it may have seemed as if the British, the Yugoslav and the North American punk scenes, with the latter infamously involving around the CBGB scene in New York City, all belonged to a single musical stream of fashion, from today’s perspective it is perfectly clear that the main holders of the punk flag in the US were not punk bands at all: Ramones were a parody on the rockabilly movement, the New York Dolls were merely an extravagant rock band, Blondie was an attempt to create yet another airheaded and bubbly Barbie dolled pop star, Television were a prog rock ensemble whose front person, Tom Verlaine thought of punk as “slightly more aggressive bubblegum music” (see Nicholas Rombes’ A Cultural Dictionary of Punk, Continuum, New York, NY (2009), pp. 242), while Patti Smith was a punk as much as Beethoven was a classicist; although she may have begun her career in something that resembled punk clothes, with her first record, Horses, she distanced herself million miles away from it, setting grounds for markedly more complex and sublime levels of pop artistic expression compared to other members of the New York punk scene. The world had to wait for a whole decade, though, until the authentic gem reflecting sparkles of innumerable signs of the times of the New York punk scene was fashioned: Sonic Youth’s Sister. Even older and much truer influences of the tediously dismal message of indie music scene number the Velvet Underground and, unavoidably, the Beach Boys’ Pet Sounds, showing us the dark side of this

sufficient aspect of the British and Yugoslav punk sounds, while widely neglecting the spirit of heroic partisanship in it, yielding a pronouncedly one-dimensional stereotype for the modern indie sound that appears as if drowning the listener in its waters of emotional lameness and self-indulgence. If looked at from a political angle, the likes of Bon Iver, Kings of Convenience, Okkervil River, Band of Horses, Devendra Banhart, Death Cab for Cutie and many others who celebrate self-pity and a sense of alienation in such a linear aural fashion can be thus seen as standing forth as monuments to the commercial interests of the ruling capitalist class, the so-called “1%”, if you will, an insight that is astounding in view of the ostensible opposition to rotten capitalist policies noticeable on the surface of this musical movement. Namely, since from this angle it could be seen as no alternative to the clubbing, bootie-shaking, selfish and merely sex appealing sound of the mainstream in its essence, with its rejection of the desire to light up the flame of empathy in the listeners’ hearts, it can be condemned for equally contributing to the great divide between human souls that is everywhere around us and which the plastically grinning ruling class may have used to keep the social unit conquered under its prosaic and hypocritical hat, as the clever conspiracy theorists may annotate. The spirit of capitalism, marked by alienation, disaffection and self-centered irksomeness, is thus, as some may say, deployed to shake that very same capitalism that the deployers oppose on the paper, but not in their hearts too, a battle plan that is, as such, predestined to failure, given that every battle, as sages would tell us, is won in heart first. Complementing these battles lost in advance in the sphere of culture and arts are those vainly waged in the political and economic arenas by lauding socialist pretenders ostensibly trying to topple down the capitalist foundations of the American society and all the malice emerging from it, though not realizing the dark, capitalist agendas hidden in the backs of their political pets’ minds and the fact that with their choices and fascistically imposed neoliberal stances they merely use capitalism to defend capitalism from more capitalism.

Yet another example that comes to mind in our treading the thin line of balance between empathic admiration of another and sane independence from another is the song that ends the debut record by Arctic Monkeys<sup>338</sup>, listening to which makes one feel as if explosively shoving away everyone around one in a moody and punkish burst of self-withdrawing rebelliousness and yet devoting one’s entire heart and being to each and every one at the same time, evoking an image of a sailor, all in white, standing on a cliff with a gorgeous view of the sea, immersed in a sense of dreamy loneliness and yet giving a marine salute to the world, dedicating oneself entirely to the world. At first the protagonist of the song disparages the surrounding clique “because their minds are all made up”, ostensibly criticizing their epistemic closeness and prejudiced frames of mind, but then seconds later he declares unreserved sympathy for them, which reaches a climax in the closing sequence of riffs, a living proof of how mountainously great expressions can arise even when we search vainly for them all throughout their course and then in those last moments pull ourselves from the abyss and ascend into heavens. An older example of this effect may come from Beggars Banquet, the Dionysian rock ‘n’ roll classic

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timeless record too. As a matter of fact, many Pitchfork Media favorites, self-pitiful antiheroes at their best, largely built on the musical premises (and promises) of Pet Sounds, exemplify what typically happens to extraordinarily original and influential human deeds when they are turned into adoration objects worth insane following: their genial, sympathetic, “pet” side becomes paler and paler with every new day, while its dark, sulky, “pat” side becomes amplified, letting the spoiled spirit of idolatry ravage the essence of these exceptional works with the passage of time.

<sup>338</sup> Listen to Arctic Monkeys’ A Certain Romance on Whatever People Say I Am, That’s What I’m Not, Domino, UK (2006).

conceived by the Rolling Stones, a record that opens with a salutation to the devil, yet after a strenuous walk down a demonic road of flare and fury, it ends with a heavenly praise to the people and a toast to the divinest in us: the love for a fellow soul. As a matter of fact, from deep within the grounds of the treasured tradition of rock 'n' roll we could dig out a story of its origins, highlighting this entwinement of devilishness and divineness that resides deep in its core. In it, a cowboy accidentally fell into a snake pit and was unable to escape from it. Having found himself face to face with a rattling snake, he knew that to save himself he needed to tell the snake a story about the beauty of saving lives using, of course, none other but the language of the snake, full of clank and clatter, lest he be misunderstood and bitten by its venomous tongue. Indeed, more often than not in life we are called upon to speak the language of bandits and crooks, lest our showing the ways of salvation be misunderstood, as well as to descend deep in depression and take the dismayed worldly souls resting in these pits by the hand, unless we never become able to bring them back to the daylight, the art which was in the classical realm mastered flawlessly by Franz Liszt, the composer whose "countenance would assume that agony of expression, mingled with radiant smiles of joy, which I never saw in any other human face, except in the paintings of our Savior by some of the early masters"<sup>339</sup>, and whose music reflected this ambivalence between guilt and gaiety quite veritably, as exemplified by the versatile juxtaposition of the Mephistophelean, the Faustian and the Gretchenian themes in his sonata in B minor. Besides, as my dear friend's, Dejan Raković's theory of consciousness sees it<sup>340</sup>, the process of reprogramming the sick and sinful features of our bodies and minds requires not bypassing their energy minima during our mental journeys across the spheres of our psyche, but rather descending deep into each one of them, individually, along the spiral staircase of their memory attractors and then broadening them, pushing their ends apart, like Samson in the Temple of Dagon, all until they become wide, but shallow, uninteresting for the balls of feelings and thoughts licensed to roam freely through the flipper of our psyche to rest therein for long periods of time. Thus, just like Zen master Joshu picked Hell, not Heaven, to go to at the end of his life on Earth, for, in his view, the mission for all the enlightened souls should be to illuminate the dark regions of reality instead of cocooning themselves in the light, so must we know that the way to embodiment of any starriness in life leads through the long nights of the soul, as the medieval theologians had it, which we must not hesitate to enter if we are determined to become a lantern of cosmic Wonder and Love to the world. If we were to obey the call of old Bruce, a.k.a. the Boss, who had gone far pass the Bridge & Tunnel to deliver enlightening encouragement to those in need of it, we must venture valiantly and with colossal wonder into that devious "darkness on the edge of town"<sup>341</sup>, for only there would we be able to get the solid proof of the divine liveliness of our being and glimpse the subtle twinkle of the celestial constellations that we, creatures built from stars, are being made of. Thus, to extend one arm into the muddiest lowlands of being and to reach out in heavenward directions with the other arm of ours, then grasp these termini firmly and turn ourselves into a bridge across which the energies can travel back and forth, drawing roads of salvation before the former and providing contrasts instrumental in preserving enthusiasm and preventing the spread of lethargy to the latter is,

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<sup>339</sup> See noticed Henry Reeve at a Liszt's concert in Paris in April 1835. See Norman Lebrecht's *The Book of Musical Anecdotes*, The Free Press, New York, NY (1985), pp. 169.

<sup>340</sup> As concisely described in Dejan Raković's 2013/2014 New Year's message, Personal Correspondence (December 31, 2013).

<sup>341</sup> Listen to Bruce Springsteen's *Darkness on the Edge of Town* on *Darkness on the Edge of Town*, Columbia (1978).

correspondingly, what we must do. “Dark and light at the same time”<sup>342</sup> is how Ben Watt of Everything but the Girl described the music of Bert Jansch, and we ought to be sure that this impression of a simultaneous pull by an unbearably oppressive darkness and immersion into a river of light that liberates and enlivens the spirit is common to every music that reaches out to souls fallen from grace, which we all ultimately are, and brings them back to the daylight of divine experience. With this Janusian recipe in mind, the cowboy succeeded in improvising a story that highlighted the merits of goodness and grace in the snake’s ominous, distressing and neurotic language and, as the story convinces us, gave birth to the sound of rock ‘n’ roll by his musical storytelling. To this very day, this story stands forth as a reminder that the authentic rock ‘n’ roll as well as the modern music originating from it will lead to the death of the soul if it retains its prime “kick”<sup>343</sup> whose message is freedom and freedom only and neglects to spread the message of love together with it, when the only way to “save a life”<sup>344</sup> is to use this language of freedom, snaky and strident, to tell the story of love, thus interbreeding two of the most fundamental, albeit mutually antagonistic pillars sustaining life, Freedom and Love, spinning in the heart of one another like the black and the white in the Tai-Chi-Tu symbol. The truest and the most touching examples of rock music have thus retained both its soft side and its shrill side, having their authors’ “hearts beating rhythm” while the “soul keeps on singing the blues”<sup>345</sup>, along with a plethora of other superimpositions of opposites that this has naturally entailed; or, as pointed out by the rock ‘n’ roll critic, Dave Marsh, “Rock’s not all swagger and rebellion; it’s their opposite, too; in fact, I would say that rock ‘n’ roll contains multitudes or else it would have turned into nothing but a fad”<sup>346</sup>, before adding that “rock ‘n’ roll seems to have been both freedom and torment, freedom to do things the world claimed could not be done, torment because of the obstacles to doing them, including the ones you place there yourself”<sup>347</sup>. Hereby, if a captivating encounter of opposites can be found routinely engrained in this sound, we can be sure that it is the one of lifesaving beauty and soothing harmony on one side and banging and throbbing fury and anger on the other, relentlessly washing over each other. Like the “sweet and salty”<sup>348</sup> of the river and the ocean, respectively, the meeting point of which is often cited as the one where life has originated, so is it with this entwinement of madness and grace, for life, really, is naturally born and rejuvenated on the back of it. Dionysian and Apollonian vibes are, in fact, so neatly balanced in most tunes picked from this genre that the guiding voices of “the god of intoxication, wine, ecstasy, and of drunkenness bordering on violence and madness”<sup>349</sup> of the former and of “the deity who epitomizes restraint, purity, and orderliness”<sup>350</sup> of the latter seem to be inextricably entwined around each other like a pair of passionate lovers. Moreover, even since the earliest days of its inception, rock ‘n’ roll has been placed side by side with two basic ingredients of rockers’ lifestyle: sex and drugs, the former of which has stood for the

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<sup>342</sup> See Ben Watt’s Thoughts on Bert Jansch, Ben Watt’s webpage (February 11, 2016), retrieved from <http://benwatt.com/play/article/thoughts-on-bert-jansch#>.

<sup>343</sup> Kick, remember, is an evanescent quality tied to the best of rock songs, resembling the swagger and the sway - equally mysterious, with never a recipe given on how to reproduce them - of which the jazz critics talked in reference to the best jazz performances.

<sup>344</sup> Listen to the Fray’s How to Save a Life on How to Save a Life, Epic (2005).

<sup>345</sup> Listen to Chuck Berry’s Roll over Beethoven, Chess Records (1956).

<sup>346</sup> See Dave Marsh’s The Beatles’ Second Album, Rodale, New York, NY (2007), pp. 34.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>348</sup> Watch I am Belfast directed by Mark Cousins (2012).

<sup>349</sup> See Ted Gioia’s Healing Songs, Duke University Press, Durham, NC (2006), pp. 71-72.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72.

unassailable epitome of bliss arrived at through the marriage of pleasure and pain<sup>351</sup>, whereas the latter has shown us how heroic powers and junky weaknesses could be reinforced side by side in the room of a druggie's mind, explaining for these two traits of rock 'n' roll lifestyle being apples falling not far from the tree of rock 'n' roll sound, or *vice versa*, for in this world causes and effects are as inextricably entwined as the top and the bottom on an alchemical snake biting its tail. Some might add now that this music still speaks to snakes in us and is thus inherently imperfect and damaging for the global consciousness, for it implicitly supports such sinuously serpentine stances and worldviews that hide hissing anger deep in their core. Others may, however, object to this point, claiming that the missionary path for the enlightened ones, those who keep the lifesaving beauty glowing within their hearts, takes them straight to the darkest and most hellish reigns of them all, for it is there that the glow of their spirits will be most meaningful for the accomplishment of their mission of saving the world, which, thus, endows the rock 'n' roll sound with a far greater glow of perfection than it seems. Just like Orpheus developed otherworldly creative capacities and managed to soften hearts of innumerable souls around him and let them sublimely float in the air by dedicating his life to the mission of "reforming the religion of Dionysus in the spirit of Apollo"<sup>352</sup>, so is there the room for belief that learning the poisonous rattling and humming language of the snakes in us first and then permeating it with the lifesaving rhythm and melody - like a benevolent alien that infiltrates a spoiled system pretending to be its veritable part, but only to begin to change it for better once comfortably set inside of it - is the road which the most courageous, Orphean creative spirits in this world will set their feet on.

In any case, had rock 'n' roll sound remained at the level of shallow boogie-woogie and overly predictable, linearly sounding rockabilly, carrying forth an aural vibe that is said to be strictly masculine, inspired by boyish fascinations with "mechanical and rotary motion – rolling, spinning, twisting, screwing"<sup>353</sup>, it would have failed to evolve into the most powerful musical stream on the planet that it is now. Luckily for us, however, these solely Yang features of its rocky beginnings, which were all about providing an impetus for aimless jiggling and joggling, happened to become balanced with their diametrical opposites in terms of watery, Yin softness and floaty and gentle, inherently feminine cravings to embrace all life in one's arms and lull it to a sound sleep, helping rock 'n' roll to evolve into a sound wherein "there are monsters, there are angels, there's a peacefulness and a rage, there is sugar and there is salt, there is ice and there is fire"<sup>354</sup>, as it was said in the opening song from one-year-old Theo's first favorite "mamma's" CD, and, with the mesmerizing power of these innate contradictions, pioneer a trail that gradually broadened into a starlit avenue, now an essential musical medium for the relentlessly fresh exhibitions of modern artiness. As a matter of fact, every time we tie a string onto a guitar frame and tune it, we are invited to think of how smoothness and silkiness of sound can be given rise to only insofar as the string's tightness and rigidity are preserved. In a similar fashion, being anchored in place like a rock is a prerequisite to roll like a glaring Tai-Chi ball of light, from one sunroof to another, as much as floating on the silky carpet of feminine fanciness is needed to endow the masculine rockiness in music with the strokes of an intrinsically feminine energy that

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<sup>351</sup> Kāma-Yoga devotees may add at this point that the greatest moment of the art of sex lies in the crisscross encounter of the orgasmic pull upwards and the chill-out pull downwards, on which one ecstatically rides so long as the balance is maintained.

<sup>352</sup> See Ted Gioia's *Healing Songs*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC (2006), pp. 72.

<sup>353</sup> See Evan Eisenberg's *The Recording Angel: Music, Records and Culture from Aristotle to Zappa*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT (2005), pp. 80.

<sup>354</sup> Listen to Voice of the Beehive's *Monsters and Angels on Honey Lingers*, London Records, UK (1991).

speaks about the essentiality of the swings and sways of freedom. “It was juxtaposition of something being extremely tight, but very loose at the same time”<sup>355</sup>, is how Christian McBride described the Famous Flames’ Cold Sweat, allegedly the first funk song ever recorded, before extending the same description to jazz *per se*, which we now, after witnessing how the imposition of the limitations of the beat has yielded aural frameworks for the dissemination of the greater message of freedom in musical language than the world has ever seen, could apply to the entire realm of popular music in general. To shun the more sophisticated rhythmicity of the classical music, where any repetition of the phrases was considered a sin, and imprison the listener inside a beatbox to spread around the ideals of freedom, of gliding through space like an ethereal wavelet liberated from any oppression, physical or mental, is analogous to the use of a rock to prove the fluidity of water and is a task whose apparent success can bring any cognitive apparatus reflecting on it to the brink of enlightenment. Thinking of this clash between gentle flows of grace and tempests of craze and passion that oftentimes leaves us in speechless awe makes me recall that a somewhat similar balance between a sense of quiet withdrawnness and mountain-moving empathy will soon be elaborated in more detail under the colorful phosphorescent lights of the Way of Love. For now, the aural atmosphere of DJ Shadow’s monument to the art of copying & pasting, *Endtroducing*, evoking distant and glacial futuristic spaces, yet intercepted with infinitely intimate angelic voices, instilling in the listener a feel that “every chance one takes brings one ever closer to being far away”, as sung in a Cut Copy song<sup>356</sup>, sends forth waves of the Way of Love, which could be with a little bit of imagination made to invoke a sense of simultaneous confinement of oneself within a bubble enwrapped by the divine light, of a state of perfect loneliness from which we are able to deliver moves to the surface of our being, unspoiled by the tendency to conform to social norms and expectations and thus distort this untainted purity of the divine origins of our actions, on one side and of perfect empathy and oneness with the entire world and every single creature in it on the other. Can You Feel It?, the blissful 1986 piece by the Chicago electro sound guru, Larry Heard, which nowadays stands forth like a monumental orange sunrise of the deep house culture, similarly combines cheerful cymbals and enlivening drumbeats that open the petals of the lotus flower of one’s heart and invite one to dance one’s blissful heart out with deep voices that project our awareness beyond the surface layers of our consciousness and into its unfathomable depths. For, we need to travel deep inside of ourselves in order to unlock the gates that surround our heart and liberate its divine shine by profoundly, not merely superficially, opening the channels for its radiant outer glow; hence, the benefits of the dialectical pull in the opposite directions, outside and inside, along the trajectory of the Way of Love. In fact, the combination of (a) a drive towards perfect relaxedness and lightness of spirit and (b) a constant tension-raising groove, seemingly antipodal to each other, is what makes the lounge electro sound, the betterment of which Larry Heard undoubtedly contributed to, appealing to the modern ear, yielding a dreamy and yet energetic state of mind typical of an enlightened psyche. The balance between dissipation and integration, that is, jubilant expression and introvert withdrawnness, distillable from this blend, can suggest its ability to unexplainably impress us by subtly highlighting none other but the glorious epistemic panorama of the Way of Love.

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<sup>355</sup> Watch *Mr. Dynamite: The Rise of James Brown*, a documentary directed by Alex Gibney (2014).

<sup>356</sup> Listen to Cut Copy’s *Nobody Lost, Nobody Found* on *In Ghost Colours*, Modular (2008).

Recognizing all this has made me wonder whether pieces of art that magically impress us for no obvious reason whatsoever<sup>357</sup> accomplish so because they secretly point to the Way of Love, the magical blend of separation and unison and the ultimate recipe for fulfilled being in this life. If there is a single philosopher who, I am sure, would readily agree with this viewpoint, it would be Martin Buber, who built his entire ontological universe around a similar concept of simultaneous preservation of individuality, symbolized by “I”, and devotion to empathic oneness with the hearts of surrounding creatures, symbolized by “Thou”. One such philosophical system is conditioned by the separation of I from Thou and by the incessant quest for their union and symbiosis, which the meaning of life is being ascribed to, hinting at the polarity between separation and unification intrinsic to it. Consequently, “Buber demanded that the scenic event, like all genuine art, be a synthesis of opposites so that the audience be at once overpowered and observing, abandoned and preserved”<sup>358</sup>, Maurice Friedman wrote, referring to Buber’s belief that “the primal duality itself, being and counterbeing, opposed to each other and bound to each other”<sup>359</sup> is responsible for endowing art with most sublime qualities, with an impression of “the storm the stillness, the mountain of waves the sandy plain, the contradiction the agreement”<sup>360</sup>, reflecting the mental and emotional state of the artists “whose force is the force of fire; it burns in contradiction, and it shines in unity; like Enoch, of whom a legend tells that he was transformed from flesh to fire, his bones are glowing coals, but his eyelashes are the splendor of the firmament”<sup>361</sup>, as he went on to poetically describe one of his stunning theatrical experiences. After all, it does not take the analytical strike of a genius to realize that what is colloquially being termed “a vision”, presenting a key drive for creative expression and being intrinsically tied to artistic experience, can arise in one only insofar as a contrast between it, in all its brightness and splendor, and its backdrop painted in the shades of bleakness and obsolescence is created on the canvas of the visionary’s mind, implying the crucifying polarizations his spirit must undergo to yield an artistic fruit to the world and explaining the simultaneous pull in the directions of starry-eyed optimism and black-hole depression experienced by the artist all the world over, placing both their lives and the lives of people close to them at the edge of a cliff. And so, when I heard a grainy voice on the radio singing of how “up on melancholy hill there’s a plastic tree, are you here with me”, in yet another simple and catchy song that blends psychedelic melancholy with jumpy joyousness<sup>362</sup>, these touching verses prompted me to think whether the key to their unexplainable impressiveness has lain in their hiding the enlightening sense of being lost and found deep in their essence, the key to the dialectical evolution of the world, by depicting one looking away from another in wonder, but only to return to her with care in a second or so and sympathetically offer a hand. In that sense, I felt as if the balance of the Way of Love and the entire Philosophy of the Way with its alternation between being different and unique as one launches one’s awareness into distant starry skies of wonder, knowing that “Love does not

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<sup>357</sup> For, only after our hearts become enchanted by music can rational attempts be made to explain the reasons behind the epithet of impressiveness that we endow the given music with, rather than *vice versa*. This is concordant with the fact that all impressions of the world are first swallowed by the heart, as our emotions and aspirations lie at much more fundamental planes in our cognitive spheres in comparison with the surface features of our mental reflections and rules of logic, language and other rational tools applicable therein.

<sup>358</sup> See Maurice Friedman’s *Martin Buber and the Theater*, Funk & Wagnalls, New York, NY (1969), pp. 18.

<sup>359</sup> Read Martin Buber’s *On Polarity: Dialogue After the Theater*, In: *Martin Buber and the Theater*, edited and translated by Maurice Friedman, Funk & Wagnalls, New York, NY (1969), pp. 56.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74.

<sup>362</sup> Listen to Gorillaz’ *On Melancholy Hill on Plastic Beach*, Parlophone (2010).

consist in gazing at each other, but in looking outward together in the same direction”, as Antoine de Saint-Exupery observed, and equally plunging in sameness and empathy into some lovely and warm earthlings’ eyes, stood subtly and quite probably inadvertently inscribed in these verses as the key to their impressiveness, sending forth another meteorite of thought through the scruffy cosmic head of mine, flashing with a message that profound signs that point to the heart of the Way of Love could be engrained in the simplest verses and gestures one could think of and may be what mysteriously makes pieces of art around us glow with a magical sense of importance. After all, the whole concept of the Way of Love, of simultaneous distantness and intimacy which governs all the fulfilling interactions in Nature and is ingrained in the symbol of the Way, could be found in melodic, tonal music *per se*, with its juxtaposition of dissonant tones that epitomize drifting into new directions and consonant ones that characterize restoration of the sense of harmonious unison. In any case, from the panorama of the Way of Love, the magnificence of a musical or any other piece of art could be measured by the extent to which it simultaneously pulls the listener both ways, deep to the insides of her starry essence and outwards, so as to expressively open one’s heart, freely release the fireworks of beauty concealed therein and shed the stardust of one’s spirit all over the face of the world. Enthralling songs and pieces of arts in general manifest their dialectical nature by acting as temporary solaces for the mind, while simultaneously propelling our spirits in the direction of ever more enchanting expressions of our being. As many of us know, the first encounters with works of art bear resemblance to entering cognitive abysses of a kind, which is succeeded by an impression of travelling deeper and deeper into the spheres of our psyche, presumably still like a stone, with headphones on and eyes closed. In such an instant of a sudden inward direction of our awareness, we become like the lidless boy carved onto the wall behind the stage in the atrium of Santa Cruz’s Catalyst or like thousands of antique sculptures of figures and figures with eyes for which one cannot tell if they are open or closed, portraying the way of walking through the world idealized by classicists, with “eyes wide shut”, immersed into an ocean of bliss that fills the insides of a divined mind, a state gently grazed by such a listening experience even for a second at a time. On the other side, however, exiting these magic wells of inspiration, we elatedly emerge projected to journey along the ascending path to heavenly being in his world. The deeper we descend in this meditative plunging into the secrets hidden within a precious piece of art, the more magnificent launching of our spirit into clouds of enlightened imagery and ways of being will be; hence, the metaphor of the Way of Love engrained in our fruitful encounters with artistic works, just as with any other inspirational details of our experiential reality. Each marvelous artistic work is thence an epitome of the image of the crucified Christ, making us bow with our awareness inwardly, opening doors to an introspective silence in which we could dig wonderful insights for the growth of our spirits and enhancement of its shine, while at the same time it crushes the gates posed on the way to the outflow of the colorful and exuberant burst of emotions that resembles the music of Cocteau Twins, fulfilling the dreams of our beautiful being in the world, of dancing like a celestial ballerina that drops divine signs with every enchanting move sent into the air, of stretching the arms of our spirit, just as the Christ on the cross did, and starting to live for the world with the fullness of our heart, thus becoming reborn again in the realm of starry spirit. After all, the purpose of arts is to lead the way for their consumers to spread their arms in two directions, to mind and Nature at the same time. On one side art thus has to powerfully relate to man in order to be grasped as significant, while on another side it has to open one to the infinity of Nature, to establish conditions for one’s growth into something ever more magnificent, conforming all the while to Andrei Tarkovsky’s ideal of a work of art that

connects its consumer with “the whole wide world”<sup>363</sup>. Or, as the film director, himself, pointed out: “The image is not a meaning that is expressed by the film director, but it represents a whole world, which is reflected in it, as in a drop of water”<sup>364</sup>. The essentially dialectical concept of co-creation can be, therefore, discerned as inherent to the conception of masterful arts, alluding to yet another crucifying symbolism ascribable to arts *per se*.

If the process of befriending pieces of art and then enjoying their guiding-star company for a whole lifetime follows the line of simultaneous immersion into the depths of our stellar spirit and empathic emission of the sunrays of our spirit so as to trustfully reach out to these suns of moving energy that are built into works of art with the purpose of illuminating our ways, describable by the concept of the Way of Love, then it would come as no surprise if I were to notice that the creative artistic expression engrains the very same principle in itself. Hence, when Jim Morrison of the Doors said that “we hide ourselves in our music to reveal ourselves”<sup>365</sup>, he grazed the surface of this idea that retreating into the inner space of our soul in order to craft wonderful gems of expression preconditions our artistic shininess to the world. Martin Buber was on the brink of reaching a similar insight when he said that the only purpose of one’s withdrawal into oneself during contemplation or creative work is to “open the door and find a beautiful human face gazing at one”<sup>366</sup>. Hence, to open the petals of the flower of one’s heart and propel oneself with the fuel of a great empathic desire to embellish the world with ornaments of signs of divine beauty, but still to remain partially shelled and covered by a veil of mystery is the way all fruitful artists in this world ought to be prepared to follow. Moreover, this viewpoint also sheds light on the fruitfulness of our slumbering on trans-disciplinary railway crossings, being attracted to both directions of action or thought spreading out from there and yet sadly sensing the distance in relation to both. This explains why I have chosen to anchor myself right where arts and science coalesce with each other and dwell in a spacey bubble that is simultaneously close to and distant from both, knowing that such is the recipe for reaching peaks of the most sublime creativity climbable to in this life. For, I have known that to those standing on the edge, in this case the thin line of intersection between science and arts, risking to fall off the podiums of one and the other, the most gorgeous views of both of the adjoined sides open. A medieval monk compared Serbs to “flowers standing on the edge of the grave”<sup>367</sup>, and I, myself, have wholeheartedly lived up to this epithet when it came to risking my professional integrity and reputation for the sake of setting the base for the flowering of my creativity right on this edge where arts and science meet, for that, in my opinion, was the only place wherefrom one could help arts avoid the fate of becoming ever more unsystematic, impulsive and devoid of higher aesthetic purpose and at the same time help science be diverted from the devastating course that it has been on in the industrialized world, which is for its educational centers to become no longer the hubs of romantic and renaissance thought and of the most exuberant expressions of love for Nature and effectively turn into trade schools supported by the same obsession with practicality and training in specialized crafts that was recognized as vital for boosting the

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<sup>363</sup> Watch Jill Bilcock: *Dancing the Invisible*, a documentary film directed by Axel Grigor (2017).

<sup>364</sup> See Andrei Tarkovsky’s *Sculpting in Time* (1986), Cited in Zoe Georgiadou’s *Cinema and Architectural Design Education*, *Artciencia.com* 10 (20-21) 1 – 21 (2017).

<sup>365</sup> See Mickey Hart’s and Fredric Lieberman’s *Spirit into Sound: The Magic of Music*, Grateful Dead Books, Novato, CA (1999), pp. 155.

<sup>366</sup> Paraphrased from Martin Buber’s *I and Thou*, Touchstone, New York, NY (1923).

<sup>367</sup> See Lazar Džamić’s *Najčešći stereotipi o Srbima: 10 pojmova balkanskog mentaliteta*, B92 News (November 15, 2015), retrieved from [http://bulevar.b92.net/srpska-posla.php?yyyy=2015&mm=11&dd=15&nav\\_id=1063357](http://bulevar.b92.net/srpska-posla.php?yyyy=2015&mm=11&dd=15&nav_id=1063357).

productivity of a society - albeit inescapably alienating because an overspecialized world resisting transdisciplinary connects is neatly portrayed by the Little Prince's one composed of separate planets, each populated by a single soul who has no way of communicating with its neighbors - in the earliest days of the Industrial Age, the obsession that continues to thrive to this very day and threatens to pull the last pieces of the heart and soul from once utterly vivacious stereotypical scientific mind, nowadays as listless and dead as Joseph Conrad's Mistah Kurtz toward the end of his Faustian quest for diamonds of exquisite thought<sup>368</sup>. After all, common sense tells us that we need to come to the very edge of a cliff overlooking the sea to find the most fabulous panoramas, those that have magically attracted adventurers and pioneers since the earliest days of humanity and from which both ocean and land can be seen in a most comprehensive light. But to stand on such vistas is to yield to a strange concoction of feelings within one, sensing the stable grounds beneath one, but also finding oneself scared of slipping and falling into the abyss stretched before one, which should be just about enough to cause a crack to open inside of one's consciousness, through which the light of the divine spirit could get in and the light of the soul escape out, to bedazzle the world with its infinite beauty. For, like desert oases forming atop cracks in the Earth's crust<sup>369</sup>, where the underground waters hit the seismic faults and rise to the surface, so does the light of the spirit need a split in our psyche to emerge to the surface and bedazzle both us and our viewers, lest in the absence of it all in our mental spheres remains dry and arid, like a lifeless desert. Thus, on a side note, the student in my biomaterials class who wrote down in a questionnaire, "I feel like I might get an A in the course and I might fail at the same time"<sup>370</sup>, could not have given me a better compliment for my teaching approach, which, as in arts, always aims to crucify souls on crosses whereon dialectical opposites, the farthest ups and downs or lefts and rights meet, making them feel as if they have descended into the darkest depths of the earth and ascended to the heavenliest heights at the same time. For, if the state of a creative mind is indeed describable in the same way the American painter, Mary Cassatt described Paul Cezanne in 1894, then I vowed to have the same, inherently dialectical, bipolar, Christ-on-the-cross mental state, oh so familiar to me, its proud bearer, be the one my teaching efforts should strive to produce in the students: "There was something surprising, even contradictory, about Cézanne. He spouted profanities yet could recite long passages of Virgil and Ovid in Latin. He scorned priests but went faithfully to Mass. He hated the official Paris Salon but kept submitting his work to its judges. He haunted the Louvre, copying sculptures and paintings into his sketchbooks, yet critics said he couldn't draw. He was obsessed with tradition and obsessed with overturning it. He felt himself a failure... and the best painter of his time"<sup>371</sup>. Besides, with my own being consciously crucified on crosses of contradictions for the sake of bleeding with words, notes and gestures that inspire people down to the depths of their souls, I could not veritably teach anything but the embracement of similar dualities to my students. Although one such contradictory character that I have harbored made

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<sup>368</sup> For a more detailed elaboration of this parable see my paper entitled Chemical Reactions as *Petite Rendezvous*: The Use of Metaphor in Materials Science Education and published in Journal of Materials Education Volume 36, Issues 1-2, printed pages 25 – 50 (2014).

<sup>369</sup> The official guide to Joshua Tree National Park available at its visitor centers (2019).

<sup>370</sup> An anonymous response of a student in the BioE 460 course at the University of Illinois at Chicago (December 3, 2014). As I elaborated on my impressiveness with this statement, I remember I added that "if you live life right, you are bound to feel as a champion and a loser at the same time... but only if you live it right", causing a burst of laughter to brim over the lecture hall.

<sup>371</sup> See Paul Trachtman's Cézanne: The Man who Changed the Landscape of Art, Smithsonian Magazine (January 2006), retrieved from <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/cezanne-107584544/>.

my career path, without an even slightest conscious effort on my behalf, confusing to the casual interpreter thereof, who could not untangle even with the best of means whether I was a saint or a crook, I have never given up on the belief that there are parallel dangers and benefits of producing such intercontinental cracks inside my students' minds: while they can be the source of perplexity that sucks meaning out of life, they can also be spaces from which light can enter the soul and exit it so as to bless and beautify the world. After all, since successfully crafted works of art present none but a veritable reflection of dialectical contradictions that have crucified the minds who created them, we could be brought straight to the doors of appreciation of the following statement proclaimed by the Italian fashion designer, Donatella Versace: "Creativity comes from a conflict of ideas". A renaissance French artist, Jean Cocteau, who also spent a portion of his creative time designing clothes would have surely agreed with this viewpoint, having noticed earlier how "the spirit of creation is the highest form of contradiction among humans"<sup>372</sup> in the course of his celebration of "habit-abhorring disobedience with which boldness reacts to rules"<sup>373</sup>. Speaking of the aesthetics of contradiction in the domain of wearable arts, every time we opt for a combination of blue and yellow or brown and green instead of, let's say, blue and green or brown and beige and every time we adorn a slender body with a horizontally striped sailor's shirt and a stocky figure with a shirt with vertical stripes or place aviator sunglasses on Asian button noses, we engage in such wearing of a cross, so to speak, proudly, so as to inspire and harmonize the casual gazers. Then, even though flamboyantly appareled Oscar Wilde claimed in 1884 that "one should either be a work of art or wear a work of art"<sup>374</sup> and even though Bernard and Berta Rudofsky entitled one of their landmark lectures How Can People Expect to Have Good Architecture When They Wear Such Clothes, we could easily envisage at this point that the embodiments of the prophet Muhammad's motto, *faqrī fakhrī*, meaning "poverty is my pride"<sup>375</sup>, of St. Francis of Assisi's "our Lady, Holy Poverty"<sup>376</sup>, or of any other emanation of the authentically Christian aesthetics of poverty get to be viewed in the most precious of their lights when one works one's being into a beautiful piece of art and lets it eclipse the fancy schmanciness of one's clothing by bringing the two into an exhilarating opposition, implicitly demonstrating thereby how the shininess of our spirits is able to endow with cuteness the least appealing of garments, while even the most adorable clothes fade into imperceptible paleness when worn by dead and diffident spirits. I spun these thoughts like swiftly rotating galaxies in my head as I stood on a pavement that flickered with the little vitreous grains embedded in it, listened to the hum of water pipes underneath the quiet starlit street and gazed at the apparels hung over neon-lit mannequins stylishly posed in the storefront of a glossy boutique, in my sand-colored tee shirt which had paled Mickey Mouse drawn on it blowing soap bubbles in the air, reminiscent of those I had done research on for one whole Olympic cycle on my way to earning a PhD degree and those in which Hermann Hesse saw

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<sup>372</sup> Watch the documentary on the art of Jean Cocteau, directed by Noël Simolo, available at <http://cinemathequeip.wordpress.com/2011/06/28/short-film-tuesday-jean-cocteau-documentary-noel-simolo/> (2007).

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>374</sup> See Michael Bracewell's *When Surface was Depth: Death by Cappuccino and Other Reflections on Music and Culture in the 1990's*, Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA (2002), pp. 96.

<sup>375</sup> See Annemarie Schimmel's *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC (1975), pp. 121.

<sup>376</sup> See Saint Francis' testament from Sienna, 1226, In: André Vauchez's *Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CN (2009), pp. 131.

symbols of the ephemeral nature of reality<sup>377</sup>, thinking of how a little bit of scruffiness on my babyish face would provide an intriguing contrast to its childish imagery. It, however, prompted a myriad of related examples to suddenly occur to me, from John Galliano's ballroom gown made out of weathered newspapers to Alexander McQueen's clothing concoctions of the Victorian and the punkish to the coquettish mouthpiece in the hands of Audrey Hepburn, with her mousey face and eyes as chastely and purely looking as the moon river of which she, with a bandana in her hair, sang from her New York City apartment balcony, all along with a gazillion of similar contrasts that mainstream fashion designers slyly use to allure the armadas of skin-deep fashionistas. As a matter of fact, whatever the art we have in mind, whenever we happen to be impressed by it, we could go ahead and search for a striking contrast hidden somewhere in its core. For, cognitive systems subjected to a conflicting pull of competing ideals and drives are those in which a crack is produced, from which the sunlight of a lively spirit within makes its way out, to the surface of their being and the surrounding reality. No doubt that the Way of Love, for one, subjects its followers to one such pull along diametrically opposite directions, ever deeper towards the essence of oneself where the shine of spirit untouched by the soiled social fingers dwells, so as to guide our actions in a most blissful manner imaginable, but also ever wider towards the surrounding world that is to be embraced by this inner shine, lest the latter slowly dwindles, aiming to join our heart in empathy with others and wash them with the geysers of otherworldly beauty that our inner spirit bleeds with. However, knowing that the root of schizophrenic acting lies in personality splits, we could once more conclude that the line dividing geni in the art of living from deluded maniacs is quite thin. Therefore, those who wish to walk along the Way of Love and become genuine stars on Earth ought to be prepared to cope with countless traps and challenges that this cracking of the soul from the inside bears. Without allowing these powerful tectonic movements of the spiritual substrate of our mind to occur under the groundbreaking force of blasting emotions and lifesaving aspirations, yielding splits and cracks along which the liveliest mental landscapes arise, no truly innovative lines would be drawn by our creative being in this life. For, just like ruptures in the Earth's crust allow the tectonic shifts and seismic waves that produce continents and create conditions for life as we know it to occur, so could cracks in our consciousness be hypothesized to present the sources for our epistemic edification and the creation of luscious mental and emotional landscapes that adorn our insides, preventing their erosion into flat and lifeless backdrops of the mind. The madman Woodsy from Irvine Welsh's *Ecstasy* therefore quite righteously convinces the suspiciously looking doctors at a mental hospital in Edinburgh in which he was secluded in the idea that "conflict creates consciousness", the phrase with which Erwin Schrödinger would have surely agreed, as this was his own version of it: "Consciousness and discord with one's own self are inescapably linked up, even that they must, as it were, be proportional to each other. This sounds a paradox, but the wisest of all times... who by life and word have, more than others, formed and transformed that work of art which we call humanity, testify by speech and writing or even by their lives that more than others have they been torn by the pangs of inner discord. Let this be a consolation to him who also suffers from it. Without it nothing enduring has ever been begotten"<sup>378</sup>. If we tend to see a social mind as a whole of a kind as well, we could also get reminded of a concordant claim by Alfred North Whitehead, "Periods of tranquility are seldom

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<sup>377</sup> See Hermann Hesse's *Soap Bubbles*, In: *Appendix, Glass Bead Game*, Narodna Knjiga, Belgrade, Serbia (1943), also available at <http://shonpatri.tumblr.com/post/267621878/soap-bubbles>.

<sup>378</sup> See Erwin Schrödinger's *Mind and Matter*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK (1944), pp. 100 - 101.

prolific of creative achievement... great ages have been unstable ages”<sup>379</sup>, aiming to show us that times during which the human spirit is being tempted, torn and crucified amongst various directions of feeling and thought are those during which most precious products of its creativeness are being born. Conversely, because inventive thought is by default rebellious thanks to its challenging its paradigmatic counterpart, creative thinkers naturally create discord in their environment, let alone in their own mental apparatuses, which explains along the way and alongside a myriad of sociological reasons why men have throughout the history been more inventive as thinkers than women, for whom the provision of safety for their progeny has been the first and foremost priority, the safety which, as we see, must be shunned *en route* to the blissful horizons of creative thought. Next, the Serbian performance artist, Marina Abramović, for example, ascribed her creative drives to schismatic upbringing whereby her parents enforced emotionless, militaristic discipline while her grandma taught her of the watery gentleness of the spiritual life<sup>380</sup>, bearing resemblance to the pull between stonehearted sternness and goodhearted grace experienced by the pensive protagonist of Terrence Malick’s *Tree of Life*, though with a far more fruitful and functional outcome. Likewise, various ups and downs in the life of Rembrandt van Rijn are said to have cracked his soul open and created an artist who “seemed like a man on a mountain top, looking on one side to sweet meadows filled with flowers and sunlight, and on the other to a desolate landscape over which a clouded sun is setting”<sup>381</sup>, being a bipolar state of mind that inclines one to the greatest creative feats, but also to the unthinkable mental torments. For, remember, this process of producing cracks in the crust of our consciousness is such that it lives up to the ancient Buddhist premise that the same is the key that unbolts the doors of Heaven and Hell, setting grounds on which an equal probability exists for us to become a genius or a madman. Still, given its essential role in hatching a divinely creative emanation of life from that celestial egg nested between the soft, warm feathers of our heart, a.k.a. soul, each one of us should set out on an inward journey with an epistemological mission to recognize similar tectonic faults between the continents of one’s consciousness, along which mountainously powerful and literally groundbreaking expressions of one’s being are given rise to. Innumerable splits within our psyche can be therefore seen feeding our creativity, from concurrent inner impetuses to empathically express oneself with an explosion of beautifying energy and introspectively withdraw into a meditative space bubble of a kind, which is exactly the polarity of the Way of Love, to a sense of floating in enlightening oneness with the entire world while somehow simultaneously remaining isolate and remote from others, to feelings of fondness and attraction over one and repugnance over other aspects of living things and circumstances, to a general sense of belonging to two or more places at the same time or feeling as a nomadic refugee and a cosmopolitan all at once, to millions of other spiritually harrowing polarities on which our heart and mind could be crucified. Lord Byron envisaged his muse as the one who “walks in beauty, like the night of cloudless climes and starry skies, and all that’s best of dark and bright meets in her aspect and her eyes”<sup>382</sup>, and I, myself, a descendent of the proud bearers of the tradition in which warriors and poets, werewolves and angels, beasts and saints are merged into one, with a cocktail composed of both the best in people and the worst in people

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<sup>379</sup> See Alfred North Whitehead’s *Science and the Modern World*, The Free Press, New York, NY (1925), pp. 207.

<sup>380</sup> Watch the documentary movie *Marina Abramović: The Artist is Present* directed by Matthew Akers (2012).

<sup>381</sup> See *Rembrandt and the Nightwatch*, History of Holland webpage: <https://www.historyofholland.com/rembrandt-and-the-nightwatch.html> (2019).

<sup>382</sup> Read Lord Byron’s poem informally entitled *She Walks in Beauty*, available at <http://www.bartleby.com/106/173.html> (1814).

flowing fierily and effervescently through their veins, having stood shakily on the cracking ground of my psyche, thrilled and electrified, occasionally with the sound of Michael Stipe singing in the distance that famous “hey kid, shake the land, maybe you’re crazy in the head”<sup>383</sup>, can attest to the veracity of the fact that being crucified from the inside between mutually irreconcilable poles and yet reaching out to grasp all of them, hoping that they could be fused together in enlightening bliss, like matter and antimatter annihilating one another with the release of energy that can light up the whole Universe, is the key to crushing the gates that block the inspirational inflow and the expressional outflow of the greatest creative powers conceivable to our earthly eyes. Recent studies have come to conclusion that bilingual children, always torn between dual ways of naming things and picturing life verbally, do better in school<sup>384</sup>, the finding that comes as no surprise to one gotten used to see merits not in streaming steadily along predetermined paths, but in standing on crossroads with their whole hearts and souls and never stopping to wonder Y, hopping from one perspective to another and thereby magically avoiding the traps that millions of devilish blind spots pose before our ways, seizing in their sunless gaps all of those who blindly stream forward, without ever looking back or sideways, and exactly because of that, as the Little Prince would have reminded us<sup>385</sup>, do not reach afar. For this reason, also, intellectual and emotional comfort and safety brought about by overly deterministic living according to prefixed templates are to be avoided at all costs if we are to retain our creative powers, while seas of unknown, insecure and uncertain are to be jumped into with our entire being in search of holy grails to rejuvenate the rivers of creativity within us with. This also explains why some of the most accomplished artists, from Pablo Picasso to Marcel Duchamp to Miles Davis to Serge Gainsbourg to Jerzy Grotowski to Thom Yorke and Radiohead, feared most falling into custom production of arts based on already established and critically approved principles, knowing that nothing drains our creative sources as habitualness and routine. And so they constantly experimented and sought novel means to express themselves instead of hanging on to worn-out ideas and practices. Picasso, thus, for example, drifted from one phase to another during the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, from the realist to the symbolist to the primitivist to the minimalist to the neoclassicist to the surrealist to the neoexpressionist, co-inventing cubism, collage, constructed sculpture and other techniques and styles along the way; Duchamp started off as a cubist, but soon after painting his masterworks from this genre, including *Nude Descending a Staircase No.2*, he moved beyond what he considered sheer “retinal art”, the art that appeals solely to the eye and invokes no thought on its conceptual points, and briefly entered the Dadaist circles, from which he emerged with his infamous readymades, that is, found objects that challenge the clouds of snootiness wrapping up art throughout the centuries, after which he worked with material crafts and assemblages at the boundary between science and art as well as with *camera obscuras* and various other optical effects and eventually found the greatest artistic pleasure in chess and wholly dedicated himself to chess problem composition, endgame analysis, journalism and correspondence games for the rest of his life; Miles, in turn, was inventing a new form of jazz every decade or so, from cool jazz in the late 1940s to modal jazz in the late 1950s to “time-no-changes” style in the mid-1960s to jazz rock a.k.a. fusion in the late 1960s to hip hop jazz with his final work in the late 1980s and early 1990s; Grotowski called his theatre “a

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<sup>383</sup> Listen to R.E.M.’s *Drive on Automatic for the People*, Warner Bros (1992).

<sup>384</sup> See Yudhijit Bhattacharjee’s *Why Bilinguals are Smarter*, New York Times (March 12, 2012), available at [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/18/opinion/sunday/the-benefits-of-bilingualism.html?\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/18/opinion/sunday/the-benefits-of-bilingualism.html?_r=1&).

<sup>385</sup> See Antoine de Saint-Exupery’s *The Little Prince*, Mladost, Zagreb, Croatia (1943).

laboratory, a centre of research”<sup>386</sup> and his premise that quest must take place in one’s work before all other domains of one’s existence<sup>387</sup> set him on the zigzag path of constantly changing creative directions where he relentlessly innovated theatre and his own methods in it, having started off his career with the philosophy of poverty, of reducing theatrical performance to barest essentials, then moving on to the paratheatrical phase and then to the theater of sources, all the while experimenting with nonverbal expressions, after which he awoke interest in the objective drama, the subject he first taught in the early 1980s in a barn on the University of California Irvine campus on which I would hold professorship some 40 years later, before moving to Italy at the peak of his popularity in America to work in a quiet place, with no pressure of reporting on the findings of his research to anyone; as for Radiohead, they started off as a UK version of a grunge band on Pablo Honey, before taking a bruised sound based on churning guitars and anthemic angst as a dominant emotion to sublime skies of crystal clear clarity on *The Bends*, then building a wall of sound of richness that would embarrass Phil Spector on any day and packing petite symphonies inside a rock song format on *OK Computer* and, then, when a formula for unending success seemed to have been found, never repeating it again and engaging in a genuinely indie, bedroom music creation on *Kid A* and *Amnesiac*, before slowly drowning in the waters of krautrock, drum machines and electro sound from *I Might Be Wrong* onwards. All these endless innovators, who made their oeuvres be windows into the history of their art during their lives, must have agreed with the R.E.M. guitarist, Peter Buck, when he said the following: “I just don’t really feel R.E.M. has to have any rules or boundaries. Once you admit that there are rules, then you’ve lost”<sup>388</sup>. Jean-Luc Godard is yet another artist who resisted falling into stale reliance on the same formula for success and instead continuously searched for novel ways to express oneself, even though this entailed heavy blows on his career and reputation as a filmmaker. Along the way he found the inspiration in Roberto Rossellini, the pioneer of Italian neorealism in cinema. “When I get discouraged, I think about Roberto”, he said. “Old, with many kids, plenty of dogs, I mean a lot of mouths to feed. And each time, he sets off in a radical direction, taking huge risks, which often lead to catastrophe. And he kicks off again...”<sup>389</sup> This attitude was, to a large extent, a natural outgrowth of a personality type that an anonymous online commenter described days after the filmmaker had undergone a voluntary euthanasia as someone who was “a master of his life, needing neither a pack to keep warm nor a pack leader to be led”<sup>390</sup>; a perfect existentialist personality, as it were, he was, always eager to renew oneself and be born and reborn, again and again. Most of these authentic self-exploratory artists that willingly undergo an incessant cycle of rejuvenation of their creative powers and approaches would always choose enduring critical disapprovals in trying new ways of expressing themselves over playing on a safe card for the sake of ensuring modest critical acclaim, thereby holding pigeons in hands while seagulls, pelicans and white doves, symbolizing the most sublime aesthetical expression attainable, may be flying over their heads. Yet, a sense of insecurity and the spirit of sacred adventurism fed on it have ever since been the critical wheels of progress of every advanced thought, be it moral, artistic, scientific or philosophical.

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<sup>386</sup> See Jerzy Grotowski’s *Towards a Poor Theater*, edited by Eugenio Barba, Routledge, New York, NY (1968).

<sup>387</sup> See the interview with Jerzy Grotowski, Creative Arts Television, retrieved from [video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/jerzy-grotowski-interview-1973](https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/jerzy-grotowski-interview-1973) (1973).

<sup>388</sup> See Anthony DeCurtis’s *R.E.M.: The Rolling Stone Files*, Rolling Stone Press, New York, NY (1995).

<sup>389</sup> *Watch Two in the Wave* directed by Emmanuel Laurent (2010).

<sup>390</sup> See the comment by ana, vucko, mali, nole, belivuk, draza, seselj on *Advokat potvrđio: Slavni reditelj nije umro prirodnom smrću*, B92 News, September 15, 2022, retrieved from [https://www.b92.net/zivot/komentari.php?nav\\_id=2214179](https://www.b92.net/zivot/komentari.php?nav_id=2214179).

The same conclusion that points at the lavishing trees of aesthetics stemming from wherever one finds antithetic emotions or directions of thought fertilizing each other can be derived with respect to all other art forms and modes of being. For example, the main reason behind the decadency of Hollywood movies lies in their emotional immaturity, engraining most of the time not even a whit of a wish to make them a place of an exciting encounter of diverse emotions that would enrich the viewer from the inside and split his heart open by their ambiguousness. Films emerging as products of this industry that has been continually becoming more entertaining and less artistic I thus usually see as saddening set pieces of withered emotionality wherein one emotion only is left to reign: fear, an emotion that, itself, is able to mesmerize its absorbent and hold its attention in a tight clutch exactly owing to its intrinsic contradictoriness<sup>391</sup>; namely, fear simultaneously arouses and restrains the mind overwhelmed by it, incentivizing action while also freezing down the actor. Another one of the key reasons behind the frivolousness of contemporary Hollywood movies can be found in characters that always seem to travel along single tracks of their personalities, executing their plans with a perfect determinacy, as if never coming across internal crossroads, the moments of “confusion, the contradictions, the quiet seconds when a person wrestles with his or her own instincts”<sup>392</sup>, hesitantly doubting over the right way forward, thus failing to engrain the exciting multidimensionality within their bleached characters. What in the world has happened to the complexity of perhaps the most iconic personality to have ever emerged from the movie screen, representing the heart and soul of the American spirit better than any of its likes before or after, Rick Blaine of *Casablanca*, I have incessantly wondered while sitting in darkened cinema halls with a soul disquieted and unhinged by the irksome linearity of characters displayed before my eyes, experiencing them in the same way as David Bowie’s “girl with the mousey hair”, a heroine walking “through her sunken dream” did<sup>393</sup>, finding the film she had watched “a saddening bore” and with a giant roll of the eyes of her heart wondering if there is life on Mars to escape to. As if embodying the famous “dual of the anthems” scene from *Casablanca*, playing the glorious, uplifting and spiritually triumphant Marseillaise on one side of the mind and a filthy little German tune on the other, every moment in the course of this movie is accompanied by a mesmerizing sense of internal crucifixion of Rick’s psyche between desperately selfish carelessness about anything in life anymore and devotedly selfless caring for all that is truly beautiful in it, yet one such “polyvalent”<sup>394</sup> mental makeup wherein opposites clash like matter and antimatter and produce eruptions of light along the way was long blown in the wind as time has gone by. Unpredictable personality transitions from sympathetic to repulsive and positive to negative and back and forth and all over again, such as those displayed by Jean Valjean and inspector Javert in the version of *Les Misérables* filmed as a revolutionary prelude to the 2012 Olympic Games in London, sensible because of showing us that black and white do not exist in life and that all things deserve to be unequivocally loved and appreciated for the seeds of divine goodness that are always present in them, are thus wholly absent from Hollywood movies pervaded by the naively drawn lines between heroes and villains. When would the creators of a

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<sup>391</sup> See A. K.’s Kratka priča o strahu: an interview with the Serbian visual artist, Ivana Tomović, *Politika* (August 5, 2014), pp. 16.

<sup>392</sup> See Courtney E. Martin’s *Do It Anyway: The New Generation of Activists*, Beacon Press, Boston, MA (2010), pp. xviii.

<sup>393</sup> Listen to David Bowie’s *Life on Mars?* on *Hunky Dory*, RCA (1971).

<sup>394</sup> The Italian neo-realist, Pier Paolo Pasolini strived to capture characters “polyvalent” in nature. “I believe in polyvalence in a character”; so says Pasolini in *Pasolini on Pasolini: Interviews with Oswald Stack*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN (1969), pp. 39.

Hollywood movie think of portraying a heroic character similar to Philippe Gerbier in Jean-Pierre Melville's *Army of Shadows*, a soul benevolent enough to sacrifice his life in the fight against evil, but also cruel enough to cold-bloodedly strangle a weaponless and boyish Vichy France informer with his bare hands or order the assassination of a comrade who had saved his life a few scenes earlier? Rarely, though, moving American movies, an epithet that is etymologically engrained in them as something that they should inherently strive to be<sup>395</sup>, succeed in employing the strategy of starting off with irritatingly stereotypical polarities, only to end by breaking them apart and inferring their fallaciousness, the example of which may be *Everything is Illuminated*, a cinematic piece whose seemingly irreconcilably different characters of the geeky Jewish writer and the rustic Ukrainian clubber become closer and closer to one another as the storyline evolves, culminating in their concluding the inextricable bond between them and the poignant final scenes wherein their acts on wholly different parts of the globe become interchangeable in their sameness and when the writer, having landed back in the US, recognizes the very same faces he saw on his trip through Eastern Europe everywhere around him, symbolically telling the viewer that we, the peoples, are the same everywhere, a realization that is the gate beyond which everything is indeed illuminated. Needless to say, European films have traditionally contrasted the naïve, unrealistic division to good guys and bad guys that haunts Hollywood movies, at least since Jean Renoir's memorable remark from his 1939 movie, *The Rules of the Game*, which is that "everyone has a reason", meaning that it is impossible to decipher what is right and what is wrong in the global context; "good or bad, you can change it anyway you want, you can rearrange it"<sup>396</sup>, as the Northern Irish guru, Van Morrison, would have had it. The lineage of directors whose work runs straight through the heart of European cinema, from Jean Renoir to Eric Rohmer to Nuri Bilge Ceylan, has done it all to contrast the imposition of clear-cut moral distinctions by the Hollywood cinema, as if abhorring the judgement of the characters that is inherent to such naïve dichotomizations in a similar way the Christ detested the judgmental thoughts emerging from the hearts of kings and commoners around him and in a similar way God beamed the lightning rods of fury down onto the primordial tasters of the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden. I get the same feeling of disenchantment with humanity when I join online discussions of certain topics that do not have simple and straightforward answers, which, of course, applies to anything of profound importance for our lives, and yet find in them colliding armies of apologists of unilateral doctrines. The first and the foremost goal I have set before myself as an instructor that inspires, elates and enlightens is to dispel any idolatries that come from the embracement of one points of view at the cost of finding nil value in others. And so, my disappointment upon seeing the total opposites of what I have advocated in the classroom and the street alike in internet debates is naturally immense, prone to throw me in an instant into the depression of a black hole. On a more positive side, participation or even the shortest visits of these open forums usually reinforce my belief that solutions composed of pairs or multitudes of mutually antagonistic statements rather than linear and unambiguously linear directives apply to every single one of complex existential problems and that the role of arts that aim to veritably represent life and steer clear of providing merely an idealistic, fairytale-like image of it – which is exactly where the key difference between the European and Hollywood understanding of cinema lies – must be to

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<sup>395</sup> Yet, "movies had that movie thing", says Michael Stipe in the song *Monty Got a Raw Deal* from R.E.M.'s record *Automatic for the People*, presumably disappointed by the lack of truly moving emotions in films emerging from the trifling Hollywood's moviemaking industry of the day.

<sup>396</sup> Listen to Van Morrison's *Enlightenment on Enlightenment*, Polydor (1990).

embody this myriad of inherently incompatible points of view in its imagery or sound, thus reflecting in its fabric the overlapping emotional four seasons of the inner world of children, the Earth as a whole spinning in space, always plunged in darkness on one of its sides while the other one is washed in sunshine, or a walk through an idyllic forest drawn in the air by the sound of Mozart's flute<sup>397</sup>, having the sunshiny and the tempestuous, the joyous and the ominous inseparably interwoven with one another. All in all, when it comes to prototypical European films, particularly the way they were conceived by the proponents of the French New Wave and by Italian neo-realists, their creators are to shun any simplistic and unambiguous points and allow realistic ambiguities to be interwoven in each and every one of their levels. The ultimate aim of these endeavors would be the creation of an art that has all the qualities of Freudian dreams; for, "the dream", as Freud suggested, "intends to say nothing to anyone and, far from being a means of communication, is destined to remain misunderstood"<sup>398</sup>. Unlike in Hollywood movies, thus, wherein certain points in the plot, alongside character traits, are directly imposed on the viewer, such as "this is a poignant moment, so cry", "this is a happy ending, so feel joy", "this is a moment of tension, so feel tense", "this is a bad guy, so despise him", "she is sweet, so like her", no such conclusions tend to be imposed on the viewer by most European film auteurs, who have traditionally chosen not to limit the complexity of reality and to allow the viewers to freely choose whom, what and how to sympathize with. In Erich Rohmer's moral tale classic, *Claire's Knee*, everyone can get one's own impression of the crucial points in the movie, the semantic message of which, as such, expands from linear to radial and from finite to infinite. Who is the movie's central character; is the protagonist's arrival at morality through immorality moral, immoral or amoral; is he and each other character to be pitied or looked up to; is Aurora, who prompts the grownup protagonist to engage in a romantic moment with a teenager, wicked or saintly, given her guiding him onto the path of fidelity thereby; is it the man or the idyllic environment a key to the film's aesthetic appeal; these are only some of the questions which every viewer will undoubtedly find one's own answer to or, even better, be prompted to endlessly contemplate about, enriching one's world of ideas and images thereby. Now, the example that not even European cinema is occasionally immune to this overly naïve distinction between paladins and pests comes from the controversies that followed Florian von Donnersmarck's work on the Oscar-winning movie, *Das Leben der Anderen*, whose protagonist is an Eastern German Stasi officer who protects one of the surveilled suspects, the storyline to which countless social figures objected, including the director of the memorial dedicated to the victims of Stasi oppression, who refused to give an access to the memorial for the shooting of the opening scene, claiming in support of his stance that compassionate and protective Stasis did not exist in reality. Tricked by the tendency of the popular history to paint the teleology of historic events in black and white, people become blind to countless positive aspects of ideas denounced for their wickedness and also inevitably negative repercussions of ideas celebrated by the masses for their greatness. And whoever thinks that it is too grayish of me to observe that real life is such that black and white are always blended in it, yielding various shades of gray, he can look around himself and mark down the vivid colors of the objects he sees. Soon, he is bound to realize that these colors are very rarely simply black or white and through the analogy he may conclude that all qualities in life occupy similarly middle grounds between the colorlessness of

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<sup>397</sup> Listen, for example, to the second part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Concerto in C for Flute, Harp and Orchestra (1778).

<sup>398</sup> See Aldo Tassone's *From Romagna to Rome: The Voyage of a Visionary Chronicler*, In: Federico Fellini: *Essays in Criticism*, edited by Peter Bondanella, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK (1978), pp. 262.

black on one extreme and the combination of all colors that white represents on the other extreme. Still, even though life is obviously all but black and white at all of its levels, from the shallowest to the deepest, an average person is often confused upon coming face to face with an expression wherein the farthest opposites appear blended in one or vehemently swinging from one to another. Mesmerized by it, she may not know how to interpret it and may run away in fear from its extraordinariness, reflecting inside herself the emotion with which Jane Clark advised Audrey Rouget to stay away from Tom Townsend, a sole socialist among the “rat pack” of aristocrats in Whit Stillman’s *Metropolitan*: “There’s something dubious about Tom. This whole thing about him being a radical, when he’s obviously not... anybody with as many conflicts as Tom is better not to get involved with”. And if this is the reaction of a stereotypical human being encountering a divine expression that is a composite of numerous mutually contradictory emotions, then the purpose of education can be to make people aware that these expressions are not to be feared, but cherished. A particularly memorable scene from a Majid Majidi’s movie, *Children of Heaven*, nicely illustrates the geniality of this realistic approach that abstains from drawing the blunt lines between “good guys” and “bad guys”, the line that has devastating educational and moral consequences, suggesting to their graspers the naturalness of the creation of stereotypes in one’s head and the reasonability of believing in perfection, the idea that counteracts the relentless attempts of the deity that Nature as a whole is to teach us how all things ought to be loved equally, all along with their imperfections that are but the salt of the earth, the fuel for the evolutionary expansion of our corporeal spirits. In it, the main protagonist, a chaste and poor man, earning his and his family’s bread by taxiing with his moped on the hot summer streets of Teheran, is shown kneeling by the gate of a posh villa during one of his daily prayers. As he kisses the ground with closed eyes and whispers the words of a prayer, the tenants of the villa, a rich family, packed in a luxurious car, open the gate, but cannot pass because of the man sitting in front of them. Their faces are frozen with surprise and the viewer guesses that they must be irritated by the man. The camera then zooms into the face of the praying man and one could hear footsteps coming close, with a distinct sound of snobbish shoes hitting the pebbled pavement, followed by a view of the shoes right next to the man’s face. And then, to the viewer’s surprise, all this is followed neither by a streak of harsh words nor by a kick in the face, but by a similarly clinking sound of a colorful ice tea in a large glass, topped with a straw and with condensed water droplets sliding down its walls like tears of devotion, placed right next to the man’s forehead that touches the ground. The message, of course, quite unlike that conveyed by the largest body of Hollywood movies of the present and past, the *Color Purple*, *Casablanca*, the *Godfather*, *High Sierra*, *3:10 to Yuma*, *On the Waterfront* and a few other notable exceptions aside: despite the poor man’s struggles, no class, income, race, ethnicity, education, age or any other criterion could be used to divide good people from the bad ones. For, in this world where cooperativity and competitiveness are tied into an intricate web and flow in tides and ebbs, characters such as the racers from *Two-Lane Blacktop*, alternately hindering and helping each other as they race from Arizona to DC for the price of each other’s car, being portrayed as negative but positive too, much more veritably depict what humanity is made of than the naïve hero/villain polarities promoted by the Hollywood movie machinery. The polarization of the world into the good and the bad, the former of which ought to be worshipped and the latter of which ought to be fought against, which the Hollywood culture has enforced over the decades has, however, created a false image of reality wherein the character of heroes, the ideals that teenagers and adolescents strive to attain, is all but complete and spiritually fulfilling. When did Dorothy from the fantasy about the Wizard of Oz as the epitome of a persona that saves the

Universe by befriending everyone<sup>399</sup> and discovering the heart of goodness beating beneath each and every skin in this world make way for cold heroes and heroines who are all about chopping down the unequivocally vile and irremediably corrupt worldly monsters in the cultural space wherein Hollywood builds its sugary castles, which may topple one day like the house made of sand that the Christ envisaged in the final message of his Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:26-27), all to the sound of “burn, Hollywood, burn, I smell riot”<sup>400</sup>, I thus incessantly wonder, firmly believing in al-Bukhari’s holy words that tell us that “when he comes closer to Me by a hand span, I come closer to him by an arm’s length; if he draws closer to Me by an arm’s length, I draw by a distance of two outstretched arms nearer to him; if my servant comes to Me walking, I go to him running”<sup>401</sup>, and that the closer we come to objects and beings that surround us, that is, the more we reach out with our spirit to them, becoming less of a bubble of ego and more of the great One that encompasses all things thereby, all in the spirit of the final instruction for profound living inscribed in the Bible, “whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17), the closer we are to the fulfillment of our celestial mission in life: to transform from a tiny stream that heedlessly runs after things to an ocean that welcomes and accepts it all into the warm home of its cosmic womb. But to accept this inherently grayish nature of reality, wherein black and white are always mixed to some extent in each and every human spirit, making it impossible to delineate where the goodness in one begins and vileness ends, is to go beyond the stark good/evil dichotomies that are vulgarly drawn by the Hollywood in order to appeal to the taste of the masses and that teach the viewers to erroneously divide people to irreparable jerks and gods for good instead of trying to discover the seeds of heavenliness in each and every one of them. Note, however, that an admirable trait of Hollywood movies does lie in the overlap of heroes and villains and that in the emphasis on the indispensable value of being an outcast, the idea that Hollywood borrowed from the superhero concept conceived by the comic book culture of the 1930s and a total opposite from the we-are-marching-as-one communist propaganda disseminated in, let’s say, North Korea. Hollywood could also be credited with the installment of the concept of the antiheroic hero through its prolific *film noir* period, albeit ending up with a more naïve outcome than the authentically existentialist, Sartrean protagonist that the postwar European cinema purported to incarnate. Compared to the naivety of Prince Valiant or the princess savers from the Slavic folklore, such complexity of the heroic characters, along with the ceaseless wonder as to where to go and what path to take, more veritably reflects the twisted, ambiguous, “close but conflicted relationships with the gods”<sup>402</sup> that traditional heroes, from the ancient Greek epics to this very day, have maintained, perhaps hiding the key to their heroism and superpowers, as it could be inferred from this minute celebration of crucifixions and crossroads of any kind. The problem is, however, that in life crooks usually fail teaching others how to be honest, regardless of what comes out of their mouths, and so do sheepish, mercenary mainstreamers fail in transmitting the merits of being a brilliant dissenter outraged by the corrupt state of the world we live in and walking in the outlandish footsteps of the Christ. And with these internal, psychological crucifixions more common to the products of the European cinema, their more humane and

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<sup>399</sup> Watch Colin Stokes’ How Movies Teach Manhood, TED Talk (November 2012), available at [http://www.ted.com/talks/colin\\_stokes\\_how\\_movies\\_teach\\_manhood.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/colin_stokes_how_movies_teach_manhood.html).

<sup>400</sup> Listen to Public Enemy’s Burn Hollywood Burn on Fear of a Black Planet, Def Jam (1990).

<sup>401</sup> See Hazem Said’s and Maha Ezzeddine’s What Do You Expect from Allah?, OnIslam (October 16, 2012), available at <http://www.onislam.net/english/shariah/hadith/this-hadith/458026-what-do-you-expect-from-allah.html>.

<sup>402</sup> See the Wikipedia article on heroes: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero> (2016).

realistic momentum of inspiration could be inferred, as opposed to the awakening of naïve, unrealistic and often pretentious heroism that is deserved for cinematic works emerging from the realms of Disneyland and Hollywood. Hence, while engaged in plotting a mouthwatering story that involved characters glued onto the window pane of a kiddo I paid a visit to, he bluntly intercepted me, curious to know what seemed to be the most important detail to his infantile mindset brainwashed by the Hollywood worldview: “Wait, who are here good guys and who are the bad ones”? Would he have understood if I had told him that not only is the world that we live in such, inherently dialectical, that bad is often good and good is bad, but nothing in it is black and white and all is gray, so that every bad guy is good to some extent too, in certain aspects of his personality, and *vice versa*; for, “none is good, save one, that is God” (Luke 18:19), as the Christ told us? One day, perhaps, he would learn that Twin Peaks was a captivating TV series for as long as the impression was held that every character, Agent Cooper and his police squad aside, is a bit of a bad guy and that the whole town could have been involved in killing its mysterious darling, Laura Palmer, as well as for as long as the real murderer, Leland Palmer, was in it, playing a character torn apart by a multitude of psychological drives raging inside of him, from the most affectionate to the wickedest. The series, in fact, began going downhill from the moment the bad guys, from Jacques Renault to Malcolm Sloan to Windom Earle, started to be characters that were quite one-dimensional in their viciousness. If we now call to mind the art of acting, we could somewhat concordantly realize that pompously exaggerated moves that pile up compatible bodily expressions typically fail to cause our intrigue and leave us in amazement. In contrast, if we dig through the stunningly stylish gestures that shed stardust of grace and enticement all over us, we would come across not naturally combinable elements imaginatively pulled off all at once, with a fascinatingly intuitive eye for the moment. A professor of theatrical performance, Sears Eldredge has thus talked of how pairing an expressive mask, that is, a gesturally and mentally<sup>403</sup> imprinted emotion, to a countermask<sup>404</sup> and then either pulling them off sequentially or in parallel is what produces captivating impressions of the character wearing them among the watchers. With unexpectedly paired gestural components lit up in synchrony on the face and the body of a captivating dancer, actor or any other creature that inspires with one’s expressions, light becomes shed on revitalizing exercises based on coupling moves that do not naturally go together. “Do something oppositional”<sup>405</sup> was concordantly a behavioral norm that Andy Warhol allegedly lived by at parties, instructing us hereby that if we wish to shine in a social space, we better learn how to complement the behavior of people in our surrounding with

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<sup>403</sup> For, “Together with the physical there is also a mental set, and specific attitude to a character. The mask remains dead without it”, as pointed out by Anthony Frost and Ralph Yarrow in *Improvisation in Drama*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY (2007), pp. 161. In support of this necessity for the process of adoption of any gestural mask to begin from the transformation of our deepest cognitive features into the “mask” that corresponds to the character that one’s role assumes, Martin Buber would add the following thought: “The little, the false actor, to whom the boldness of the simulacrum is alien, who stands over against the hero as the nothing stands opposite the something, fingers it with his senses; he collects the voice, the mien, the gestures of the hero; he traverses, explores, handles the world of the doer in order to acquire his material; and then constructs out of it a mask. But the great actor does not finger, he is transformed... the actor is transformed into the doer, the seeking into the acting, the wave into the way” (Martin Buber’s *On Polarity: Dialogue After the Theater*, In: *Martin Buber and the Theater*, edited and translated by Maurice Friedman, Funk & Wagnalls, New York, NY (1969), pp. 68).

<sup>404</sup> See Anthony Frost’s and Ralph Yarrow’s *Improvisation in Drama*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY (2007), pp. 158.

<sup>405</sup> The quote, in fact, originates from Henry Geldzahler, the curator of the American Art section at the Metropolitan Museum in New York in the 1960s. See Nick Bertozzi’s and Pierce Hargan’s *Becoming Andy Warhol*, Abrams ComicArts, New York, NY (2016), pp. 141.

stupefying novelties rather than to reinforce its clichés through conformity. A parallel with music can be evoked here in the form of Paul McCartney’s praising Brian Wilson’s bass lines not only for their being literally offbeat, but also for “putting the note where it was not supposed to be”<sup>406</sup> and rarely letting the bass line play the root of the chord<sup>407</sup>, thus yielding an aural multidimensionality that could be cited as the key to the timeless sense of magic emerging from the grooves of the Beach Boys’ *Pet Sounds*. On this record, in particular, Wilson’s choice to play the bass lines polytonally, in a completely different key, typically a minor third down from the song’s key<sup>408</sup>, created a sense of alienation from the aural atmosphere and, thus, the depth, which has so far proven timeless. Needless to add, the same principle of coupling pairs or multiples of gestures in unexpected and counterintuitive styles accounts for the external aesthetics and the internal excitement brought forth by our overall facial and bodily expressions. Try, for example, winking and pulling off a pout at the same time, frowning and cracking a smile in synchrony, or sending your eyes into orbit in the opposite direction from the turn of your neck and you will immediately be able to sense the revitalizing effects of such gestural going against the stream of our behavioral clichés and habits. Similarly, if you were to take each sentence of this book or more preferably a fiction novel and give it to a first-class comic book artist and a mediocre one to draw matching illustrations thereto, the difference between them would lie in unexpected gestures and landscapes that complement and broaden the scope of expression provided by the text itself drawn by the former versus essentially adding more of the same impressions and accentuating the verbally expressed meanings far beyond the limits of artistic subtlety and taste by the latter. For, breaking habits and going upstream has to be always neatly balanced with travelling downstream, all with the flow, as the all-encompassing dialectical panorama of thought drawn here, taking the form of a universal cosmic cross, silently speaks in favor of. The best approach an actor can adopt, thus, is to constantly surprise the audience by pulling utterly unexpected combinations of signs and gestures, which would also be suited to the moment by relying on his improvisatory talents, an approach that Marlon Brando compared to a boxer who always delivers a punch from northwest when the opponent expects it to come from southeast and the other way around<sup>409</sup>; both the knocked down boxer and the audience are made to see stars if this approach is being followed rightly. From this principle, countless formulae for mesmerizing expression, both on and off the stage, can be derived, including the one calling for the pairing of the states of emotional agitation with composed body language and peaceful, equilibrated states of mind with wild gestures, as well as the one prohibiting the dancer from singing to the tune danced to, lest the energy of the performance be diluted. Moreover, on a broader scale in the theatrical realm one always finds conflicts in terms of “various currents which run counter to one another, but frequently they do so in the sense in which themes in a musical composition run counter to one another, touching at different points and producing, not conflict, but harmony”<sup>410</sup>. Eugenio Barba has thus greatly admired the sense of bewilderment awoken among the audience by their witnessing acts on the stage that evoke the dawn of chaos

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<sup>406</sup> See Charles L. Granata’s *Wouldn’t It Be Nice: Brian Wilson and the Making of the Beach Boys’ Pet Sounds*, Chicago Review Press, Chicago, IL (2003), pp. 197.

<sup>407</sup> See, for example, Tom Polk’s *What Makes Pet Sounds So Appealing? Brian Wilson’s Harmonic Techniques*, retrieved from <http://www.tompolk.com/writings/petsounds.html>.

<sup>408</sup> See Scott Seabridge’s *An In Depth Musical Analysis of the Beach Boys Masterpiece ‘Pet Sounds’*, Sweet Uncertainty Blog, retrieved from <https://sweetuncertaintyblog.wordpress.com/2017/12/02/a-in-depth-musical-analysis-of-the-beach-boys-masterpiece-pet-sounds/> (2017).

<sup>409</sup> Watch *Listen to Me Marlon*, a documentary movie directed by Stevan Riley (2015).

<sup>410</sup> See Hermon Ould’s *The Art of the Play*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., London, UK (1948), pp. 35.

and the rise of immaculate rigor and routine at the same time, as if pushing the watchers into a state of paradox wherefrom cries that spell both Yes and No are let arise in the air from their consciousnesses<sup>411</sup>. The Polish theatre director, Jerzy Grotowski, consequently talked of *conjunctio oppositorum* as a key to producing successful theatrical impressions and acting performances, highlighting in particular the fusion of Stanislavskian spontaneity and Brechtian discipline as the blend that all improvisers should strive to embody within themselves<sup>412</sup>. Late in life, Bertolt Brecht sporadically exposed ideas on the so-called dialectical theatre as a form of art wherein letting the story unreel in an inherently contradictory manner on the stage is vital in preventing the predictable linearity from lulling the viewer's attention to sleep, producing a collision of ideas, concepts and emotions that stimulate the audience instead. To illustrate the powerfulness of this countercurrent effect I bring to mind the highlight of the play *The Black Watch*<sup>413</sup>, which is a scene in which the Scottish soldiers deployed in Iraq open the letters from home. One by one, they emerge on the dim stage accompanied by the soft sounds in the background, as each soldier takes a pile of letters from a person who was the last one to appear before the audience. Everyone is so deeply focused on reading one's own letter and is unable to distribute them to others before engaging in reading. Then, when everyone is out on the stage, the scene quietly implodes into its climax, as soldiers, each one immersed in one's own world, engage in mysterious sign language monologues, expressing themselves with a tender and unexpectedly emotional hand dance, a unique moment that intercepts the play's roughly two hours of constant utterance of obscenities and tireless exhibitions of savagery and the one that makes the play worth watching in its entirety an endless number of times. Of course, this memorable scene owes its powerfulness to the backdrop of roughness, coldness and cruelty against it is superimposed. Yet another way to achieve artistically inspiring effects by juxtaposition of antagonistic impressions in theater is through the so-called negation of the storytelling by means of scenery or *vice versa*, that is, by "turning the word against the scene", as the Swiss dramatist, Friedrich Dürrenmatt phrased it<sup>414</sup>, such as in the cases where actors confined in a prison cell converse about the merits of freedom or when the topic of inescapable demises of human fate is elaborated in the midst of luscious landscapes that spell eternal peace, sunshine and harmony.

Analogous conflicts of colors, shades, symbols, shapes, tone, rhythm or any of the countless other visual qualities are similarly discernible in almost any striking painting. So pervasive they are in this domain that we could bring to mind the memorable scene from Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* wherein the associate professor of history, George mocks the intellectualism in humanities by assuming out loudly that another professor visiting his house would praise the painting that attracted his attention for its "quiet intensity in a certain noisy quality or a quietly noisy relaxing intensity"<sup>415</sup>. For example, from Giotto's *Faith to Bellini's Madonnas* to Degas' ballet dancers to Gauguin's *Daydreaming* to Dali's *Persistence of Memory* to Munch's *Starry Night* to Gorky's *Agony* to Tobey's *New York Tablet*, the depth of perspective and a sense of strikingly intimate directedness of expression are found neatly

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<sup>411</sup> See Anthony Frost's and Ralph Yarow's *Improvisation in Drama*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY (2007), pp. 220.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 200.

<sup>413</sup> The play was written by Gregory Burke and directed by John Tiffany for the National Theatre of Scotland. Its troupe played it at the San Francisco Armory on May 31, 2013.

<sup>414</sup> See Bert O. States' *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA (1985).

<sup>415</sup> Watch *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* directed by Mike Nichols (1966).

balanced, with the former expanding our focus, dissipating the sunrays of our attention in all directions, lifting the lid of our mind and opening it to the entire cosmos, and the latter focusing these rays inside of the core of our being and integrating our insights and emotions into a glaring ball of light that is to explode at one point, yielding similar sprouts of artistic impressions all over the world we inhabit. For, one of the central contradictions that painters have had to find the compromise for since the earliest days of the visual arts was how “to achieve a sense of depth without sacrificing the brightness of color, to achieve an orderly arrangement without sacrificing the sense of depth”<sup>416</sup>, that is, to resolve the struggle between sculptural effects achieved with the use of contours or chiaroscuro and coloristic effects on the surface plane<sup>417</sup>, and only the most skilled among them managed to balance the depth of perspective with a punch-in-the-face directedness, the very same balance that can be applied to human expressions in any other domain of arts or everyday living alike. “The mystery of plastic creation is based upon the dualism of the two dimensional and the three dimensional”<sup>418</sup>, the abstract expressionist painter, Hans Hofmann pointed out, comparing a complete painting with a balloon that balances its expansive inner pressure with the tension of its outer surface, the former of which is analogous to his first law, which is that “the picture must achieve a three-dimensional effect, distinct from illusion (that is, traditional representation), by means of the creative process”<sup>419</sup>, and the latter of which is analogous to his second law, which is that “the picture plane must be preserved in its two-dimensionality throughout the whole process of creation until it reaches its final transformation in the completed picture”<sup>420</sup>. Now, if we were to attempt to systematically categorize and list distinctions that tend to be blurred with great aesthetic effect in paintings, they would include (a) motion and constancy, as, for example, in Raphael’s *Saint George and the Dragon*, Degas’ *L’Étoile*, the impressionists’ portrayals of agile horsemen in commotion against the hush or subdued background, including Degas’ *Racehorses Before the Stands* and *The Gentlemen’s Race* and Toulouse-Lautrec’s *At the Cirque Fernando*, the *Rider on a White Horse*, and in Jean Metzinger’s *Cycle Race*, where the activity of the futuristic bicyclist in motion is contrasted against the passivity of the spectators painted in and around his face; (b) antagonistic foci of attention, as in Gauguin’s *Three Tahitians*, Manet’s *Railway* and *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* or Renoir’s *Bal du moulin de la Galette*; (c) soft curvatures and sharp edges, as in Kandinsky’s abstract paintings, such as *Quiet Harmony*; (d) levelness and tilt, as in Malevich’s suprematist paintings; (e) contrasts between color tones, producing vibrant complementarities, as in Carl Wilhelmson’s *Churchgoers in a Boat*, Matisse’s *White Torso* and *Blue Torso* and countless still life paintings over the centuries; (f) compulsion and control, as in the style of Johannes Vermeer, where “the counterpoint of impulse and restraint” is said to have “reflected a society and a culture where rigors of Calvinism are offset by an exuberant freewheeling economy”<sup>421</sup>; (g) ambiguous character expressions, as in the pose struck by Mary Magdalene on the far right of van der Weyden’s *Deposition*, making it impossible for the viewer to conclude if her stance is a blasphemous dancing gesture or a more compassionate pathos than that of any other figure present at the scene of pulling the dead Christ from the cross, save the painting

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<sup>416</sup> See E. H. Gombrich’s *The Story of Art*, Fifteenth Edition, Phaidon Press, London, UK (1989), pp. 543 - 544.

<sup>417</sup> This is why in the attempt to create the deep perspective, Orson Welles renounced color and shot his famous feature film debut, *Citizen Kane* in black & white.

<sup>418</sup> See William C. Seitz’s *Abstract Expressionist Painting in America*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA (1983), pp. 42.

<sup>419</sup> See Hans Hofmann’s *Search for the Real*, Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA (1948), pp. 48.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>421</sup> Watch Vermeer: Beyond Time documentary, PBS (2017).

Virgin; (h) a sense of the whole invoked by the completeness of the canvas coverage, but countered by the fractured nature of the painting, as in Cezanne's *Bathers* and, subsequently, in Modernism, Cubism and Expressionism; (i) various symbolic "ups" and "downs", as in Turner's *Flint Castle*, for instance, where the Sun on the horizon, sending forth elating bursts of energy towards the viewer, is paired with the dark silhouettes of the weary peasants working on the shore, or in Chagal's *I and the Village* wherein the figure of a dancer is painted upside down, standing on inverted houses, next to an upright peasant holding a scythe and walking past regular row houses, aside from the devilishly green and greedily utilitarian human face facing that of a white sheep, clean and chaste, being all about giving and giving only, and many more. In Leonardo's portrait of sixteen-year old Ginevra de'Benci, stark contrasts that alone and in combination with one another "breathe life into the picture"<sup>422</sup> are innumerable and include the bright, sharply featured girl's face posed over a dim, soft and mysterious landscape, which itself contrasts with the skylight emerging through the dark greenery; the austere, waspish temper suggestible from the far view that transforms into sympathy and curiosity upon a closeup; enigmatism echoing the *Way of Love* and evoked by having the aristocrat girl's left eye look at the viewer, while her right eye gazes into the distance, making her appear as if being in the present moment, but also being immersed in the ocean of infinity; the interplay between light and shadow on and around the figure's face; and a simultaneous sense of distance of the landscape and proximity of the figure. All the while, in spite of this myriad of contrasts, the artist attempted to emulate in the appearance of the Florentine figure the spirit of the juniper bush hovering over this figure, whose name represents a version of *ginepro*, which translates to "juniper", thus creating a fine and lively balance between consonance and dissonance where, it should be always remembered, the key to the mastery of any artistic expression lies. The works of Caravaggio, which stood at the point of transition from Renaissance to Realism, embodying the characteristic features of both, from *The Boy Bitten by a Lizard* painted in 1594 to *David with the Head of Goliath* painted in the last years of the painter's life, brimmed with ambivalent meanings, in part owing to their "paying implicit recognition to the notion of poetic ambiguity, which seeks to probe the secret of ultimate paradoxes through the suggestive power of certain images"<sup>423</sup>. The drama between geometry and narrative often seen in Caravaggio is also pervasive in the works by Edward Hopper<sup>424</sup>, one example of which can be *Stairway*, a painting where "everything in the house says, Go; everything outside says, Where?"<sup>425</sup>, where "the open door is not the innocent passage connecting inside and outside but a gesture paradoxically designed to keep us where we are"<sup>426</sup>, and where we are torn by an ambivalent impulse that "urges us forward while insisting that we stay"<sup>427</sup>. In Hopper's most popular work, *Nighthawks*, the viewer is equally split between the impulse to stay, as conveyed by the ethereally lit interior of the diner and the surreally clear patterns reflected by it on the adjacent sidewalk, and the impulse to move on, as conveyed by the isosceles trapezoidal shape of the diner window creating a pull toward a vanishing point extending beyond the frame of the painting, as a result of which the viewer remains magically "suspended between contradictory imperatives – one, governed by the trapezoid, that urges us forward, and the other, governed by the image of a light place in a dark

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<sup>422</sup> Watch Leonardo da Vinci – Portrait of Ginevra de'Benci episode of Masterworks documentary series, Arthaus Musik (1988).

<sup>423</sup> See John Gash's *Caravaggio*, Chaucer Press, London, UK (2003), pp. 23.

<sup>424</sup> See Mark Strand's *Hopper*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY (2001), pp. 41 and 45.

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41.

city, that urges us to stay”<sup>428</sup>. As someone who has been cautious but curious all one’s life, torn between an immense desire to be on the road and explore and an equally massive urge to cuddle within a safe nest, in love and comfort, so as to dedicate one’s whole life, fully and unreservedly, to another, I have strongly sympathized with one such dialectic pull that is intrinsic to the great majority of Hoppers, one offspring of which became my philosophy of the Way, of divine being achievable through a simultaneous anchorage onto the deepest seabed of one’s spirit and dispersal of one’s entire being, of everything one has had or felt or thought, like a burning star, into the world revolving around one’s mountainous ego. In a personal favorite amongst Hopper’s paintings, *New York Movie*, a different contrast is embedded, namely that between the gloomy and horizontal, almost subterranean depth of the left side of the painting dominated by the outward-looking moviegoers seated in red plush chairs and the three lights arranged in a perspectival progression shining over them and the bright, vertical, chapel-like depth of the right side of the painting dominated by the inward-looking usherette enwrapped in her thoughts under three more intimate lights, which all along with the slightly skewed perspective of the viewer, watching the film, like other spectators, while also being attracted to the usherette, creates the impression of “enacting two contrary impulses – we are looking both *at* and *in* (the painting), moving between the two as we shift our attention from one side of the canvas to the other”<sup>429</sup>. When it comes to the art of Edvard Munch, the lowly impulses lay inextricably entwined in it with the sublime ones, appearing to be drawing the viewer into an underworld and an ethereal, higher world at the same time; or, as noted by Joseph Beuys, “‘Upper’ and ‘lower’ experiences are drawn together: flowing powers of the spirit, from the demonic and ghostly up to the ultimate aura”<sup>430</sup>. Inasmuch as the art of Wassily Kandinsky is concerned, in an attempt to touch upon its having conflict as a most characteristic subject, the artist referred to “his mother’s personality as a mixture of contradictory elements – she combined ‘pronounced nervousness’ with ‘impressive, majestic tranquility’”<sup>431</sup> as a way of justifying countless polarities that raged inside him and craved to be expressed, ranging from the “contradiction between his restless, romantic spirit and the tightly buttoned exterior that he presented to the world”<sup>432</sup> to “the equally insistent demands of intuition and reason”<sup>433</sup>, of spontaneity and discipline, of improvisation and calculated precision, to “the conflict between the cerebral and the emotional”<sup>434</sup>, which his art could be said to have been, in the end, all about. As a result, the ultimate goal of Kandinsky’s art, where “each figure is caught in the nexus of tensions”<sup>435</sup>, was “to show that construction can be achieved according to the ‘principle’ of dissonance”<sup>436</sup>, with “the principle underlying his compositions being the one of duality, of opposing pairs”<sup>437</sup>, where “the apparent contradiction masked a fundamental principle of unity in which all things were interlinked”<sup>438</sup>. One such sense of unity

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<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5.

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45.

<sup>430</sup> Quoted in Maurice Tuchman’s *Hidden Meanings in Abstract Art*, In: *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting, 1890 – 1985*, edited by Edward Weisberger, Abbeville Press (1986), pp. 34.

<sup>431</sup> See Frank Whitford’s *Kandinsky: Watercolours and other Works on Paper*, Thames and Hudson, London, UK (1999), pp. 15.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18.

<sup>435</sup> See Pierre Volboudt’s *Kandinsky*, Universe Books, New York, NY (1986), pp. 59.

<sup>436</sup> See Frank Whitford’s *Kandinsky: Watercolours and other Works on Paper*, Thames and Hudson, London, UK (1999), pp. 17.

<sup>437</sup> See Pierre Volboudt’s *Kandinsky*, Universe Books, New York, NY (1986), pp. 61.

<sup>438</sup> *Ibid.*

through the apparent disparity attempted to be created by yet another abstract painter, Barnett Newman, who perceived himself as a herald of “a religious art which through symbols will wrest the basic truth of life from the void”<sup>439</sup>, as, for example, in his remarkable minimalist piece titled *The Voice*, which consists of a stiffly textured vertical line painted over its opposite, a mute and shadowy smear of gray. Another remarkable example comes from the notable neo-impressionist painting technique developed by Georges Seurat in the mid-1880s, a.k.a. pointillism<sup>440</sup>, which was to paint small dots of different hues adjacent to one another and thus produce a more intense effect on the eye viewing the painting from a distance than when the individual pigments were mixed into a blend and applied to the canvas as such. Essentially, by painting with double brush strokes of contrasting colors, they allowed the two to emphasize each other and create a vivid visual experience for the viewer, indirectly demonstrating how expressions, regardless of their nature, are intensified when impregnated with antagonisms. To this day, the discovery of this technique stands forth as one of the most notable assignment of the aesthetic quality to contrasts *per se* in the history of art. However, the dearest juxtaposition of contrasts, blunt and bold, in paintings that adorn the odea of my mental microcosm is that between the dancers on the stage in Degas’ *Orchestra Musicians and Ballet from ‘Robert le Diable’*, presented in light and in the midst of an exciting movement, and the musicians seated beneath her, groomed darkly and seemingly engaged in a languid conversation. Many historians of art would, however, argue that no painter antagonized generations of critics as much as Francisco Goya did, a painter whose work often lay on allusive and ambiguous middle grounds halfway between laconic satire and mystical fervor, derogation and celebration, parody and elegy, patriotism and dissidence and other contradictory sentiments, which interpreters of his work have tried to untangle in vain for the last 200 years. When it comes to the metaphoric, regional realism of the paintings by Andrew Wyeth, they owe an even greater lyrical momentum than the works by another famous 20<sup>th</sup> Century American painter of the eternal loneliness of the human condition, Edward Hopper, to the captivating balance between a sense of an absolute placidity and peacefulness and eerie tensions brimming under their surface, just the way the painter himself described the *St. George River*, which he ended up painting in the tempera called *River Cove*, “as perfectly calm, but underneath there’s terrific currents”<sup>441</sup>. Then, one of most mesmerizing features of the installation of the *Last Supper* by Marisol Escobar, alongside the deliberately introduced slip fault across all but the Christ’s figure, is its ambiguity between plane and volume, which may not be surprising to anyone familiar with this artist’s inclination to wed various influences, including pop art and pre-Columbian art, and have her drawings and prints embody “bipolar themes, including ‘touching and not touching’, ‘sacredness and profanity’, ‘modesty and eroticism’, ‘violence and tenderness’”<sup>442</sup>. If you now pay close attention to a typical Hubert Robert’s painting, ruins or ongoing demolition occupying the central place in it are practically always contrasted with a petite figure or two that radiate with an indestructible life force, be it lively shadows in *Démolition de l’église Saint-Jean-en-Grève* and *The Burning of the Opera at the Palais-Royal*, a vivacious clique of girls stealing flowers from a vase in *A Hermit Praying in the Ruins of a Roman Temple*, or a mother with a child, a pervasive motif in the French painter’s

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<sup>439</sup> Quoted in Maurice Tuchman’s *Hidden Meanings in Abstract Art*, In: *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting, 1890 – 1985*, edited by Edward Weisberger, Abbeville Press (1986), pp. 49.

<sup>440</sup> See Alan Gowans’ *The Restless Art: A History of Painters and Painting, 1760 – 1960*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, PA (1966), pp. 193.

<sup>441</sup> See Wanda M. Corn’s *The Art of Andrew Wyeth*, New York Graphic Society, Greenwich, CN (1973), pp. 160.

<sup>442</sup> See John Loring’s *Marisol Draws*, *Arts Magazine* (March 1975), pp. 66 – 67. Catalogued in Cecilia Puerto’s *Latin American Women Artists, Kahlo and Look Who Else*, Greenwood Press, Westport, CT (1996).

work, in Ruins by the Water, The Seesaw, The Burning of Rome, The Triumphal Arch and the Theater of Orange, A Colonnaded Thermal Building, the Roof Partly Open to the Sky, with Girls Washing Clothes, and many others. Next we may recollect Lorenzo Lotto's juxtaposition of a pair of gray worldly figures to the vibrantly colored Holy Mother and the Christ child in The Madonna and Child with Two Donors, the objective of which has fallen within the realm of intentions of renaissance artists to humanize the divine and spiritualize the secular. Antagonistic emotions internally rupturing bodies apart and allowing for some mystical, strangely enthralling energy to flow out through so formed crevices from the unfathomable depths of the soul could also be frequently discerned on images painted by masterly hands. For example, when the blind poetess describes the motherly figure with a child in van Dyck's Virgin with Partridges in the movie Russian Ark, all shot in one take in the interior of Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, she rapturously points at "calm and serenity" of her countenance, concluding that there is no doubt that "God's protective and unseen presence is in her", and yet the excitement of Madonna's appearance in this painting is due to the blending of this sublime tranquility with a sense of trepidation and antipathy, as if she is trying to protect her child from the ominously flying partridges in the dark distance and the frivolous and mischievous circle of cherubs surrounding her, secretly suggesting that the society, even if it be in the form of a conference of angels, inescapably causes the spoilage of naturally seraphic human spirits. The ambiguity of Mona Lisa's smile in da Vinci's famous painting, secretive and mystical, disappearing as soon as we shift our focus away from her pious, yet subtly vivacious eyes, has kept the generations of art analysts enwrapped in contemplation over its meaning and origins. Drawing on this expressional ambiguity, Ernst Gombrich, for example, noticed that "like a living being, she seems to change before our eyes and to look a little different every time we come back to her... Sometimes she seems to mock at us, and then again we seem to catch something like sadness in her smile. All this sounds rather mysterious, and so it is; that is so often the effect of a great work of art"<sup>443</sup>. The same trick of imprinting expressional duality on a person's face was used by Christian Rohlfs in the portrait of his mother, looking at which one could not really tell if the old lady is grieving or smiling. Vermeer's female characters did not stray far from these ambiguous grounds and oftentimes, as it is the case with the Muse of History from the Studio or the Girl with a Pearl Earring, one could recognize in them a mixture of pensive sorrowfulness and whimsical liveliness, of poses that seem simultaneously purposeful and natural, of attracting the viewer's attention and warding it off into wider cosmoses, along with countless other equivocal gestures through which "the substance and movement of life remain beyond the artist's grasp"<sup>444</sup> and the viewer is left to swim amidst myriads of questions in the attempt to untangle the cryptic actuality from reality<sup>445</sup>. It is usually said that from a far distance Vermeer's painting seem realistic, but as the viewer comes closer to them, they begin to reveal more and more features of a highly subjective, self-invented world<sup>446</sup>, and in this process of trying to figure out which is real and which is abstract, the viewer usually becomes tangled in a web of ambiguities, whose purpose, *de facto*, is to keep him intrigued, to draw him back to the picture over and over again. As for Vermeer's art, another contrast intrinsic to his painting style at the finest level, the level of a line,

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<sup>443</sup> See E. H. Gombrich's The Story of Art, Fifteenth Edition, Phaidon Press, London, UK (1989), pp. 300.

<sup>444</sup> See Lawrence Gowing's Vermeer, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA (1952), pp. 57.

<sup>445</sup> See Dina Rashid's Formal Analysis of 'Girl with a Pearl Earring', Jaffat El Aqlam (June 28, 2014), retrieved from

<http://www.jaffatelaqlam.com/posts/2014/6/24/formal-analysis-of-girl-with-a-pearl-earring-dina-rashid>.

<sup>446</sup> Watch National Gallery documentary film directed by Frederick Wiseman (2014).

was that between contrast *per se* and the lack of it. Namely, thanks to his rare skill as a painter, the boundaries between objects in his paintings struck a fine balance sharpness and softness; or, as pointed out by Ernst Gombrich, “like a photographer who deliberately softens the strong contrasts of the picture without blurring the forms, Vermeer mellowed the outlines and yet retained the effect of solidity and firmness; it is this strange and unique combination of mellowness and precision which makes his best paintings so unforgettable”<sup>447</sup>. Like the backward glance of Vermeer’s girl with a pearl earring, the face and the posture of Rubens’ Delilah are said to convey a unique meaning to each viewer thanks to their ambiguities: whether the Judean *femme fatale* displays remorse or relief or fondness for Samson or a spiteful smirk or simply all these emotions together is a permanent subject of dispute. Their meaning is also notable for changing literally day to day in the eyes of regular visitors and curators of the British National Gallery in London<sup>448</sup>, where it currently sits, reminding us of an important purpose that contrasts embedded in a piece of art have: to allow the latter to live forever, to always adopt a slightly different meaning when viewed from different angles and/or with different states of mind. Rubens’ Allegory on the Blessings of Peace, which the Flemish painter presented to Charles I as a gift in the attempt to call for an armistice between England and Spain, is another notable painting explicating a contrast between conflicting visions in a rarely vivid manner, specifically showing Minerva surrounded by children, bowls of fruit, dancing maenads and a playful panther all bathed in light in the forefront and Mars waging wars under dark clouds in the back. Then, perhaps the most beloved and celebrated of all frescoes that adorn the Serbian houses of God, the one found in the Mileševa monastery, near the town of Prijepolje, dating back to 1223 AD and depicting the scenery surrounding the Christ’s grave, contains the image of an angel, all dressed in white and holding a countenance of serene optimism and sanity, in contrast with the two sorrowful female figurines dressed in black behind its back and a legion of Roman soldiers crushed by an otherworldly sadness below it. In this countenance, however, a myriad of feelings is being mirrored, ranging from determination and eruptive fecundity to cosmic joy ready to burst into sunshiny smiles and laugh it all off to surreptitious perplexity and hush-hush mystery. Like the face on the icon that, all alone, adorned the southern wall of the bedroom in which my mother slept, the face before which she prayed wingless every night, with “a smile on her face and a tear in her eye”<sup>449</sup>, able to show a happy, flushed face with rosy cheeks or a worried, pallid one depending on the way the viewer viewed it, the White Angel from Mileševa may be able, too, to reflect the inner feelings of the monastery dwellers and visitors back to them, implicitly handing them the advice of the oracle of Delphi, “Know Thyself”, all owing to the unusually rich, composite nature of its expression. Likewise, perpetual symbolic tensions could be recognized in the paintings by the Serbian painter, Milena Pavlović-Barili, allegedly arising from the artist’s yearning to bring together the two separated parents, whom had both loved her deeply and affectionately. This she often achieved by splitting the centrally depicted character into its diametrically opposite poles, just as a vector in physics is sometimes divided to two complementary vectors with a 180° angle between them, and paintings such as Composition, Girl with a Lamp, Self-Portrait with a Shield and an Eagle, and A Clever Virgin and a Crazy Virgin could be cited as examples. Such an artistic approach prompted Susan Sontag to declare

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<sup>447</sup> See E. H. Gombrich’s *The Story of Art*, Fifteenth Edition, Phaidon Press, London, UK (1989), pp. 433.

<sup>448</sup> Watch National Gallery documentary film directed by Frederick Wiseman (2014).

<sup>449</sup> Listen to the Rolling Stones’ *Shine a Light on Exile on Main St.*, Rolling Stones (1972).

that all Milena expressed, in art and in daily life alike, was a form of an internal dialogue<sup>450</sup>, perhaps between the essence and the surface, between the celestial core and the phony crust of our human being destined to be pulled apart internally by various contrasts, I deem. This approach based on the constant impregnation of the work of art with various contradictions can be said to have inspired the next generation of Serbian painters of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, including those gathered around the collective known as Mediala, a self-invented compound word coined by combining the Serbian words for honey, “med”, and dragon, “ala”<sup>451</sup>, hinting at the juxtaposition of sweet and soothing on one side and fiery and tumultuous on the other as a contrast lying at the core of these visual artists’ philosophy. Among paintings from the Art Nouveau period, one example that comes to mind is that of pairing of an ethereal Madonna and an earthly girl in a Slavic folk costume carrying an ivy wreath, the symbol of remembrance, in Alfons Mucha’s Madonna of the Lilies, where the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century artist continued to combine the two traits he had been interested in combining throughout his entire career as a painter and a poster designer: the classical beauty and the profaneness<sup>452</sup>. In the domain of street art painting, we could evoke the beauty of that white paint smeared over a stack of automobile tires, as envisaged by Jean-Michel Basquiat, the cult figure of the Lower East Side graffiti scene in the 80s, who had based his approach on the depiction of so-called “suggestive dichotomies”, some of which included high society opulence vs. poverty of the slums, abstraction vs. figuration, historicity vs. contemporariness, integration vs. segregation, innerness vs. exteriority, political vs. personality crises, and anarchy vs. automatism<sup>453</sup>. In the world of photography, one example evocable at this point may be the arboreta artwork by Len Jenschel, whose lifelong inspiration was “the mixtures of harsh dissonance and mellow resolutions of Igor Stravinsky’s Neoclassical period”<sup>454</sup> and who create the art where “lushly nuanced colors spreading across expanses of water, land, and sky were enhanced by man-made clutter that complemented nature’s beauties with intricate but contrasting textures, scale, tones, and hues”<sup>455</sup>. And as far as the art of the current times is concerned, one out of a myriad of examples may be that of Morgan Sorensen’s deliberately making birds and other aerial creatures the subjects of his paintings so as to impart a dose of lightness onto his heavy style and create a contrast that will mesmerize the viewers<sup>456</sup>.

As for movies, the most comprehensive art form, so complex that their directors can never have a perfect control over their final forms, we could, first and foremost, summon some of the mind-blowing scenes from Federico Fellini’s movies, such as the visitation to the Madonna by Cabiria, “a Chaplinesque little prostitute”<sup>457</sup>, “a hooker with a heart of gold”<sup>458</sup> coming from the ruins of borghetto San Francesco, evoking such a broad range of emotions that hardly any seem to have been left out and, as such, being the closest thing in the cinematic realm to fulfilling Gustav Mahler’s ideal of composing symphonies that are “everything, everything”.

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<sup>450</sup> Watch a documentary film about the life of Milena Pavlović-Barili, Studio B Channel, Belgrade, Serbia, aired on August 10, 2014, 11 pm.

<sup>451</sup> “Med i ala” translates to “Honey and Dragon” in English.

<sup>452</sup> Watch Collections in Prague: Alfons Mucha, 1000 Masterpieces from the Great Museums of the World, Arthaus Musik (2012).

<sup>453</sup> See Marc Mayer’s Basquiat, Merrell Publishers, London, UK (2010).

<sup>454</sup> See Sally Eaucloire’s New Color / New Work, Abbeville Press, New York, NY (1984), pp. 103.

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 101 – 102.

<sup>456</sup> See the 16-page insert on the art of Morgan Sorensen inside Volume 66 of the Hi Fructose magazine (2023).

<sup>457</sup> See Peter Bondanella’s Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present, Frederick Ungar, New York, NY (1983).

<sup>458</sup> Listen to the Thrills’ You Can’t Fool Old Friends with Limousines on Let’s Bottle Bohemia, Virgin Records (2004).

From desperation to hope to anger to affability to humiliation and elation and back to despair, all wrapped up in smirks and tears - all of this and far more could be distilled from this scene and from Cabiria's expressive face throughout the course of movie, including, most notably, that touching gaze straight into the camera at the very end of it, as memorable as that of Harriet Andersson as Ingmar Bergman's Monika four years earlier<sup>459</sup> or that of Rosy Afsari as Basanthi in Ritwik Ghatak's *A River Called Titas* sixteen years later, though a million times more poignant. Thereafter, we could equally call to mind a description of the final scene of another one of Fellini's masterpieces: "At the end of *La Dolce Vita*, Marcello wanders down to the beach in the early morning, sees the horrible shapeless one-eyed monster, then becomes aware of the girl from the restaurant, clean, lovely, untouched by the tawdriness of the party, calling to him from across an estuary. They cannot hear one another, and soon Marcello turns away, tugged back into the world he can neither live in nor leave"<sup>460</sup>. Our recollection of this scene through the kaleidoscope of these words, reliving the image of a monstrous sea creature posed side by side with a vision of an angel on Earth and placing us for a moment right along the seashore on which J. Alfred Prufrock found himself in the classic poem by T. S. Eliot, the poet who, himself, was commended "because of the way he was able to bring disparate images together into a cohesive whole via a powerful poetic sensibility"<sup>461</sup>, the seashore ahead of which mermaids' eyes twinkle and celestial treasures await one and behind which humanity rots in all its greed and vanity, makes us evoke a number of similar encounters of opposites that stretch our spirit in opposite directions, all until it explodes and expands into a ball of light that grasps the whole ungraspable Cosmos in an instant, in whom the secret of all touching pieces of art, movies included, rests. In fact, one of the most striking, constantly repeating elements in Fellini's movies is the clash between the protagonists' (a) running after divine values emphasized by religious orders surrounding them, portrayed, for example, by Marcello's flying in a helicopter in search of the statue of the Christ similarly flown over Rome in an unknown direction in the opening scenes of *La Dolce Vita*, and (b) indulging in celebration of sensual and unconstrained lifestyles without any ethical borders imposed, culminating in the sexually spiced life of blasphemy of the vacuous jet-set. This inner crucifixion of the central character's spirit provides the most fundamental polarity in *La Dolce Vita*, around which multiple other choreographic, cinematographic and dramatic pulls in opposite directions were built, all so as to "give expression to the classical and contemporary human dilemmas of appearance and reality, superficiality and integrity, intellectualism and emotionalism, sophistication and naturalness, inauthenticity and authenticity – all within the framework of a sacramental universe which demands that we choose to be who we are and to do what we do, with fear and trembling, knowing that every choice is a choice of value, an expression of the *being* we are"<sup>462</sup>. Correspondingly, the creation of emotional ambiguity in characters was a hallmark of Fellini's directorial style, as immortalized in the scene from 8½, where Guido and Claudia ride in a car toward a derelict cityscape and the filmmaker notices that he could not tell if Claudia's smile was judging, forgiving or mocking him, before evoking an ethereal character, Claudia, herself, as "a girl at the springs who passes the healing

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<sup>459</sup> A fascinating thing about this particular breaking of the fourth wall is that the camera loses the focus, deliberately or not, halfway through the take, making Monika's face slightly blurred and transmitting a secret message to the viewers thereby.

<sup>460</sup> See Robert Richardson's *Film and Literature*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN (1969), pp. 114.

<sup>461</sup> The description is by Colin Lanceley and is quoted in Gillian Whiteley's *Junk: Art and the Politics of Trash*, I. B. Tauris, London, UK (2011), pp. 139.

<sup>462</sup> See Charles B. Ketcham's critique of Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*, In: *Federico Fellini: The Search for a New Mythology*, Paulist Press, New York, NY (1976), pp. 64.

water... beautiful, both young and ancient, a child and yet already a woman, authentic and radiant”, revealing his recipe for the creation of captivation in characters on the movie screen a.k.a. concoction of opposites. When it comes to the contrast between darkness and light, a theme traditionally elicitable in black & white cinematography, a striking example comes from Fellini’s preceding the bedazzlingly light, perhaps the lightest scene in *La Dolce Vita*, in which the Umbrian angel in the form of a little blonde waitress girl named Paola is introduced, by one of the darkest scenes, involving Marcello’s friend Steiner standing alone in the dark and musing out loud over how “sometimes at night the darkness and silence weigh on me; peace frightens me; I fear it more than anything else; it looks like a façade that hides Hell behind it”. The next memorable movie scene comes from the ending of Fellini’s cataclysmic adaptation of Petronius’ *Satyricon*, the visual portrayal of times of chaos wherefrom, as Nietzsche’s Zarathustra argued, stars, one of which was the Christ in this case, are born<sup>463</sup>; the moment wherein the hero of the story, Encolpio is seen gazing at the open sea for one final time, knowing that he must “do what any decent hero must: set sail”<sup>464</sup>, and then turning into a stone in which the story of him will remain impressed for good, along with an infinity of possibilities, a film critic described in the following way: “He moves toward the open sea and the wing-like ship, and represents, as he walks between the baffled intellectual Greek and the dark instinctual African, the myth-informed vitality of imagination capable of integrating the opposed powers represented by his companions into a new generative system”<sup>465</sup>. Creating a conflict of opposing forces inside the protagonist’s mind has, in fact, stood as one of the most desired and enthralling elements of any dramaturgical forms of art ever since the days of the Greek tragedy, having the power to suck the viewers into the viewed and then fill the cups of their hearts with almost any emotions conceivable. For example, inspired by the role played by Jimmy Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause*, Andrzej Wajda and his crew went on to foster “ambivalence in movement and behavior”<sup>466</sup> in what was to become one of the liveliest and the most memorable characters to have emerged from the Eastern European cinema, Maciek Chełmicki, played by Zbigniew Cybulski in *Popiół i diament*, the ambivalence that culminated in the firework scene in which he shoots and hugs his adversary, signing his own death sentence in the first seconds of *Victory Day*. Other illustrious cinematic examples may come from Yasujirō Ozu’s movies, most notably *Tokyo Story* wherein the ceaseless reference to the passage of time and the evanescence of life, accentuated by the images of passing trains, chiming clocks, fuming chimneys and boats sailing to an open sea, is coupled to distinctively stationary camera, moving only once in the course of the whole movie, and that so as to subtly suggest that “in each creature a universe resides”<sup>467</sup>, serving overall as a “a figurative reminder that modern life is in perpetual motion, and that the beauty of life is often

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<sup>463</sup> How much Fellini appreciated this chaos from which stars are born is illustrated by his response to the question, “What do dreams tell you?”: “They help to confuse me”. See Aldo Tassone’s Interview with Federico Fellini, In: *Federico Fellini: Essays in Criticism*, edited by Peter Bondanella, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK (1978), pp. 33.

<sup>464</sup> See Dante Alighieri’s *Divine Comedy: Hell*, Canto I, lines 92-93, Translated by Clive James, Liveright Publishing, New York, NY (1321). A concordant rhyme comes Charles Baudelaire’s *Voyage*: “Though sea and sky are black as ink, lift sail! Our hearts are full of light and will not fail”.

<sup>465</sup> See Stephen Snyder’s *Color, Growth, and Evolution in Fellini Satyricon*, In: *Federico Fellini: Essays in Criticism*, edited by Peter Bondanella, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK (1978), pp. 186.

<sup>466</sup> See Andrzej Wajda’s comments on *Ashes and Diamonds*, a movie directed by him (1958), on its DVD release by the Criterion Collection.

<sup>467</sup> See Stanley Kauffmann’s review of *Tokyo Story*, In: *Tokyo Story*, edited by David Desser, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK (1975), pp. 154.

found in standing still”<sup>468</sup>. A memorable scene in it shows Shukichi and Tomi, the aging couple, silhouetted against the glittering sea in all its incomprehensible vastness, contrasting the man and the universe one against the other, smallness, transience and fragility against greatness, timelessness and strength, honoring one by honoring the other and thus delicately proving that they are indivisible, one and the same. In another scene, the husband and the wife find themselves standing at the overpass in front of the Ueno station and comment on the intolerable hustle and bustle of the big city, concluding that “if we lose each other, we’d never get back together again”<sup>469</sup>; yet, what the camera captures is nothing but the two elderly figures standing under the luminescent sky, yielding a contrast between scrimmage and serenity that bedazzles the viewers of the scene, teaching them *en passant* that peace and beauty could be found in even the loudest and the most discordant situations and landscapes. The dialectical didactics of the movie furthermore lies in its teaching the watcher how to become a better man by changing from a spirit spoiled by the busy and self-centered city life to the one that goes twain miles with “whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile” (Matthew 5:41) and “maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45), so to say, while at the same time pointing at the inevitability of malevolent neglectfulness as a natural part of the cyclical pattern of life. Ozu’s prewar classic, *The Only Son*, abounds with equally many subtle dialectical contrasts that split the sensitive watcher into two and open a crack in him through which illuminative tears of joy and sorrow are able to drop from some heavenly heights and water the thirsty spirit of the world through which our soul roams. A striking dialectical blend of feelings could be, for example, read from the posture adopted by young Ryosuke after his mother told him that she would love to have him stay with her in a small industrial town, but that he should go to middle school and become an educated man: slumped and leaning on to a wall, signifying sadness because of the necessity to leave mother for good and yet holding the pose of a proud dandy at the same time, reflecting two states of mind that could be hardly imagined as able to coexist in harmony. Another one of such blends is visually apparent in the landmark scene in which the mother and the son are depicted in an open field in kneeling postures that express their feelings more than millions of words, sending rays of love towards each other, while Tokyo incinerators fume with the reek of burnt garbage in the background. However, as noticed by the film critic, Tadao Sato<sup>470</sup>, the final scene of the movie, wherein the image of a closed gate and the mother leaning sobbingly onto a factory wall, symbolizing despair and dejection, is paired with the American music of lightness and hope, with dandelions dancing on the ground and with the sunlight washing over the tired mother, holds a special significance in this sense. Another heartrending scene from a Japanese movie wherein a character is depicted with an endless sea in the background is that showing Tamaki in Kenji Mizoguchi’s *Sansho the Bailiff*, the mother of two, all of whom were sold into slavery and scattered all over the land of Japan, standing gingerly on a cliff facing the sea and singing the melody that calls for their children to be back in her arms. The rupturing contrast between the calm sea in the back and a spirit wrenched in a torment of sadness in the front is accompanied by confronting melodies: a soft one that resembles the song Tamaki will have sung for decades, blind and immovable, and a

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<sup>468</sup> See the review of Yasujirô Ozu’s *Tokyo Story* at Strictly Film School web page: <http://www.filmref.com/directors/dirpages/ozu.html> (1999).

<sup>469</sup> See Yoshida Kiju’s *Ozu’s Anti-Cinema*, Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (1998), pp. 92.

<sup>470</sup> Watch an interview with Tadao Sato conducted in Tokyo and included in the DVD version of Yasujirô Ozu’s *The Only Son* (1936) released by the Criterion Collection (2003).

rather debilitating one symbolizing the backward nature of feudalists who set up the system of slavery and use of another human being, around which the movie revolves. It, however, belongs to the old school of scriptwriting where every scene or a dialogue was written with an implicit obligation to conform to the central storyline, without intercepting it with seemingly random and unnecessary, though in reality vitally emotionally tying, details, save for the moment when the brother and the sister break a tree branch by pulling on it together, just as in the beginning of the movie, when they were still kids, signifying a big upcoming moment in their lives, the one of their separation for good. Nowhere in it are to be found the so-called “I lost a button” moments, referring to Charlie Chaplin’s interception of the ethereal dance of the fairies on Columbine’s grave, who were to show to weeping Harlequin that “his love is not in the grave, but everywhere”<sup>471</sup>, with a shot of him roaming bewildered in the backstage in search of a lost button. Countless are, of course, movies that suffer from the same aesthetic flaw, that is, from the missing button mistakenly unsearched for, particularly hit by it being those that present adaptations of novels, and, sometimes, even when photography, acting and camera work are all spot on, this demerit is just about enough to make a difference between a mediocrity and a masterpiece, as is the case, for example, with the difference between the following two *film noirs*, respectively: Frank Borzage’s *Moonrise* and Nicholas Ray’s *They Live by Night*, one of the scenes in which was intercepted by the romantic couple’s searching for a cigarette, a moment providing a vital diversion from the plot for a few seconds or so. Such seemingly unnecessary details that appear to drag the storyline from a straight path, producing a dialectical pull between senses of being lost and found and distantly invoking the image of visionary Speed Levitch walking across the streets of New York and claiming that “to be lost in a big city is to be quite precise about your place in the Universe”<sup>472</sup>, are vital for producing every touching artistic expression, narrative one especially. For, only through a combination of the senses of being lost and being found can the ideal of uttermost cosmic harmony, describable by the concept of the Way, of a constant interplay between connectedness and separation, reached. “He is found and He is not found”<sup>473</sup>, stands accordingly written in a book of the Zohar as the account of divine revelation whereby the more we know of the godliness that pervades it all, the less we know of it too, which is why the relationship between the human mind and God could be pictorially represented by the image of the Way, a line that divides and brings together at the same time. Inherently echoing a sentiment similar to Samuel Beckett’s heavily popularized “I can’t go on, I’ll go on”<sup>474</sup> phrase by producing a miniature knot in a continuous storyline, around which many functional loops, tying beginnings and ends in versatile manners, could be built, each one of such sidetracking moments I have enjoyed calling a *čobani*, *budale* moment in a reference to the remark exclaimed by the main protagonist of Dušan Kovačević’s *Balkan Spy* in the course of his trying to tell a story to a small audience by playing a sequence of slides to it, when a seemingly random photograph of two peasant youths munching clover leaves popped up on the screen and he briefly dismissed them as “some shepherds, fools” in an instant that has absolutely no connection to the narrative of the film. That such fine moments, albeit unrelated to the storyline, can mean a world can be exemplified by the unwinding of the rope that held the bucket with

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<sup>471</sup> Watch *Limelight* directed by Charlie Chaplin (1952).

<sup>472</sup> See Timothy “Speed” Levitch’s *Live from Shiva’s Dance Floor*, available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qsPNgIusrA> (2012).

<sup>473</sup> See *The Kabbalah Unveiled* containing the Books of the Zohar, translated by S. L. MacGregor Mathers, Chapter III, line 37, Theosophical Pub., Co., New York, NY (1912).

<sup>474</sup> See Paul Kalanithi’s *How Long Have I Got Left?*, *The New York Times* (January 24, 2014), retrieved from [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/25/opinion/sunday/how-long-have-i-got-left.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/25/opinion/sunday/how-long-have-i-got-left.html?_r=0).

which Apu's mother pulled water from the well in Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali*, a film whose viewing Akira Kurosawa compared to seeing the sunrise for the first time<sup>475</sup>; 'twas the second-long shot which to some critics symbolized the transition from the sentimental, linear and overly theatrical Indian cinema of the past to the neorealist, image-oriented and unaffectedly poetic cinema of the future. Another random example may come from Michele Deville's *Lucky Jo*, when the eponymous protagonist played by Eddie Constantine asks for a green apple and is then being handed a wooden ladder and taken to a garden at night by his host to pick cherries from a tree, in a scene unrelated to the storyline, but brimming with visions of crucial importance for the aesthetics of the movie. Yet another memorable cinematic moment that comes off the top of my head now to exemplify the unusual beauty achievable by apropos pulls away from the central thread woven through the story is from *Everything is Illuminated*; namely, just as the emotional climax of the movie is about to be reached and come crashing on the watcher, one of its protagonists says to another that his shirt is worn inside out, pointing out a seemingly insignificant detail, a detail that, however, turns out to be an intersection of an infinity of figures, synecdoches, metonymies and somersaulting parables, transporting the spectator to any distant corner of his universe of thought in a blissful blink of an eye, for an instant in time all-illuminatingly connecting his here and now with everything and allowing the movie to live up to the pompous premise embedded in its title. Note also that the beauty of this scene is partly derived from a casual way in which a mountainously profound metaphor has been lightly dropped before the viewers' feet. As a counterexample that illustrates the aesthetics of this cinematic encounter of toning down and building up, being yet another cross of a kind which good pieces of art are being laid on, I am free to invoke the final scene of *Darjeeling Limited*, a movie by Wes Anderson, a somewhat unjustified darling of the modern indie movie scene, wherein the protagonists chase a train and are seen dropping their belongings behind them because only without them could they hop on it. Namely, when the message of detachment from material goods and of life as a journey whose aim is the journey itself that the main characters' travelling across India in the 1960s was meant to symbolize would have more movingly resonated with the watchers had it been posed in a subtler manner, it ended up being almost desecrated by being coupled to pretentious slow motion, to loud music of a pompous finale and to no competing cinematic semantics. Now, speaking of little details caught on camera, seemingly unrelated to the central storyline, but, in fact, essential in drawing a web of cinematic captivation around the watcher, we could also bring to mind the very beginning of *Yasujirô Ozu's Tokyo Story*, when the elderly couple searches for the air pillows - said to be a metaphor of the director himself, being simultaneously brought to the viewer's attention and yet kept hidden from his view all the way through - before becoming temporarily distracted by the neighbor who enters the conversation for a moment or so, returning to their search afterwards and eventually finding the mysterious and yet commonplace object that they sought. Because of such emphasis on miniscule visual and dramatic elements, the cinematic approach of *Yasujirô Ozu* has been praised for its quiescent rebellion against what already by his era came to be regarded as classical Hollywood narration based on exclusion of any inconsequential events and details, lest they ruin a narrow and linearly told story, as it was believed, thus lacking the infinitely versatile spectra of impressions that real life abounds with, for which reason it earned

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<sup>475</sup> At the end of the series of lectures at the oldest Indian Institute of Technology, in Kharagpur, in December 2015, I expressed my sincerest impressions of India and told the students that seeing India, for me, was indeed like seeing sunrise for the first time. They teared.

the epithet of anti-cinema<sup>476</sup>, enabling Ozu to be seen not only as a creator of beautiful art in the eyes of the modern filmophiles, but as its acerbic critic as well, in the spirit of all the creative spirits of this world that gave vital impetuses to the areas of their creativity. For, a consensus amongst the majority of film critics is that Kurosawa, the Japanese darling of the West, thanks to his control of the character and the dramaturgical elements of the film, may be a better moviemaker than Ozu, but Ozu, thanks to his offering a tart critique of cinema, particularly Japanese, through his art, is, no doubt, greater. For, to enter the pantheon of greatness, regardless of the field, is to live up to the premises of the metalogical metaphor insinuated by the opening shot of Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*, showing a man with a movie camera standing on top of a movie camera, i.e., to question the foundations and the form of the art through which one expresses oneself through one's art, alongside utilizing it as a vehicle for the direct transmission of meaning, on the plane lying below that on which more sublime, metalogical insights are being made. Kurosawa's movies, needless to add, abound with contradictions that, like whirlpools of a kind, drag the viewer deep into a world profuse with insights into the nature of the human being, and my favorite example comes from the turning point in the evolution of the character of Kanji Watanabe in *Ikiru*<sup>477</sup>. Namely, as he talks in a nightclub with Toyo, the young coworker of his, whom he just bought a pair of stockings to replace the worn ones she wore, and hears her say, with the voice blended with the chatter of young girls preparing a birthday welcome to a friend in the back, that when she makes toy rabbits, she feels "as if all the children of Japan were my friends", he suddenly gets the idea of what the purpose for the last year of his life will be: to build a playground for children. As he, enlightened for an instant, runs down the stairs, the guest of honor comes up to the sound of the girls' singing "Happy Birthday (to You)", albeit with director's leaving the birthday girl out of the frame to let us know who the real person reborn at that very moment was, the moment wherein concocted lay the sadness and the misery of a man encountering a cheerful clique in spite of his impending Golgotha and a glistening joy of becoming a complete human being for possibly the very first time in one's adult life. Yet another example that comes straight from the heart of Japanese cinema is a scene from Masahiro Shinoda's *Pale Flower* wherein merciless Muraki, who has just pulled out the heart of another man, and Saeko, silent and graceful like a lotus flower, posed like a question mark over the role of Taoist muses who teach the art of beautiful living wordlessly, stand facing each other in the house of God, immersed in the chorus of angelic voices, in the midst of an ambience in which the same opposites wholly unsuccessfully invoked by Stanley Kubrick in *A Clockwork Orange* stood elegantly confronted this time. For, as for the pairing of physical assaults with Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* in the Kubrick's classic, even the devouring of a pretty Slavic spy to the music of the celebrated second movement of Bach's *Suite No.3 in D major*, a.k.a. *Air*, in a directorially naïve, but exotically picturesque movie about the Secret Agent 007, *The Spy Who Loved Me*, appeared more artistically appealing. However, speaking of the cinematic blends of violence and transcendent joys, it is difficult to find a more illustrious example thereof than Charles Burnett's *Killer of Sheep*, a low-budget movie in which outbursts of anger and aggression are made to float like ships across the background streams of natural beauties and are immersed in an atmosphere evocative of a cosmic splendor that enfolds it all and which all the protagonists, sadly, appear to be blind to. Like the vocalist in a popular Bosnian song, *Nekako s'*

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<sup>476</sup> See Daisuke Miyao's Introduction to Yoshida Kiju's *Ozu's Anti-Cinema*, Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (1998), pp. xii.

<sup>477</sup> See Stuart Galbraith's *The Emperor and the Wolf: The Lives and Films of Akira Kurosawa and Toshiro Mifune*, Faber and Faber, New York, NY (2001), pp. 157 – 160.

*proljeća*, admitting his madness to the sound of calm and soothing aural waves washing over him<sup>478</sup>, the atmosphere of the film, like that in many later cinematic studies on the twisted logic of violence, appears to have emerged from the principle to pair every idyllic scenery and sweet sentiment with something chilling to the bone, and *vice versa*. Then, what makes the final scene of the 1967 movie *The Graduate* truly memorable is not the rebellious reaction of the angry adolescent fed up with the phoniness and suffocating stiffness of the world of grownups *per se*, but coupling of the latter to Simon & Garfunkel's hymn to the sound of silence, as if subtly insinuating that explosive exuberance that produces true change in the world always bears resemblance to a spinning wheel whose center rests in stillness and quietness, prerequisites for the generation of the most enlightening moves conceivable. What made the famous Laurie's sock hop dance in another coming-of-age classic focused on the life of American adolescents in the early 1960s, *American Graffiti*, so memorable was the repeated cutting of the tense and energetic dancing atmosphere in the gym with Richard Dreyfuss' immersion in the darkness of an empty high school hallway, of the starlit schoolyard and of the backseat of a slowly cruising car. The one-hit wonderer in the film-directing domain, Charles Laughton highlighted the contrast between shadowy eeriness and cradlesong quiescence in *The Night of the Hunter* by both visual and musical means, the style that many future directors of thrillers would pick up on, including David Lynch whose talent for "combining peculiar elements in unexpected ways"<sup>479</sup> and maximizing ambiguities<sup>480</sup> can be said to hide the key to his cinematic success, all so as to reinstate the message that "mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (James 2:13) and that childlike chastity that sees each and every one as intrinsically good will "abide and endure" in the world wherein the most innocent ones are always uninvitingly dragged into vortices of collective fall from grace, the topic elaborated in a myriad of movies, particularly from the neo-noir genre. The movie that touches this topic perhaps more impressively than any before or after is Coppola's *Godfather* and if you have ever wondered how come the opening scenes have such a captivating effect on the viewer that he typically becomes glued to the screen for the next seven hours or so, know that the repetitive alternation between the clandestine talk in the quiet and the dark of a backroom of the don's house and the drinking and dancing joyously in the loud limelight and the open air has had a great say in accomplishing so. The same trick of contrasting light against darkness, in this particular case wittily making the black the light and the white the dark, was employed in the opening scene of yet another 1970s American classic, Robert Altman's *Nashville*, yet another "impressive blending of 'box office' and 'art' in American movies"<sup>481</sup>, alternating between the view of the major studio, Studio A, and a haughty white country singer recording a dead song in it, and the view of the backdoor studio, Studio B, and a gospel choir recording a song of joy and happiness in it. Another key polarity portrayed in this landmark movie is that between individualism and collectivism; specifically, the twenty-four characters roam around, like in a plotless video game, encountering each other, but without showing any affection or desire to bond, though in a bigger frame, depicted is a sense of connection of them all in spite of the icy, isolationistic individualism that they embody, the cancerous individualism that plagues America and makes its culture rot from the core. Like the *Godfather*, another American film beginning with a long wedding scene is the *Deer Hunter*, an ode to the calamities

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<sup>478</sup> Listen to Crvena Jabuka's *Nekako s' proljeća on Nekako s' proljeća*, Jugoton (1991).

<sup>479</sup> Vladan Petković, a Serbian film critic, Personal Correspondence (August 8, 2012).

<sup>480</sup> See Justus Nieland's *David Lynch*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, IL (2012), pp. 84.

<sup>481</sup> See Roger Ebert's *The Deer Hunter* (March 9, 1979), retrieved from <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-deer-hunter-1979>.

of war whose ambiguities culminate in the final scene of the protagonists' singing God Bless America in the wake of a funeral, the diametrical opposite of the merriness with which the film opened, and this singing was such that it, as Roger Ebert stressed out, "contained such an infinity of possible meanings, some tragic, some unspeakably sad, some few still defiantly hopeful"<sup>482</sup>. Having mentioned the Godfather, now that we have brought to mind this anchorage of communality in the deepest center of individuality and *vice versa*, impelling some of us to recall how wars, as times of tragic divisions between people, also bring about profounder bonding between them than the periods of phlegmatic peacefulness, it is time to reecho that famous "Mama, is it possible that you love your family so much that you lose it", Michael Corleone's most significant line in the second part of this dark saga and a question that makes us wonder as to how the immense protective and impassionate love for a few selected souls turns into an equally powerful expression of its diametrical opposite, hate, towards the rest of the world, describing the central ethical dilemma around which this dazzlingly dark ode to the train ride from an infinitely pure spirit of a child to a cold, vengeful and desensitized grownup soul revolves. The concept of family as a closed circle that walls a soul against the rest of society and silently drowns it in the lukewarm waters of indifference, standing in the way of its bursting like a supernova, turning its delusive veil of ego into stardust and becoming truly everything, the whole Cosmos and beyond, has been therefore attacked by many progressive thinkers, including the radical political activist, Kenzo Okuzaki, noted for uttering the following words as a part of his, ironically, wedding speech: "Nation is a wall between men. It is a big wall that prevents us from joining together. I also consider family a wall. It isolates human beings from each other and cuts ties. In other words, it is against the divine law. So I intend to continue attacking it"<sup>483</sup>. After all, it is no secret that almost every dreadful dictator from the history of humanity, who did damage to the members of his own nation more than to any other, loved his country cordially, with his whole heart, but allowed this blinding love to disable him from understanding the interests of other nations or countries, which he usually saw as hostile interferences in need of ruthless suppression<sup>484</sup>. What this unequivocally proves is that too much love can be as harmful for its objects as pure hatred, necessitating surges of compassion and care to be directed to friends, foes and foreigners alike and bringing us straight to the doorstep of the guiding star of thought shone out of the blissful heart of the Christ in the midst of his sermon on the Mount of Beatitudes bordering the Sea of Galilee: "If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so" (Matthew 5:46-47)? Therefore, when the sunrays of our love dissipate everywhere, onto every worldly soul that we have known and that comes to mind on the wild streams of our consciousness, when we imagine us fondling and caressing them and praying with all our heart for them, sparing neither darlings nor deadliest enemies from these touches of our grace, then we become like a sun, able to shine from even the remotest of all corners on Earth, and all the wrinkles and ripples on the karmic energy landscape of our soul get to be evened out in an instant. A humble insight also waits to be derived from these observations

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<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>483</sup> Watch Emperor's Naked Army Marches On, a documentary movie directed by Kazuo Hara (1987).

<sup>484</sup> See the interview with the Slovenian sociologist, Renata Salecl, and the part where she describes one of the central points of her book *The Tyranny of Choice*, the point that in its importance stands side by side with the idea that "a loss of faith in authority that forbids some of our actions opens the door not to freedom, but to creation of new limitations": "Love and hate are directed to the same paradoxical object... in my book I ask myself if love and hate are two sides of the same coin and what the moment is when we see that a discourse of love transforms into aggression and hatred", *Politika – kulturni dodatak* (July 19, 2014), pp. 2.

and it refers to the finite goodness of even the souls ready to perform utterly evil acts. For example, the man who ordered the razing of my fully furnished and decorated house in Montenegro in 2018 and, with it, the burying of precious items and possessions and also intangibles, from its magical smell to the overall spirit and memories, need not have been the embodiment of uttermost evilness. Rather, it could have been a man whistling a melody as sweet and benevolent as Elvis Costello's Shipbuilding underneath his breath, reminiscing over the bicycle he would buy for his boy's birthday with the reward received for fulfilling this inglorious task, performing the wicked act only with the mind set on the good it would bring to one he loved. Realizing this makes us aware that not individual people, but the system, which enslaves the people by imposing specific, in this case materialistic values on them, must be challenged and changed by those who wish to leave traces on Earth that gods would be proud of during their lifetimes. There is, of course, little doubt that this complex entwinement of love and hate in the life stories of the movie's main protagonists, father and son, Vito and Michael Corleone, hides the key to the memorable and artistically monumental character of this movie. How journeying on the tracks of trustworthiness, of being genuinely good and respectful to the neighbor, practically saintly in devotion to saving him from the trouble, can lead one to the destination that is the embodiment of worldly sins is an ethical question of paramount profoundness that some other movies elaborated too through the corresponding evolution of their characters, including naïve Thelma from *Thelma & Louise*, the movie which should have been perhaps named simply Thelma due to the centrality of her character, John Rambo in *First Blood*, de Sica's Antonio Ricci from the *Bicycle Thieves*, and many others. In John Ford's filmed version of *How Green Was My Valley*, the local preacher, Mr. Gruffydd advises his fiancée, Angharad to marry another man because having her near him would make him want to "kill", reflecting the sentiment of all of us who have felt at least once that we could be spat at, punched and humiliated, but should the same insults and injuries befall those whom we love, all hell would break loose and our saintliness would swiftly vanish in the air. Once again we are thus being brought over to this profound existential question: how come that too much love in one can yield so much hatred and malice too? Finally, could our soul's quiet preoccupation with this grave enigma, most of the time without the direct involvement of conscious thought, be the real reason why the cinematic and musical juxtapositions of violence and sentimentality so strongly resonate in us these days? Why else would be the scene where Frankenstein's monster and the innocent child, the blackest and the whitest in contrast, sit by the river bank, pluck white flowers from the meadow, drop them to the watery surface and watch them float, unanimously considered the most epic of all from James Whales' 1931 classic?<sup>485</sup> For the same reason, the most powerful scene in Gillo Pontecorvo's *Battle of Algiers* could thus easily be the one wherein a young bride is being sweetly dressed, combed and lip-glossed in preparation for the wedding in the attic of a house to the sound of a gun-holding Justice of the Peace's preaching to the public about the upcoming war coming through the window. In Martin Scorsese's *Raging Bull*, the scenes of violent fights of tempestuous men in the boxing ring and outside of it, washed in sweat, suffering and mutually inflicted pain amidst the glittering lights of fame, appear so striking because they are coupled to a soothingly sentimental musical score, a full contrast to aggression and brutality brimming over the screen. Of course, the idea that the musical score should counteract, not accentuate the

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<sup>485</sup> Note that in a mellow tribute to this horror classic, Victor Erice's *Spirit of the Beehive*, in which, coincidentally or not, a central place is occupied by the memorable nightstand and the icon of the Holy Virgin and a plush Teddy Bear placed side by side on it, all seems to be a preparation for the rather sloppily executed encounter between the gunman and the girl inside of a desolate barn with two dark openings, the metaphor of eyes in the human head.

emotion conveyed by the image dates back to 1928 and the famous statement on sound signed by Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Alexandrov and Vertov, wherein they agreed that “only a contrapuntal use of sound in relation to the visual montage piece will afford a new potentiality of montage development and perfection”, as well as that the ultimate aim was attaining “an orchestral counterpoint of visual and aural images”<sup>486</sup>. From this landmark moment on, countless filmmakers, though predominantly outside of Hollywood, used this trick, oftentimes going as far as to insist on the perpetual juxtaposition of image and sound in a contradictory manner. The approach followed by the French composer, Maurice Jaubert, for example, was to fill the gaps in the film’s fabric of emotion that words could not express<sup>487</sup>, thus creating musical scores that were complements to the lines of dialogue rather than their simple iteration. Directors who adopted similar methods include the Indian director, Ritwik Ghatak, as in the wedding night scene in *A River Called Titas*, Sebastian Schipper in the two dance scenes in *Victoria*, the one-shot feature film whose masterfulness of the moment could put more famous one-take movies, from Hitchcock’s *Rope* to Sokurov’s *Russian Ark*, to shame any day, and the British filmmaker, Terence Davies, most famously in *The Long Day Closes*, wherein the scenes of bullying in the schoolyard and in the classroom were paired with Robert Burns’ *Ae Fond Kiss* and other acapella sung lullabies. In fact, this juxtaposition of serene music to violent scenes has been a regular trick employed by filmmakers all over the world. For example, similarly to what Martin Scorsese did in the *Raging Bull* as well as in the final scene of *Mean Streets*, the South Korean director Park Chan-wook coupled the memorable scene wherein the protagonist is involved in a fistfight against fourteen other thugs to a rather tender and romantic musical score in his movie *Oldboy* from 2003. Gus Van Sant employed the same type of contrast between the musical and the cinematographic elements in the melee scene from *Paranoid Park* in 2007, and so did Bong Joon-ho in *Parasite* from 2019. Then, the single most memorable scene of the 10 h series *Narcos: Mexico* is arguably the one showing the capture of Don Neto by the ocean shore, where the bloodshed was accompanied by the idyllic scenery and the sound of Diego Verdaguer’s *Mamá Ven a Sentarte Aquí* played to the gangster’s ears, insinuating that our brains may be tuned to be impressed most by the combinations of things that the brain, itself, does not perceive as combinable at all. Akira Kurosawa resorted to the same oddity when he used the jazzy version of *O Sole Mio* in the violent scene of arrest of the psychopathic medical intern and the kidnapper, Ginjirô Takeuchi, flashing guns and frowns and cyanide pills and wrestling grips, in *High and Low*, a movie that paved the way for the American crime TV series, demonstrating how the influencer – in this case the American culture conquering Japan following World War II - ought to always lean his ears to the echo of its influence over the influenced in order to keep the creative sources behind this influence fresh and pertinent. Before it appeared in his final movie, *Salò*, the same trick was employed by Pier Paolo Pasolini in his directorial debut, *Accattone*, when he used a sacral musical piece by Johann Sebastian Bach as a score for the memorable street fighting scene, all in a somewhat sloppy, a bit banal attempt to prove that there is a tender side to every thuggish character, that hurt feelings of sacred love stand behind all the worldly hostilities and hatreds, as insinuated by the ambiguously long clinch - maybe a wrestle, maybe a hug - as well as to make us aware that artistic sensibility need not be a shield against descents into delusion and disgrace in real life. The same message, I believe, Stanley Kubrick wished to

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<sup>486</sup> The statement could be retrieved from [https://soma.sbccc.edu/users/davega/filmpro\\_114/FILMPRO\\_114\\_Reference\\_Notes/SovietMontage/A\\_Statement\\_on\\_Sound\\_Vertov\\_1928.pdf](https://soma.sbccc.edu/users/davega/filmpro_114/FILMPRO_114_Reference_Notes/SovietMontage/A_Statement_on_Sound_Vertov_1928.pdf).

<sup>487</sup> Watch *My Journey through French Cinema* directed by Bertrand Tavernier (2016).

convey in *Clockwork Orange*, bringing memories of Nazi officers who'd cut people's ears to the music of Ludwig van Beethoven, believing that their being touched by this music gave them the right to indulge in the sense of dominion over commoners who were indifferent to it and proceed to humiliate them as such. The Third Reich aircrafts and other army toys that sowed the seeds of death all across Europe and beyond were, indeed, under the command of ill spirits who had found great enjoyment in music and other arts, having used it to reinstate a sense of supremacy over any other ethnic group or race on the planet, shattering thereby any illusions in us that beautiful art *per se* could bring us the salvation from the evils of our nature. The sight and sound of bombs shed by them in the Willy Wyler's 1942 patriotic propaganda movie about the Brit folk's favorite, Mrs. Miniver is compounded with her reading in a shelter to her plush-rabbit-holding children a bedtime story that was the end of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, "She pictured to herself how this same little sister of hers would, in the after-time, be herself a grown woman; and how she would keep, through all her riper years, the simple and loving heart of her childhood..."<sup>488</sup>, evoking the same mind-splitting combination of NATO bombs falling all around me in April 1999 as I put myself alone to sleep to the mellow sounds of Kate Bush's *And Dream of Sheep* and Air's *Moon Safari* in a room at the ground floor corner of a three-story house, the walls of which were crumbly due to all the mold and must and seemingly collapsible at the slightest push of the hand or the softest blow of the wind, let alone a bomb falling somewhere nearby. Yet, now that I look back, despite being more akin to pillars of salt than to a solidest building structure, these musty walls acted like the truest cornerstones of a home. A month or so later, while the bombs still relentlessly shredded my homeland to pieces, not peace, as the vile bombers had had it, I found myself hanging out in the Hague with Slobodan Šijan, a Serbian filmmaker and the director of the movie voted as Yugoslavia's best, *Who's Singin' Over There?* For a while, we shared a rented loft on Prinsegracht Street, less than 100 miles from a more famous, Amsterdam's Prinsegracht Street, in which Anne Frank hid from the Nazi patrols and wrote her diary<sup>489</sup>. The interior of this apartment, I remember, was traversed in every direction by a black cat with white paws, a cat that seemingly disobeyed the laws of gravity in its runs up and down against the walls and the ceiling. As we bogglingly watched the very same scenes of bomb-shattered buses carrying innocent civilians as those Šijan had depicted in this extraordinarily successful feature film debut of his, the famous filmmaker told me that his movies attempted to be "comedies of horror", and the very same combination of comicality and tragedy, wherein one is often unable to tell where the absurd and the satirical end and where the serious and the thoughtful begin, now I see as typifying the Yugoslav cinema in general. This eminent moviemaker and I were both born in Belgrade, the city that, as its historians might note<sup>490</sup>, is schizoid in many respects, including, for instance, the collective sense of being torn between the awareness of its indisputably rich history and the nonexistent traces thereof on its

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<sup>488</sup> See Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), retrieved from <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/carroll/lewis/alice/index.html>.

<sup>489</sup> Anne Frank lived on 263 Prinsegracht Street. My history of living in bizarre places does not end here. In fact, my first habitat in the United States was a bed and breakfast place that was also the oldest house in Potsdam, NY. Strangely, out of 5233 Elm Streets in this country alone (see the survey run by the National League of Cities, according to which Elm Street is the 15<sup>th</sup> most popular name for a street in the US; retrieved from <https://www.nlc.org/most-common-us-street-names>), not including the rest of the anglosphere, my abode lay exactly on that very Elm Street on which John Carpenter shot his first version of the *Nightmare on Elm Street* as a student of Clarkson University, where I got my first employment in America, before he set off to Hollywood and made a blockbuster out of it.

<sup>490</sup> See Bojan Kovačević's *Višestruki original*, *Politika – kulturni dodatak* (August 30, 2014), pp. 7.

façades and architectonic silhouettes levitating portentously over it. Needless to add, when I mumbled that memorable “I had a dream and it split the scene”<sup>491</sup> into the microphone, disguised as a schizophrenic girl, the muse of Sonic Youth, kind of like Lung Leg on the cover of the band’s epic record, *Evol*, during the concert our trio played live in the studio of B92 Radio on the Halloween Night of 1993, I could not have not known that it would turn out to have been an ode to my hometown too and, perhaps, to all this celebration of dialectics spilled like confetti of lustrous thoughts across the pages of this book. Now, having mentioned the perpetual woes underwent by my compatriots throughout the history, always clinched between the East and the West in a variety of cultural contexts, I bring to mind Branislav Trifunović’s artwork named *Kuda?* and displayed in a Belgrade art gallery on the occasion of one hundred years since the beginning of the Great War. It is a minimalistic representation of a framework of the stern and the bow of a ship, the symbol of hope and perhaps an allusion to the French fleet that waited for the Serbian army passing through the Albanian Golgotha to embark on it to recuperate and gain strength to bounce back, defeat its fierce enemy and end the World War I for good. This light framework of a ship, however, rests on a bulky pedestal on the sides of which one finds endless excerpts from the yellowish newspapers from the period of 1914 - 1918, describing the immense suffering of the Serbian nation, and it is this contrast between the pedestal and the ship, the ponderous and the light, the passed and the promised, the muddling and the minimal, the covered and the clean, alongside the impossibility of telling whether the ship is surfacing or sinking, that accounts for the stunning impression left in the wake of gazing at this exceptional artwork. Therefore, it could be that anytime we recognize a clash of contrasts in a social setting, we ought to be sure that something great is being brewed underneath its surface. To add to that, I, myself, an American as well as Serbian, Slovenian and European Union citizen at the moment of writing this, have tried to explain my and many other people’s attraction to the United States as the result of its concealing a similar array of antagonisms in its heart, as in accordance with the views of some of the progressive scholars of the 1920s who saw it “in terms of conflict – as a continuous struggle between the forces of liberalism and conservatism, aristocracy and democracy, and the rich and the poor”<sup>492</sup>. This perspective that underlies the eruptions of light emerging from the meetings of worlds that are poles apart, so different that they may seem unable to coexist even in the wildest dreams, coincides also with my finding the most sentimental and touching scene in Jacques Tati’s *Mon Oncle* to be the one where a pack of stray doggies, “with no direction home”<sup>493</sup>, just like the main protagonist, Monsieur Hulot, passes through “a hole in the wall”<sup>494</sup> that separates the *petit-bourgeois* world of lofty phoniness, plastic sterility and vacant hearts from the real world of clumsy naturalness, poignant poverty whose is “the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3) and crumbly walls behind which muses over whom heavens smile in sympathy reside. To impress the viewers subtly and silently, opening the deepest cellars of their psyches and disposing of sparkly treasures over their floors, in the Virgin Spring Ingmar Bergman superimposed the scene of an ultimate blackness and despair, that of a father falling to the ground before his dead daughter, with the view of a shimmering mountain stream in the back, yielding a visual combination that confounds and conceals the recipe for an ultimate artistic experience. Seven years earlier, in *Sawdust and Tinsel*, he portrayed the art of

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<sup>491</sup> Listen to Sonic Youth’s *Schizophrenia on Sister*, SST (1987).

<sup>492</sup> The exact quote is attributed to J. T. Adams, V. L. Parrington and T. J. Wertenbaker. See William M Drew’s *D. W. Griffith’s Intolerance: Its Vision and Genesis*, McFarland & Co., Jefferson, NC (1986), pp. 161.

<sup>493</sup> Listen to Bob Dylan’s *Like a Rolling Stone on Highway 61 Revisited*, Columbia (1965).

<sup>494</sup> See David Bellos’ *Jacques Tati: His Life and Art*, The Harvill Press, London, UK (1999), pp. 207.

film, like perhaps any art ahead of its times, as analogous to the troubled circus troupe, ridiculed and spitted upon by the loftier arts such as theater, and in the final frame contrasted the joyous walk into the sunset of the Little Tramp and his muse in *Modern Times* with the careworn, yet delightful hobble into the dark of the night by the beauty and the brute, the two hemispheres intrinsic to every powerful movement throughout the history of humanity. Another impressive instance of superposition of opposites in an Ingmar Bergman's movie comes from a scene in *Autumn Sonata*, where the artist's daughter, played by Liv Ullmann, reminiscences over the "infinity of being and thought" while the camera zooms into her face, creating a deliberate disparity between the words expanding into the semantic eternity and the view of the universe closing up on a scant and destitute detail of its face. Speaking of the graceful rides into the sunset, the cult Western, *Shane* owes its magic to showing us that out there where the attitude of "going places one has never been to" and the attitude that spells staying and zealously defending one's hearth and home, held by the two protagonists of the movie, Shane and Joe Starrett, respectively, the petals of a heroic heart unfold and the doors open to the enchantment of pure and chaste, childlike eyes of this world, which would remain gazing at the sunsets into which the hero has ridden for a long, long time, remaining impressed and inspired by his story for life. In this final scene of the film, the hero moves on, to new lands and adventures, while his heart spells staying near the worldly souls in need of defense and protection as a greatest virtue, thus creating an illuminative paradox in the viewer's mind, quite like the one that is intrinsic to the paintings of Edward Hopper, to whom travelling was important, as hinted at by his making passageways, roads, railways tracks and stations the frequent objects of his paintings, but a sense of stillness was what he wished to provoke in the viewer more than anything else; or, as stated by the University of Chicago poet, Mark Strand, "These two imperatives – the one that urges us to continue and the other that compels us to stay – create a tension that is constant in Hopper's work"<sup>495</sup>. When in another classic Western, *Stagecoach*, John Ford contrasted the claustrophobia of a stagecoach whereon the Ringo Kid travels with the pastoralism of the open land of the Wild West, he opened the door for the dichotomy between the iron horse and the prairie that was to become embedded deep in the iconography of the western movie genre in general. Road was thus paved for countless subsequent cinematic encounters of the desert and the meadowland, the vivaciously wild and the insipidly cultivated, as in the encounter of two mindsets reflecting these very same qualities, the aboriginal and the civic, in Nicolas Roeg's *Walkabout* and in the South Australian seascape portrayed in one of its memorable scenes, composed of a swimming pool, a symbol of artificiality and limitedness, superimposed on a background that is an ocean, boundless and free, extending into infinity, resembling yet another scene having the ocean as a backdrop, though with a hand holding a motorcycle antenna as a contrast, along with a voice releasing sighs, unsure whether they are of pleasure or grief, comes from Djibril Diop Mambéty's *Touki Bouki*, a movie whose ambiance is highly similar to that of Roeg's *Walkabout* or Malick's *Badlands*, mesmerizing the viewer with hybridization of the tranquilly natural and the humanely energetic. Having brought a moonlike desert to mind, I remember the furry ape sitting in the midst of it in the scene known as *The Dawn of Man* in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* and ponderously banging the skeleton of a diseased forefather with one of its bones, making the watcher mystified regarding whether discovered in this bone was a tool or a weapon, thus hinting at the age-old Manichean puzzle wherein every sword has double edges and every good deed performed for someone's benefit has its dark side of the Moon in terms of the back of negligence it has turned to someone else, before the view of this sacramental, yet

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<sup>495</sup> See Mark Strand's *Hopper*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY (2001), pp. 3.

somehow playfully nuanced bone flying through the air is classily cut to show a spaceship traversing the Solar system. A concordant contrast between the light of the life and the dark of the death stands impressed at the very end of both Andrei Tarkovsky's feature film debut, *Ivan's Childhood*, and his last film, *Sacrifice*, showing a bare tree, leafless, blackened and dead, on the backdrop of a sunlit sea. In the former film, the child, hung by Nazis, is showed in retrospect, running happily into it during the days of his carefree childhood, whereas in the latter film, another child, mute after having gone through a throat operation, is seen watering a similar tree planted a day earlier with his Dad, who by then has gone crazy owing to his "growing to hate the emptiness of human speech"<sup>496</sup>, has burned everything he possessed and has been taken by the ambulance, then lying under it, uttering the beautiful words, "In the beginning was the Word. Why is that, Papa?", and continuing to dream, all in the days of dying Earth. Although, in my opinion, the eye of the camera approached the tree too fast and too flightily in the sad story about Ivan Bondarev, presenting one of the definite demerits of this cinematic masterpiece, nonetheless exceptional, especially in terms of its use of the background imagery to illustrate the protagonists' states of mind, the technique that dates back to Jean Renoir's *Rules of the Game*, in *Sacrifice* this contrast was represented masterfully, giving an impressive final touch of lightness, beauty and eternal optimism to a movie more pessimistic and depressing than perhaps any he has ever made. And so, as I, myself, sit under the cherry tree of the starry cosmos unfolding in the eye of my mind and a shower of examples continues to randomly fall off the top of my head and slide like raindrops down the window of my mental screen, the window that all I want to do is open, like Peter Pan or Gordon Jenkins' professor<sup>497</sup>, and fly out, to everyone's amazement, I bring to mind the ending of *My Dinner with Andre*, the movie directed by Louis Malle and popularized by the Pulitzer-Prize-winning film critic, Roger Ebert<sup>498</sup>, who has owed his success to setting up the territory for his punditry on the middle ground between Hollywood flashiness and indie intellectualism, and in it a cab ride adorned with glitters of colorful neon lights, evocative of sci-fi futurism, though paired with the backseat rider's memories that drag him down, into the vortices of the past, altogether with Erik Satie's *Gymnopédie No.1* played in the background, producing yet another dialectical pull in diametrically opposite directions while enfolding the movie as a whole in the waves of unusual warmth, demonstrating how a single touch at the end can give a dazzling meaning to all that has preceded it. Having mentioned a piano piece, critics have ascribed the genius of Francois Truffaut's second feature, *Shoot the Piano Player*, to its "mélange of tones"<sup>499</sup> whereat one knows not whether one views a film noir, an existential comic tale, a tragic love story or a grotesque comedy, for they are all mixed into one, alongside telling a captivating story as a metaphor of life while also reflecting on the process of telling the story and on the art of cinema itself, handing us the guidance for marvelous creation in every other domain of human creativity as well. Next, Alexander Payne's *Sideways* can be said to owe its captivating ambience to placing an utterly depressing character, Miles, into a comical context and making the spectators internally confused as to which of these two sentiments will prevail following their long and strenuous wrestling on the movie screen: depressiveness or funniness, downheartedness or spiritedness, tragedy or comedy. The movies of

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<sup>496</sup> See Andrei Tarkovsky's *Sculpting in Time*, University of Texas Press, Austin, TX (1989), p. 222.

<sup>497</sup> Listen to Gordon Jenkins and His Orchestra's *The Professor* (feat. The Ralph Brewster Singers) on *Seven Dreams*, Basta (1953).

<sup>498</sup> See Todd Randleman's *Rule of Thumb: Ebert at the Movies*, Continuum International Publishing Group, New York, NY (2012), pp. 7.

<sup>499</sup> Watch the commentary by Peter Brunette and Annette Insdorf on Francois Truffaut's *Shoot the Piano Player*, Criterion Collection (1960).

Roy Andersson, especially the Living trilogy, hit a similar middle ground between humor and dolor, “simultaneously delivering us loss and gain, pain and pleasure, the pathetic and the absurd”, in such a way that “these opposing conditions are so tightly interwoven that it is almost impossible to separate out one strand from the other”<sup>500</sup>. Mike Leigh’s tragicomic masterpiece, the black comedy-drama and the story about the wretched fate of honesty and truth in a world governed by “secrets and lies”, *Naked*, like the rest of his cinematic oeuvre, was marked by Roger Ebert as being “painful to watch, but also exhilarating, as all good movies are”<sup>501</sup>. In addition, the movie is said to “explore the tension between the domesticated and the anarchic”<sup>502</sup>, evoking the antagonism between order and chaos, stability and freedom, that most fundamentally ontological polarity that all other polarities in life could be reduced to. David Thewlis got catapulted to stardom in this movie thanks to his role of Johnny, the “nauseated Nineties”<sup>503</sup> version of the Christ that resurrects people from the dead, albeit in a hard and painful way, the way every delicate medical procedure does, being invasive and a bit hurtful to the patient. The actor has been praised for the multilayered nature of his character, shifting “from fear to cynicism to hopefulness”<sup>504</sup> in a matter of milliseconds and alternating from a Good Samaritan to a misogynist and back as the multifaceted diamond of his character is being rotated in the viewer’s hands. Epitomizing a searcher *par excellence*, in whose nature it is to make intense choices and thus swing from extreme goodness to extreme wickedness like a pendulum<sup>505</sup>, he helps his ex, Louise, by his mere presence, offbeat as it were, transform from an unsightly figure to a Mancunian goddess in the spectators’ eyes, displaying the entwining of the diametrical opposites that life is composed of at its best. Throughout his prolific career as a filmmaker, Wim Wenders has considered himself as a painter, *i.e.*, an artist rooted in the visual and the spatial, searching for ways to express time<sup>506</sup> and more often than not in such an approach based on reaching out to glorify the exact opposites from the qualities one embodies is where the key to true inspirational power and creativity lies. That in the absence of the counterpoint the point in question crumbles is a point also implicitly corroborated in the majority of movies of another giant of the contemporary European cinema, Lars von Trier, who has relentlessly infused the sense of realism captured by a handheld camera and iterated by improvised dialogues and the obsessive usage of Take 1s with cinematic elements evocative of the romantic, the supernatural and the dreamy, all in an attempt to create a mesmerizing concoction of the two, whereby both are being intensified in effect<sup>507</sup>. Finally, *Mulholland Drive*<sup>508</sup>, a movie about movies directed by

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<sup>500</sup> See Robert Enright’s *The Tragic Optimist: ‘You, the Living’* directed by Roy Andersson, *Border Crossings* 113 (March 2010), retrieved from <https://bordercrossingsmag.com/article/the-tragic-optimist-you-the-living-directed-by-roy-andersson>.

<sup>501</sup> See Roger Ebert’s *Naked*, *Chicago Sun-Times* (February 18, 1994), retrieved from <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/naked-1994>.

<sup>502</sup> See Micheal Coveney’s *The World According to Mike Leigh*, HarperCollins, New York, NY (1996).

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>504</sup> Watch Neil LaBute on *Naked* Interview, Criterion Collection, Vancouver (2005).

<sup>505</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>506</sup> See Wim Wenders: “Everything I Loved I Had to Defend”: An Interview with Wim Wenders, *The Talks* (January 29, 2014), retrieved from <http://the-talks.com/interviews/wim-wenders/>.

<sup>507</sup> His movie *Melancholia*, for example, Lars von Trier described as “a clash between what is romantic and grand and stylized and then some form of reality”. See Nils Thorsen’s *Longing for the End of All*, retrieved from <http://www.festival-cannes.com/assets/Image/Direct/042199.pdf> (2011).

<sup>508</sup> The movie possesses an extraordinarily thick layer of parallel meanings; one of them becomes apparent if we see Betty as a metaphor of Lynch himself, a pure and enthusiastic freshman in the dark realm of Hollywood, represented by seductive and decadent Rita. Over time their relationship turns into a bad romance and a breakup in the wake of

elusive and mystical Montanan, David Lynch, who had earlier created a cult cinematic masterpiece known as *Twin Peaks*, a “melodramatic common denominator – a mode crossing genre and media and linking televised soaps, the postwar film noir, the police procedural, the suspense thriller, and the family melodrama”<sup>509</sup>, has dizzied the watchers by immersing them into a cinematic reflection of reality co-created by our thoughts and dreams to such an extent that untangling where our drives begin and the drives of divine Nature end is an impossible task; in view of that, it comes as no surprise to notice that with the memorable coupling of bright, trustful, positive and sunshiny Betty and mysterious, amnesic and confused Rita, this movie has also provided an invaluable musing in movement on the relationship between the two brain hemispheres antipodal to each other: analytical and intuitive. This complex cinematic rumination evoked Ingmar Bergman’s earlier depiction of the encounter between two contrasting personalities and their swapping traits in *Persona*, the movie which he, symbolically, so as to depict the essentiality of the blending of opposites to produce an artistic experience, wished to name *Cinematography* at first. It is also similar to another cinematic clash of diametrically opposite characters by the seaside, one represented by wood and the other one by steel, which its creator, Agnès Varda, in this film that served as a precursor and a seed for the nucleation of the French New Wave<sup>510</sup>, supplemented with numerous other contrasts, from the superposition of professional acting of the young couple over the amateur acts of the villagers to the use of documentary stylistics to counter the fictional plot, and so on. It also bears immense resemblance to Lars von Trier’s subsequent portrayal of two sisters in the movie *Melancholia*, Justine and Claire, as the unconscious and the conscious, respectively, along with a myriad of other characters, each of which was meant to represent a different concentric circle of the human psyche. Like Edouard Manet’s pairing Victorine on the left, dressed in black and intently viewing the viewer, with the little girl dressed in white on the right, holding her back turned to the canvas and looking away from the viewer, toward passing trains behind the gate that she holds on to<sup>511</sup>, we ought to know that coupling the logical, rational activity of the left side of the brain to the intuitive, creative activity of its right side is the key to displaying the traits of a blazing consciousness, the one that touches deeply, at the most subliminal of levels, everything that comes to its view. Anyhow, since in the balance of these two hemispheres depicted by the two central characters of these many visual artworks lies the key to opening gates for an inflow of the gushing streams of an absolute creativity, it may explain why artistic pieces that combine similar clashes of antipodes, serving as metaphors for this perfect balance dormant in our minds and signs that point in the direction of attaining it, have such an unexplainably enlightening effect on us. And just as the process of retrieval of sanity of the dark side of the moon of our consciousness, thoroughly scattered and disoriented up to that point in the movie, as it is for the majority of beings inhabiting this planet, has begun from a kiss and a love affair between the two, so could we be sure that wherever we let the diametrical opposites merge with each other, the doors to exhibitions of paramount peaks of creativity will open for us. Therefore, when Donna Hayward, a character from Lynch’s *Twin Peaks*, confesses her bipolar feelings to her

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which Betty tries to do it all to systematically eliminate Rita, eventually only extinguishing oneself. This, of course, stands for Lynch’s own attempt to transcend the Hollywood culture of superficiality, though, destined to remain a part of it, merely finding solace in the meditative annihilation of his own ego as the way to escape the hellish spirits piling up all around him.

<sup>509</sup> See Justus Nieland’s *David Lynch*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, IL (2012), pp. 81.

<sup>510</sup> Watch Agnès Varda’s debut feature film, *La Pointe Courte* (1955). Naturally, Varda saw this and her other movies as “dialogues, not lectures” (See David Sterritt’s article on *La Pointe Courte*, TCM).

<sup>511</sup> See Edouard Manet’s painting named *The Railway*, a.k.a. *The Gare Saint-Lazare*, painted in 1873.

mother, saying “It’s like I’m having the most beautiful dream and the most terrible nightmare at once”<sup>512</sup>, we should know that she points at the Way, risky and slippery, wherefrom we could fall into an abyss and be pulverized in an instant, but the only Way leading to the enkindling of stars of wonder in the eyes of those who would come to absorb our artistic expressions and the striking of their hearts with the lightings of enlightenment.

From groundbreaking kisses on the movie screen to the grainy walls that we thence hug and dance over in ecstasy, we come to architecture; speaking of it as of yet another domain of visual arts, according to the French philosopher, Gaston Bachelard, the dialectical juxtaposition of “large and small, hidden and manifest, placid and aggressive, flabby and vigorous”<sup>513</sup> can be unveiled as the secret of the captivating nature of innumerable “poetical” spaces through which our starry spirit roams. Perhaps most notably, the American architect Robert Venturi argued in favor of contradictory compositions whereby structural ambiguities and exciting superimpositions of complexities over simplicities and the other way around are not suppressed, but encouraged to conceive of<sup>514</sup>. The Indian-English architect and sculptor, Anish Kapoor has obeyed this fundamental principle and he was correspondingly said to “combine several ideas into one - the outside and the inside, the additive volume and the subtractive volume - as the dichotomy of opposites characterizes his work”<sup>515</sup>. The French-Californian architect based in San Francisco, Anne Fougeron, a long-time admirer of Robert Irwin, a wizard in combining expressive spaces that promote contact and those that induce solitary retreats and self-oriented reintegration, has accordingly seen her art as an exploration of various stylistic, spatial, figural, textural and chromatic contrasts, including shadowy and light, urban and pastoral, technological and ecological, Victorian and hypermodern, utilitarian and Dadaistic, industrial and residential, roofed and outdoorsy, protected and transparent, communal and private, and, most notably, the refinement of Dr. Jekyll and the roughness of Mr. Hyde<sup>516</sup>, if not the “extremely psychologically penetrating”<sup>517</sup> contrast between “romantic, high-flown” Don Quixote and “vulgar, worldly-wise” Sancho Panza, bringing them into dialogue out of which new and unforeseen beauties are born, just like this very reality of ours, being continually recreated from the dialogue between the human mind and Nature. Gazing at innumerable architectural works and musing on them relentlessly brought Alain de Botton to conclusion that “if certain subtly balanced buildings touch us, it is because they stand as exemplars of how we might adjudicate between the conflicting aspects of our characters, how we, too, might aspire to make something beautiful of our troubling opposites”<sup>518</sup>, reiterating the feeling that art, especially when at its best, speaks to

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<sup>512</sup> Watch the second episode of the TV series *Twin Peaks* directed by David Lynch (1990).

<sup>513</sup> See Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space*, Beacon Press, Boston, MA (1958), pp. 112.

<sup>514</sup> See Richard Weston’s *100 Ideas that Changed Architecture*, Laurence King Publishing, London, UK (2011), pp. 170.

<sup>515</sup> Watch *Small Talk: Kapoor* directed by Sacha Neugarten Prod (2018).

<sup>516</sup> See Anne Fougeron’s *Fougeron Architecture: Opposition/Composition*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, NY (2011), pp. 17.

<sup>517</sup> Watch Thomas Shippey’s lecture titled *Don Quixote – The First of the Wannabes*, The Great Courses, Kanopy (2014). According to the lecturer, countless complementary characters all across the history of film, theater and literature could be traced to the contrast between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, including that between the Cisco Kid and Pancho, the Lone Ranger and Tonto, Frodo Baggins and Samwise Gamgee from Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*, Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller from Dickens’ first novel, *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, Bertie Wooster and Reggie Jeeves from P. G. Wodehouse’s stories and novels, C. S. Forester’s *Horatio Hornblower* and *Lieutenant Bush*, Patrick O’Brian’s *Captain Aubrey* and *Dr. Maturin*, and Arthur Conan Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes* and *Dr. Watson*.

<sup>518</sup> See Alain de Botton’s *Architecture of Happiness*, Pantheon Books, New York, NY (2006), pp. 201.

the deepest secrets of ourselves and stands forth as a guidepost on our paths toward higher, diviner forms of being, inevitably tied to the conjunctions of complements. One such encounter of opposites can be experienced by looking at the photographs of the Post Palace No. 2 projected by the Serbian architect, Momir Korunović in 1927, which is, according to many, the most striking architectural work that has ever decorated the streets of Belgrade. Although it still stands where it had been originally erected, a stone's throw away from the central train station, it ended up being thoroughly destroyed in Allied bombing during World War II and was never renovated in its authentic, Serbian-Byzantine style. Inwardly folding edges and caved entrances suggestive of souls being stowed away in its awe-inspiring interior combined with arch-top windows that evoke the elegance of Venetian romanticism, along with colonnaded roofs and balconies and two elongated clock towers, let alone the baroque-style coalescence of convex and concave shapes, yielded the impression of frightening heaviness and cumbersome gray and vogueish vividness and sprightly flair brought to majestic unity in it. If we were to set off now a few hundreds of miles to the southwest, arrive at the eternal city of Rome, a city owing its charm to being “an urban setting where extremes come together into a recombinant whirl”<sup>519</sup>, and rush to let the ocean of tears run down our eyes and cheeks and heart and knees, we might notice the following. The almost unnoticeable source of enthrallment behind our immersion in the generous water streams, splashes and sounds of Fontana di Trevi, a masterpiece of urban design that took 122 years and 14 popes to complete, is, according to Nicola Salvi, one of the architects involved in its creation, owing to the central statue of Oceanus being surrounded by two Tritons, one of whom grittily leads a horse by its mane and blows a conch shell, representing the ocean in an invasive and angry mood, while the other one is fettering a rearing sea horse, standing for the ocean in its tranquility<sup>520</sup>. While the former Triton appears to have tamed his horse and has a triumphant expression on his face, glowing with the sense of conquest and victory, looking straight at the gazer, the latter Triton, with a face concealed and seeable from the lowest, cobblestoned level only when the viewer is positioned on the line connecting the Triton's face and the gelato sign on Oceanus' right-hand side, radiates with wonder and uncertainty, as it struggles to seize the rage of the horse whose hair he feebly holds on to. With Oceanus gazing at him supportively, while the goddesses standing above Oceanus' shoulders rejoice in the view of the victorious, seashell-blowing Triton, one could argue that this struggling sea deity presents the focal point of the whole fountain. At the same time, the two goddesses overseeing the Tritons' struggle in turbulent waters maintain a peaceful and capriciously pleased countenance, allowing Oceanus to act as a mediator between the hardships below and the placidness above and providing yet another contrast that captivates the viewer. Added to all of this is the smooth-hewn stony basin of the fountain and the polished texture of the marble Tritons contrasting the piles of rugged rock and the foamy flows of water. The same trick of architectural artistry was employed later by Frank Lloyd Wright in the design of Falling Water, a stunning piece that decorates the forested Pennsylvanian countryside known as Bear Run: in this case, however, it was rusticated stone blocks that were placed behind the smoothly sculpted figurines, yielding a lively, dramatic and aesthetically pleasing contrast between the frighteningly forceful and rough on one side and the soothingly graceful and elegant on the other<sup>521</sup>. This work of the American organic architect who described his approach to creation as “illumination of the insignificant” is, of course, only one

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<sup>519</sup> See Edward W. Soja's *My Los Angeles: From Urban Restructuring to Regional Urbanization*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA (2014).

<sup>520</sup> See Henry V. Morton's *The Fountains of Rome*, The Macmillan Company, New York, NY (1966), pp. 80.

<sup>521</sup> See Steen Eiler Rasmussen's *Experiencing Architecture*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA (1959), pp. 75 - 77.

out of many in which he employed the concept of “a mishmash of a variety of conflicting shapes and parts”<sup>522</sup> to produce an enchanting experience of objects in space. A similar “contradictory portrait”<sup>523</sup> is ascribed to an early “touchstone for exploring the histories of American houses”<sup>524</sup>, Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello in Charlottesville, Virginia, a “densely-layered, half-resolved agglomeration of visual images, social ideas, and spatial relationships”<sup>525</sup> that captivates as a result of its being “organized according to a series of dichotomous categories”<sup>526</sup>, combining huge halls with hidden spaces, sociability with solitariness, hospitality with reclusiveness, and representing “a villa and hermitage, a place of sociability and of retreat”<sup>527</sup> at the same time. With its domed rotunda in the center, suggestive of closeness at heart, and a versatile landscape extending from it toward a striking geomantic opulence of its immediate surrounding, suggestive of radiant openness, San Francisco Palace of Fine Arts, that “modified sadness or sentiment in a minor key”<sup>528</sup>, as conceived by its designer, Bernard Maybeck in 1915, exactly a century ago, conveys the same spirit of the Way of Love, that is, of finely balanced closeness and openness, alongside owing its aesthetic splendor to the placement of a colonnade evocative of Roman ruins against an authentically neat and tidy backdrop composed of an artificial lagoon and a park, let alone the shipshape natural and residential backdrop of the Marina neighborhood. Then, on a bright midsummer morning I walked to the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, with the Sun blazing behind my back, and the first detail I noticed in the giant statue of Abe Lincoln, as Langston Hughes’ verses, “I’ve known rivers ancient as the world... my soul has grown deep like the rivers”<sup>529</sup> echoed through my head, was Lincoln’s leaning back on the broad chair, incredibly firmly seated in it, like a rebel kid in the classroom, though with the right foot subtly extended forward, as if he is about to stand up at any time in the defense of his people in the name of “the government of the people by the people for the people”, as it stands written on the wall on his right-hand side, behind an array of fluted Doric columns, thus combining stillness and dynamism, stoniness and impulsiveness in a single pose, perhaps being the key to its ability to appear so magnetic to the attention of the observers. Speaking of the Classical Orders, rarely ever were they so strikingly impressed in my memory as on the early April night when I, a homeless refugee whose country was bombed to pieces, made a tiny flight of stairs descending to Coliseum from the park of the Oppian Hill in Rome my bed for the long hours of darkness, covered only by a blanket of stars and guarded by the goddesses of cosmic wonder. Right in front of me I could devour with my artistic eye the combination of round arches and upright columns partly swallowed by the round walls of the amphitheater and partly exposed on their surface: Doric on the first level, Ionic on the second and Corinthian on the third, increasing in gracefulness from the bottom to the top, thus exhilarating my weary spirit and keeping it aroused and ready for one of the greatest adventures of my life. Another architectural masterpiece hidden among the crooked and narrow Roman streets is the Church of Santa Maria della Pace, stunning at the first sight not only as the result of a fine interplay between curved and angular forms on its

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<sup>522</sup> Watch Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio episode of the documentary TV series, America’s Castles, A&E Network (1995).

<sup>523</sup> See Dell Upton’s *Architecture in the United States*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK (1998), pp. 29.

<sup>524</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20.

<sup>525</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21.

<sup>527</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31.

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 127.

<sup>529</sup> Read Langston Hughes’ *The Negro Speaks of Rivers* in *The Dream Keeper and Other Poems*, Knopf Books, New York, NY (1932).

façade, but even more due to the impression of its sunshiny openness - created by the rounded portico set out in a sunny courtyard, appearing as if it bursts out of the bricked edifice that homes it - encroaching upon the cool and shadowy web of murky passageways that lead to it from all sides<sup>530</sup>. A similar vision of merging the earthly darkness with the sunshiny openness as a metaphor of an encounter between the dead spirits and the living souls has driven Enric Miralles and Carme Pinós in designing the Igualada cemetery in the suburbs of Barcelona, one of the most poetic graveyards on planet Earth. In creating this spatial impression of meeting Life and Death, whereby their frightening antithetic relationship to one another becomes lightly erased, all along with the landmark path running through it, curved and irregular, “filled with memories, with back-references, with associations”<sup>531</sup>, the Catalan architects were heavily influenced by the aesthetic concept that emphasized contrasts between convex and concave, columnar and rectangular, solid and hollow, sturdy and dissipative, propagated by the Danish architect, Carl Petersen<sup>532</sup>. One such captivating mishmash of contrasts can be seen on the front façade of the basilica of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, designed by Leon Battista Alberti in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, whereon squares, circles and their regular subdivisions blend and breed, creating a mesmerizing effect on the observer. Circles and squares, the former representing life and the latter symbolizing death, were combined in quite a different manner in Dušan Džamonja’s abstract and rather minimalistic Monument to the Revolution in the village of Podgarić in today’s Croatia, one of many Brutalist monuments to the victims of World War II in Yugoslavia, whose unforgettably asymmetric wings, broken yet extended to their fullest, symbolize the juxtaposition of these two profoundest opposites in the grand story of our existence as the starting point for the spectator’s soaring to the heavenly blissful experience of it. Contrasting rectangular shapes against a round central object was also the trick Henri Matisse used to make the appearance of the plump, oval body of Carmelina striking, though he did not end there and supplemented these geometric contrasts with the contrasts in lighting, especially around the details of the painting depicting the robust figure of the nude. Then, as I stood in awe before the Cathedral of Notre Dame of Strasbourg, one of the most haunting architectural creations on this planet, looking first at the central statue of a mother holding a child from a faraway distance and then the teeny tiny figures on the inside and the outside from a few feet away and then gazing at it again from afar and then from nearby and over and over again, all the while knowing that ceaselessly alternating moments of unison and separation are required for profoundly meeting any given physical entities, I recalled how Wolfgang von Goethe called it “sublimely towering, wide-spreading tree of God”, while I saw more of a metaphoric bush of roses in it, such that all over its stem that extends to the sky one finds (a) thorny curls and spires, evoking horror and fear, as if embodying with its structural symbolism the Biblical proverb that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Psalms 111:10), and (b) interposed angelic figurines that rosily hold suns of grace and love in the arms of their spirit engraved into stone, creating a typically Gothic combination that stuns us with none other but with its blending of fear and love, the two existential qualities as extremely antipodal to each other as any two qualities of life can be imagined to be. Like the microscopically sharp needles of drug delivery carriers which I developed in the past, producing harm just enough so as to open up the passages in the epithelium for the transfer of the benevolent drug, and like the music of Johann Sebastian Bach, using fear as a spear to throw our spirit on its knees in prayer and open it up to penetration of the

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<sup>530</sup> See Dell Upton’s *Architecture in the United States*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK (1998), pp. 66 - 71.

<sup>531</sup> See Malene Hauxner’s *Reflections on the Avant-Garde*, ‘scape 1 (2006), pp. 19 – 25.

<sup>532</sup> See Steen Eiler Rasmussen’s *Experiencing Architecture*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA (1959), pp. 81.

healing waves of love floating through the air along with the dread-evoking vibe, so do these upward-pointing spires on this and other Gothic architectural gems serve the purpose of making the churchgoer more receptive to the message of love embodied in its form too, let alone let to fly across its interior on the worded wings of a sermon and gratifyingly reverberating between its walls.

When it comes to “flying high in the friendly sky”<sup>533</sup>, the junkies among us may tell us that the wildest and the most captivating behavior on drugs is achieved when the so-called “designer + downer” recipe is used, implying the mixing of two antagonistic types of drugs in the blood, one of which is exalting and the other one of which is soothing. As an illustration of this, the following paragraph is pulled from an autobiographical sketch by the jazz critic, Stanley Crouch, preceding his realization that an artist is, by default, an ambivalent, contradictory personality, “a kind of Janus that one becomes used to in the world of jazz or any other art”<sup>534</sup>. “Some knuckleheads who moved into the house behind ours during that period spent most their time dropping ‘red devils’ (Seconals) and smoking weed. When they made a long night of it, the droopy heads would add a little Benzedrine and Thunderbird to have one side of their consciousness going up while the other side was going down. Then the whist cards would come out and they would battle until dawn, music blaring all through the night. These were the men who introduced me to Thelonious Monk and John Coltrane”<sup>535</sup>. With the savory bites of blood and chocolate melting into a cosmic dust of *prana* in our mouths, we could then recall how the combinations of tartness and sweetness, of uplifting fruitiness and balsamic, soothing graininess, or of crunchiness and mushiness - with that secret formula of crispiness on the outside and fluffiness on the inside typically being sought after by the chefs - have ever since been considered the epitomes of delicacy in the gastronomical universe and that, consequently, chic fusions of complementary tastes is what seems to always stand behind all the unequivocally delicious meals. This is why the phrase “it hits all the senses” is commonly used to compliment immaculately tasking food, implying that dishes in which every taste under the sun is represented stand for highest achievements in the art of gastronomy. If the science of scents, targeting the rather underrated sense of smell, ever becomes instituted as an art of its own, we would be able to complement one of the essential principles of perfuming, dictating the spraying of the fragrant aerosol into an empty space, in the same way as we pass a perfect ball on the soccer field, and then stepping into its cloud, a proof that subtlety and fineness intrigue and attract the worthy souls, whereas insistence of abundance and literalness repels them, attracting dunces and dullards instead, with the secret of putting on a perfume taught by professional strippers, which is to mix it with baby lotion, yielding thus an irresistible concoction of “naughty and nice”<sup>536</sup> and, apparently, a magnet for men. Like pirates of the Caribbean, who’d raise the flag of a friendly nation and a flag with skull and crossbones side by side, or occasionally substitute the former with the latter at the right moment in their approach of the attacked ship, so as to make the sailors on its starboard feel powerless, so does this strategy used by the ladies of the night rely on mixing the opposites as a profound principle behind the enticement of another, his virtual surrender, the seizure of his sanity and taking over full control over him, in all domains of life, be it warfare, the world’s oldest profession or arts. Moving from the nympho to the macho and

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<sup>533</sup> Listen to Marvin Gaye’s Flyin’ High on What’s Going On, Tamla (1971).

<sup>534</sup> See Stanley Crouch’s Considering Genius, Basic Civitas Books, New York, NY (2006), pp. 328.

<sup>535</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7.

<sup>536</sup> See Sanjay Sabnani’s What Are Best Ways to Use Perfume? *Quora* (May 30, 2013), retrieved from <http://www.quora.com/What-are-best-ways-to-use-perfume>.

from seduction to sports, another discipline considerable as art on some occasions, albeit mostly being vulgarized by the crude exhibitions of virility and the displays of the worst in man, we could bring to mind the basketball coaches' insisting on the players' learning how to set themselves into the position of the so-called triple threat, including (1) shooting, (2) dribbling and (3) passing, once again highlighting the transformation of linear lines into suns radiating in a multitude of directions with the highest level of mastery achievable by the athletes. On an even subtler level, one may pay attention to the "fancy footwork"<sup>537</sup> of a skilled dribbler or a defender tracing one such dribbler on the soccer field and one could recognize in it the rapid succession of mutually antagonistic moves, serving the purpose of confusing the opponent with the multiplicity of intentions intrinsic to them. As I, for example, a defensive midfielder, confront a dribbler holding the ball, I could break down the individual moves of my feet in such a way that one may suggest a retreat before the attacker, another may suggest pressuring the ball, the next one may appear to be wanting to block a sideways pass, the one after it may prepare the center of balance for a sudden rebound and so on, when a complete amateur on the field would pick on one of these moves and repeat it until losing the dual or weakening the defense and allowing the other team to score. Diego Armando Maradona, one of the most skilled dribblers to have walked the Earth, then, worked hard to balance speed with the technique, knowing that "speeding up the timing to get into play" was essential, but only up to a certain limit, given that "abandoning technique to run faster would be useless"<sup>538</sup>. Although "finding a balance", in his own words, "wasn't easy"<sup>539</sup>, this balance was nowhere as holistic, intricate and difficult to maintain as the one that ruptured his personality into two, while acting simultaneously as a source of his extraordinary soccer prowess. This balance was between Diego, whom his trainer, Fernando Signorini, christened as "a kid who had insecurities, a wonderful boy with whom I'd go to the end of the world"<sup>540</sup>, and Maradona, whom the same person perceived as "a character Diego had to come up with to face the demands of the football business and the media, who could not show any weakness, and with whom I wouldn't take a single step"<sup>541</sup>. How different, but also similar this is to Boris Becker's description of the personality of my compatriot and one of the best tennis players in history, Novak Đoković, as a composite of "a machine with Zen peacefulness who wants to win at all costs" and "a soulful man who loves family, Earth and charitable work and who would give you his last tee shirt if you had nothing to wear"<sup>542</sup>. In the eyes of the footballer, himself, this must have been a clash between two self-images, the former of which was that of an innocent, chaste, infinitely loving boy who roamed the alleyways of Villa Fiorito and the latter of which was that of a god on Earth. The same balance, I have the liberty to say, lives inside most, if not all, human beings that have amazed the world with their creative outputs in arts, science or other disciplines. And whether one sells one's soul to the devil by envisioning oneself as a god or one makes oneself capable thereby of conceiving and performing expressions that bless and beautify the humankind, or such expressions are possible only insofar as this question tears the deepest beds of one's granite soul apart and crushes them into finest ashes I leave here for the readers to digest in the times of philosophical leisure. Finally, when Maradona scored first one of the most fraudulent and then one of the most beautiful goals in the history of

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<sup>537</sup> Listen to Prefab Sprout's *Venus of the Soup Kitchen on From Langley Park to Memphis, Kitchenware* (1988).

<sup>538</sup> Watch *Diego Maradona* directed by Asif Kapadia (2019).

<sup>539</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>540</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>541</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>542</sup> See Novak Đoković i Rolan Garos: Beker, Ivanišević i Pilić otkrivaju tajnu uspeha, BBC News (June 14, 2021), retrieved from [http://www.b92.net/bbc/index.php?yyyy=2021&mm=06&dd=14&nav\\_id=1874615](http://www.b92.net/bbc/index.php?yyyy=2021&mm=06&dd=14&nav_id=1874615).

the game, one after the other, in a game between Argentina and England at the World Cup in Mexico in 1986, especially charged in the context of the Falklands conflict and its colonial connotations, prompting the world to suddenly polarize itself between those who adored him and those who despised him, not only was this the natural repercussion of his polar personality, but it also echoed the effect that such, utterly creative personalities produce in the world: they leave no soul indifferent nor shadow unshaken. Still, a cheater to one, a hero to others, the sign that we have done something of stellar importance for the peoples of the world will have come from our sharing the fate of Maradona's arrival to and departure from Naples: while 85,000 people cheered him when he came to its grounds, he left the city to which he had brought first two national champion titles alone<sup>543</sup>, having been declared the most despised person in Italy and ruthlessly stigmatized by the press, the ministries and the populace alike.

Chess, that most intellectual of all sports, is yet another art wherein the progression from the fierce straightforwardness of the old-school masters, such as Anderssen, Marshall, Steinitz and Lasker, to the atomic chess of Kasparov and beyond, which now necessitates a tireless search for moves that would be simultaneously offensive and defensive, combinational and positional in their character, can be translated to the reigning trend of glorification of ambiguities and semantic multiplicities intrinsic to the most artistic of the moves in this realm. Browse through chess books in search of exciting games and you will realize that moves decorated with exclamation marks are usually such that they – in the spirit of the aforementioned ladies graciously spraying the precious perfumes into the air around them - fall into one of the following categories: (a) bold sacrifices of a piece or a positional advantage to enforce regaining them triumphantly moments later, (b) quiet moves that affect the whole board, including even its most distant squares, and serve a broad strategic plan, often bringing the opponent into a zugzwang situation and forcing him to self-destroy its position, (c) moves that disobey the classical tactical rules, appearing at the first sight as errors, but in a bigger scheme of things proving their immaculateness, such as Stockfish's putting one's own queen first into confinement with 21. Qa4 and 22. Nb5 and then to the edge of the board of one's own side with 30. Qa1 or deliberately entering a discovered check with 37. Kh2 in the computer game against Jonny<sup>544</sup> that dispelled the traditional belief that computers could not play wittily and imaginatively, or (d) moves that serve a manifold purpose on the board, be it by posing multiple offensive threats or by simultaneously attacking one square and defending another. Precisely speaking, as the game of chess progresses from the opening to the middle game to the ending, so do the multifold chess moves become more extraordinary to find, given that they are very natural early on in the game<sup>545</sup> and suggestive of an excellent thought process later on. Historically, the emphasis on such moves with a dual character begins in 1910s with Jose Raul Capablanca, who is often said to be great "because he understood the power of two", that is, "of doing two things at once"<sup>546</sup>. One out of myriads of such moves pulled out from the repertoire of games by the Cuban grandmaster can be his pawn move as black with 15...c5-c4 in the game against Ossip

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<sup>543</sup> Watch Diego Maradona directed by Asif Kapadia (2019).

<sup>544</sup> Watch Stockfish vs. Jonny TCEC Season 7, Stage 2, Round 5 game available at <https://www.chess.com/article/view/the-best-chess-of-2014> (2014).

<sup>545</sup> "When moving a piece, try to do multiple things at once", as Jon Chang, my son, Theo's first chess instructor said in one of his notes on the opening strategy (Irvine, CA, December 6, 2021). Take 1.e4, for example, a move that opens the space for the development of the white-square bishop and the queen and establishes control over central squares, or 0-0/0-0-0, which brings the king to safety while simultaneously developing the rook.

<sup>546</sup> Watch Great Players of the Past - Vasily Smyslov, with GM Ben Finegold. YouTube, retrieved from <https://youtu.be/Wmnspxi0OqI> (2021).

Bernstein in Moscow in 1914, being a part of the authentic minimalistic gem, which was to serve as a stylistic inspiration for Bobby Fischer half a century later. With this simple move, bordering sheer vulgarity at the very first sight, Capa destabilized his hanging pawn structure in the center, but simultaneously blocked and threatened the white b2 pawn, opened space for the attacking slide of the black bishop from e7 to b4, and limited space for white by seizing the d3 square. In contrast to his being able to pose multiple threats with this move, the weaknesses in his own position thus created were not exploitable in a similar manner, he correctly recognized, as the white rook's attack on the undefended pawn on d5 and the hopping of the white knight onto the opened d4 square to gain positional advantage excluded each other. Three years later, in the game against Rudolf Spielmann at the 1911 San Sebastian tournament, Capablanca played another such fantastically multifold move, namely 28. Bf4, which "prevented everything and attacked everything"<sup>547</sup>, fulfilling a defensive role by cutting off the black queen's control of the h2 pawn and disabling the checkmate threat of ...Rf2-f1, but also attacking the black queen on c7 directly and threatening the capture of the black bishop on e7 and the arrival of the white queen onto the eight rank, specifically c8 square, indirectly, while also blocking the defensive retreat of the black rook back to the f8 square; not surprisingly at all, two moves later black resigned under an indefensible checkmate threat. Then, in Round 15 of the New York City tournament in 1927, Capablanca, as black, played Aaron Nimzowitsch and, as usual, turned the game in his favor with an unpretentious maneuver of a seeming simpleton, that of ...Nc6-a5-c6-e7-f5, with which he offered the exchange of knights and then captured the opponent's knight with a counterintuitive pawn, 31...gxf5, thus leaving the h5 pawn right near his king totally undefended and free for the white queen to pick up. This positional trickery helped Capa take control of the fourth rank with his rooks wherefrom he would use the principle of attacking multiple targets at once, namely the unprotected white pawns on b2, d4 and f4 and the vulnerable white king on the g-file, winning the game with a stylish zugzwang. In an earlier, second round of that very same chess tournament, a similarly simple maneuver of Capablanca's black queen, ...Qf6-e5-d5-a2-b3, imposing no apparent brilliancies, earned Capa another victory against the same opponent, first owing to the threat it imposed on two weak spots in white's position on quite the opposite sides of the board, namely h2 and a2 squares, and then, after the queen settled on the seemingly insignificant a2 square, owing to simultaneously pinning the bishop on b2 and threatening to capture the pawn on a3 after ...a7-a5. Next, speaking of these multipurpose moves, the game between Botvinnik and Capablanca played at the AVRO tournament in 1938 is known for its landmark move of the white bishop from b2, where it was locked in the corner, uselessly staring at the immobilized pawn at c3, to a3, where it sacrificed itself to drag the black queen away from the defensive line, crossing the road from a secluded apostate to a hero in the blink of an eye; however, the preceding positioning of the white queen in the center of the board, onto e5, wherefrom it simultaneously defended the attacked pawn on e6, tied a black knight on f6 in place and threatened with the advancement of the passed pawn is what set grounds for this illuminative sacrifice and the memorable win for the Soviet grandmaster. His sacrifice of the bishop in this game, though, bears a striking resemblance to another Ba3 played decades earlier, by Hermann Clemenz against Eisenschmidt in Tartu in 1890, being a striking move with which White simultaneously (a) defended a checkmating attack of the black queen on the white rook at e1, (b) enforced the move of the black queen and the loss of a precious tempo using which a defense of Black might have been strengthened, (c) sacrificed itself, giving an utmost aesthetic

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<sup>547</sup> Watch the Magician and the Machine: Capablanca vs Spielmann video, Agadmator's Chess Channel, retrieved from <https://youtu.be/txrznoBFnjM> (2019).

appeal to the move, and, finally, (d) set grounds for a victorious ending combination which involved another sacrifice, of the white queen, and a fabulous checkmate with two white knights only. An equally quiet and unexpected move of a black bishop, from b7 to a8, brought Garry Kasparov the title of the world champion by simultaneously offering a draw-enforcing queen exchange, threatening the unprotected knight on b3, opening the room for a seventh-rank slide of the black rook and the doubling with the queen along the b file, all the while sacrificing the second pawn, the eventual taking of which was to ensure the win for the Jewish-Armenian grandmaster in this exhausting final match of the 1985 World Championship series, the news of which, I remember, I heard from my Dad while taking a bubbly bath in my sunset-orange tub as a tender nine-year old. Although Kasparov needed a draw in this last game of the championship to secure the world champion title, he opted for his authentic, offensive style, choosing the Sicilian as black and sacrificing one and then another pawn while opening the very kingside on which Karpov concentrated all his pieces, which is the reason why we both rejoiced in this win and why to this day it represents one of the most inspirational chess games in history. A similar carelessness about the material advantage brought about by snapping a pawn Kasparov displayed in the famous Game 16 of the same Championship match, drawing the knight from f6 to d7 on move 23 instead of grabbing the passed and unprotected white pawn on d5; although this knight would eventually return to f6 and from there on infiltrate Karpov's second rank and give the first in the final series of blows to him, by making this backward jump, it blocked some of the key defensive squares, primarily b6, and also allowed the black queen to protect the h6 pawn that would be made vulnerable with the pending push of the g5 pawn to g4 square, but more importantly, it served an offensive role by demonstrating to the opponent that should his fellow knight positioned at d3 be attacked, the knight would defend it by jumping to c5 or, more probably e5. Such simultaneity of positional and tactical points served by moves on the chessboard has typified the chess geniuses and has ensured that both I, a strategist and a defender at heart, admiring more the former nature of play, and my father, an innate attacker and tactician, more in love with the latter type of play, would rejoice in them just about the same. Another one of his stories I remember is that of listening mouthwateringly, with his buddies, to the radio footage of the World Championship final classic between Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky in Reykjavik in 1972, which would be replayed for fans exactly two decades later on a tiny Montenegrin island of Saint Stefan, bringing charges against the American chess genius, issuing a warrant for his arrest because of violating the international sanctions against my country at the time and forcing him into exile for the rest of his life. In the most popular game of this match, game No.6, in which Fischer as white fluidly outplayed Spassky and brought the black pieces to a virtual standstill after the 30<sup>th</sup> move, neither was the final tactical maneuver centered around the 37.Qe4 move the one that heralded the victory nor was it the magnificent slide of the queen from a3 to h3 that switched the focus of the attack from the queenside to the kingside nor the humiliating R1f2-2f3 sequence that showed to the world the helplessness of the opponent's position, but it was the quiet 29.Qh3-g3, whereby the white queen shyly threatened the black rook at b8, forcing it to move to the seventh rank in the following move, but also opened space for 30.h4, with which the black knight ended up completely frozen, with no square to jump to, as well as enabled 32.Qe5, with which the black's position ended up being completely cramped and reduced to meaningless wonderings of the queen between squares d8 and e8. The hypermodern masterpiece that 13-year old Fischer's win over Donald Byrne at the Rosenwald Memorial Tournament in New York City in 1956 is started off with a timid opening by Fischer as the black, fianchettoing the bishop and then relinquishing the center completely with 6...dxc4, but

then launching a fierce counterattack from this rope-a-dope position that made the opponent overly confident by the seeming passivity and slowness with which it was built, again with a stunningly shy and tactically forbidden move comparable to an inarticulate mutter of a child spoken to the ears of a pedant linguist; it was a jump of the queen's knight (third in four moves!) to the edge of the board, 11...Na4, posing multiple threats thereby and attacking both the queenside and the center with this quiet sacrifice, leading to the black queen's sacrifice six moves later and eventually earning the game the colloquial status of the Game of the Century. In one of the lesser known Fischer's games, played as white against Hector Rossetto in Buenos Aires in 1960, he drew 29.Kf3 and by doing so he did not only defend the doubled pawn at e4, but also intentionally put one's own rook into confinement, inviting the opponent to set two undefended pawn traps with 29...Nb7, which Fischer staggeringly fell into when he played 30.Bxf7, sacrificing the bishop at the cost of turning his king into the most powerful piece on the board and winning the game in the end<sup>548</sup>. Then, when David Bronstein, that quiet dreamer by the chessboard, who'd, like my Mom and myself, rather live through the fantasy of beautiful sequences of moves played in his head than live them out heedlessly, thus bringing himself to terrible time troubles over and over again, drew Bc1-g5 and then an equally quiet Bc4-b3, gallantly sacrificing his rook thereby, it was a whole tree of threats for the black king that opened in the distance, one of which, involving the further sacrifice of another rook and a knight and the midgame passage of the white king all the way to the sixth rank, led the Jewish-Ukrainian grandmaster to a win over Ljubomir Ljubojević at the last Interzonal tournament he ever played, at Petropolis in 1973. Now, somewhere deep inside of me, in the deepest and the dustiest cellars of my consciousness, there are still motley traces of that chaste sixteen year old boy, with intellect as pure as the mountain stream, who'd betray his friends who had gone to bath in the azure of the Adriatic and choose to sit alone by the chessboard, studying Alekhine's *On the Road to the World Championship*; the reason why this chess book left such an immense impression on me was (a) because of the strategic clarity of ideas conveyed in it; (b) because of acquainting me with who was to become my most favorite chess player in history, whose style dominated by imaginative midgame most resembles the thoughts roaming through my head and thoughts woven through this book, contrasting the simplicity of the language of a dime novel; and (c) because of teaching me of the composite nature of the most extraordinary chess moves to be drawn, turning them in my eyes into sunrays that radiate with effects in countless directions at the same time. To that end, Alekhine's style differed greatly from that of Fischer and Capablanca - who'd seek simplification and the release of tensions as soon as the tiniest positional or material advantage was foreseen and who, effectively, acted as predecessors of the chess style influenced by engines in the early days of their gaining superiority over humans, in the 1990s and 2000s, which I often call "porn chess", in analogy to acts stripped off of their contextual richness and oriented toward goal and goal only, i.e., in this case, focused on achieving gain through tactical calculation, while being devoid of strategic, holistic, authentically human thought - and abounded with stunningly complex moves that served the purpose to confound the opponent with their dazzlingly protean character. For example, though the game against Bogoljubow at the Hastings Tournament in 1922 is remembered for Alekhine's drawing queen from e4 to e2 and sacrificing it to enforce a winning pawn endgame, only seven moves earlier he had drawn the queen to the exact same spot, e2, where he produced a stunning *zugzwang*,

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<sup>548</sup> Further analyses have shown that the rook exchange that black had as an option with 32...Rxb5 would have forced at least a draw by letting the white king go to g7, positioning the black king at e7 and then playing ...Nh8! after the white pawn arrives at h7.

showing that a decisive advantage would be gained to each one of the fifteen moves Bogoljubov had as optional at the moment. No former world champ is said to have been more effective in using the back rank to increase the energy of his pieces and reengage them in the battle in a more prolific manner than Anatoly Karpov and the paradigmatic example comes from the 24<sup>th</sup> move of the game 9 of the semifinals of the Candidates Tournament in 1974 against Boris Spassky: Nc3-b1, returning the white knight to its starting place wherefrom it would go on a hunt in a different direction, posing threats and weakening Spassky's pawn structure in the center and on the kingside, while also fortifying the stalwart rook on d2, opening the room for c2-c3 to chase away the black's best positioned piece and, all in all, laying path for a merciless offense by seemingly withdrawing from it, the style so typical for the Uralian grandmaster that today it deserves the colloquial epithet "Karpovian". Karpovian was also the final position of black pieces in the game that decided the new world champion in 2013, all of which, except the pawns, rested on the back rank, including the queen and its bishop who had not been moved for the entire game. The last four moves made with pieces other than pawns by Magnus Carlsen as black involved the hopping of the knight twice away from the back row and then straight back to it, securing the win in such a quirky manner in the midst of a storming midgame. The first in this series of jumps, 18...Ne8-c7, was a move that falls in the category of multifaceted ones that increase the tensions and multiply the possibilities, enabling the push of the b pawn, which would eventually promote into a queen, while defending the rook on a6 and never leaving the e8 square too far, from which the g7 square in front of the black king is protected against the checkmate threat. The Norwegian grandmaster gave it a priority over the simplifying g7-g6 and almost mesmerized Viswanathan Anand thereby, prompting him to make an amateurish blunder with 28. Ne1 instead of Be1, putting a poor end to this strange game that one commentator called akin to one of those "victories we need not more of lest we are done for" and that, among other things, illustrated a listless direction in which the increasing reliance on computer analyses might take the modern chess, killing the strategic finesse and bringing about spiritless tactical calculations instead. Another example may come from the final, fortieth move in the triumph of Vladimir Kramnik over the local darling, Loek van Wely at the Corus Tournament in Wijk aan Zee in 2007, e4-e5, whereby one diagonal was closed and its mirror image opened, the former of which blocked the coordinated attack of the black queen and the rook at the h2 pawn guarding the white king and the latter of which allowed the launching of an indefensible assault on the black king, all in a single move. Kramnik's nemesis, Veselin Topalov has made tons of such complex moves in the past, with one of my favorite being 46...Rf5-f4 in the game against Andrei Kharlov at the FIDE World Championship Knockout Tournament in Tripoli in June 2004, the move with which he sacrificed another one of his rooks right after the sacrifice of his first rook at the neighboring square, e4, was met with an appropriate exchange by the opponent, demonstrating relentless decisiveness to give away the material so as to get hold of the positional, simultaneously (a) avoiding the attack on the black queen and the rook by the pending jump of the white knight onto d6, (b) threatening with the entrance of the rook into the white's defense lines, and (c) blocking the c1-h6 diagonal and allowing for the capture of the pawn on the g file, which was to serve as an inventive hideout for the black king in the next couple of moves. As for the use of opposite player's pawn(s) to hide one's king behind, another nice illustration comes from Karpov's win against Jan Timman at a London's tournament in 1984 and the spectacular 19...Kb7-a8, leaving the white pawn at a7 intact while opening the route for the black bishop at a6 to return to its starting position, c8, wherefrom it would give the decisive blow to the white king, notably showing how retracting pieces can yield an equally powerful attacking momentum as pushing

them forward, the style that, once again, deservedly claims the epithet “Karpovian”. The most notable and obvious chess style predecessor of Karpov was the ninth world champion, Tigran Petrosian, who always preferred prophylaxis over risk-taking and often played in a purely positional manner, focusing only on the expansion of the control over space, without any concrete strategic, let alone tactical, plans in mind. A concordant example of the use of the opponent’s pawns to hide one’s king behind from Petrosian’s oeuvre may come from his legendary king-march game against Mikhail Botvinnik from their world championship match in 1963, where he engaged in the daring repositioning of his uncastled king from e1 all the way to g7, behind a couple of black pawns, where it found safety in the midst of a mating net. In this game, Petrosian focused on creating double weaknesses in Botvinnik’s position, the first one being the lone pawn on e6 and the second one being the lone pawn at c4<sup>549</sup>, which he exploited with a knight in the middle of the board, a piece he had preferred throughout his career over the bishops exactly because of the multiplicity of squares that it can attack or defend around it. Another example comes from Game 7 of the 1966 World Championship final between Tigran Petrosian and Boris Spassky, which immaculately illustrates the former’s boa constrictor style and is the game one of whose turning points was 30...f5, perhaps not as striking as a preceding and a subsequent sacrifice of a black knight, 24...Ne5 and 41...Ng4, respectively, the first of which was a strategic one, giving away the material value for a sole positional compensation, while the second one was purely tactical in nature. With this stunning move the Armenian grandmaster sacrificed the pushed pawn, yet created grounds for its and its brethren’s unstoppable advance toward the black king, while threatening at the same time the instantaneously deadly opening of the h1-a8 diagonal controlled by the fianchettoed black bishop and, most vitally and elegantly, enforcing the sacrifice of the black pawn at e5 and its substitution by a passed white pawn<sup>550</sup> which was to serve in the further course of the game as an imaginative roadblock for the progress of white pieces. In contrast to Petrosian, Spassky was a fierce tactician and a superb combinatorial player who had to curb these tendencies of his in order to reach the summit of the chess world and although many moves were raved about from his game against Bronstein played in Saint Petersburg in the winter of 1960, immortalized in the James Bond movie *From Russia With Love*, it was a quietest of them, 9. Nc3-e4 that has always impressed me most. With it, the pawn at d5 was sacrificed in exchange for advancing the c2 pawn to c5, thus opening the space for the kingside-attacking Bc2 & Qd3 arrangement of white pieces, while also locking the queenside and temporarily incapacitating the black’s development on it. At the same time, preparation was made for the self-sacrificial intrusion of the knight from e4 to d6, for turning a blind eye to the institution of the black pawn in the very center of the white structure, wherefrom it would act like a foreign grain of sand inside a mollusk, prompting it to form a pearl around it, and for the sacrifice of the rook at f1, which would eventually lead to queening of the intrusive black pawn in the further course of the game, though at a dear price of having the black king caught in a checkmate trap already by move 23. Then, when the Latvian magician, Misha Tal crushed Larsen in the decisive game of the semifinals of the Candidates Tournament in 1965, his finely orchestrated tactical firework of moves was preset by the early,

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<sup>549</sup> Watch Varuzhan Akobian’s analysis of this game, St. Louis Chess Club Lecture (October 15, 2015), retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pu4b77EMTj0>.

<sup>550</sup> The power of the passed pawn is nicely illustrated by Peter Leko’s 46. f4 in Game 13 of the 2004 World Championship Final against Vladimir Kramnik. With this move in a materially equal rook ending, the Yugoslav-born Hungarian grandmaster skillfully sacrificed one of his four pawns to produce a passed one on the fourth rank, which was to become the key to his enforcing a draw in a relatively lost position.

solely positional sacrifice of a knight in the center, at d5, and then by the quiet 29. Qf3-f4, the former of which created an invisible barrier across the *e* file, serving to block the advance of the black pieces as much as to be grounds for an unstoppable attack for the white, and the latter of which posed multiple unpreventable threats while boldly drawing the queen onto the riskiest of all places on the board, sacrificing the central pawn and leaving the king open and virtually unprotected. Likewise, Najdorf's immortal sequence of sacrifices in the game against Glucksberg in Warsaw in 1929 was preceded by the quiet move of the black queen from d8 to e8, defending the weak pawn at e6 and at the same time insinuating the pending offensive passage to h4 wherefrom it was to launch a mortal attack on the white king. Rarely, though, an obvious attack on dual targets has been used as a trap to allure the opponent to, as by Paul Keres in his game against Efim Geller from the 1951 Soviet Championship in Moscow, where with 19...g6 Keres allowed the 21.Qd2 and an attack on the undefended black knight on a5 and the pawn on h6, which he counteracted with surprising 22...Nf4 and won the game shortly thereafter for black. This, however, is a classic example of an exception that proves the rule in question thanks to its rarity, even more so when we consider that 22...Nf4 was, likewise, a move that opened numerous threats, including the upcoming exchange of a bishop for the knight on f3, the attack on the then vulnerable h3 pawn and g2 square, and the push of the d3 pawn. Last but not least, skillfully converted minor positional advantages to victories in chess endgames often employ the so-called principle of two weaknesses, where a blockade achieved by the opponent defending a single weakness is broken not by confronting it with the full force, but by creating a weakness elsewhere in the position, which diverts the opponent's attention and leads to the crumbling of his position. Or, as summed up by Danny Rensch, "you often see amateurs misplay endgames precisely because they get so obsessed with their one advantage that they forget to look for the principle of two weaknesses ideas as a way to gain winning chances"<sup>551</sup>. Chess, in other words, offers us a great lesson as to how banging the head against the wall of a well-defended weakness does not provide for a best way to overcome an obstacle, be it over the board or in life, and how it is more prolific to walk in the footsteps of that famous Zen master who came to a narrow alleyway where dozens of people were stalled by a wild and raging horse and were waiting to see how the master would tame the horse, when he simply looked at the scene and walked the other way.

In the realm of martial arts, then, we could recall that traditional teachings based on adopting the state of utmost meditative peacefulness that soothes the mind with its waves of serenity, while simultaneously building and releasing mountainously explosive powers from within our body, intend to push our beings into opposite directions that neatly resemble the pair of poles of the Way of Love in their essence: a meditative and an expressive one, respectively. A particularly exemplary martial art can be the one of Capoeira, whose masters at work tend to immaculately blend the spirit of a playful dance with the spirit of a sturdy fight in each and every one of their moves. On its philosophical grounds, this Afro-Brazilian martial art is made of profound paradoxes too, with scholars often describing it not only as a simple "struggle between positive and negative forces"<sup>552</sup>, but as an active "exploration of what is negative, painful or malicious within the ostensibly positive, whole and benign"<sup>553</sup> and the other way around, as in

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<sup>551</sup> Watch FIDE Candidates 2022, Round 4 by FIDE Chess retrieved from <https://youtu.be/9OI2Dxm9hok> (2022).

<sup>552</sup> See Barbara Browning's *Headspin: Capoeira's Ironic Inversions*, In: *Everynight Life: Culture and Dance in Latin/o America*, edited by Celeste Fraser Delgado and José Esteban Muñoz, Duke University Press, Durham, NC (1997), pp. 79.

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*

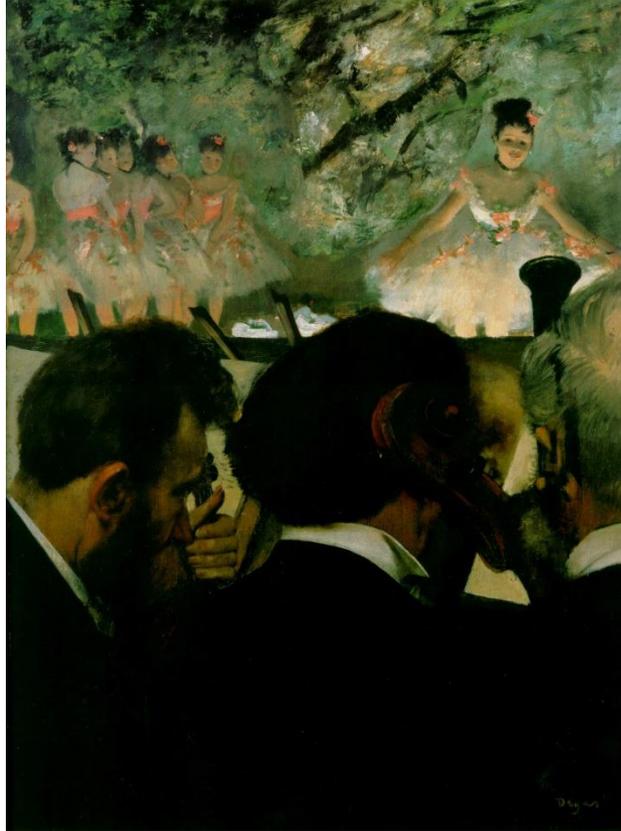
harmony with the Tai-Chi-Tu symbol and its showing us how antipodes of things reside in their hearts, aside from surrounding them on the sides. Or, as Mestre Pastinha, the founder of the Angola school of Capoeira, originally the truest to this harmony between playfulness and belligerence, who passed on to his followers the attitude of attempting to answer the riddles of “the no in the yes, the big in the little, the earth in the sky, the fight in the dance”<sup>554</sup> with each sway of their bodies, put it in a song, quite in the spirit of alchemists’ strivings to make up what is down and down what is up as well as of the authentic Christian yearnings to make first what is last and last what is first (Matthew 20:16), “Eh, the moon comes to the earth, eh, the earth comes to the moon”<sup>555</sup>, thus attaching a sacramental character to the art of ironic, inherently postmodernist inversion of whatever our intellects come to grasp as well as of standing upside-down, strongly and yet flexibly, with respect to all things in this crooked life. This is all to say that regardless of the type of art we have in mind, common to them all may indeed turn out to be complementariness amongst a variety of qualities that, like the simultaneous cursedness and blessedness of Sophocles’ Oedipus at Colonus, stand in antipodal opposition to each other and yet, miraculously, become brought into a harmonious whole. If this insight tells us something of an immense importance for the story of our spiritual ascent to stars, it is that seemingly irreconcilable opposites stumbled upon anywhere in life are to be brought into glistening unities as a part of our divine mission on Earth. “Bring things together that don’t seem ready to be”<sup>556</sup>, was thus one of Jean-Luc Godard’s key distillations of the recipe for creativity into a succinct saw, which, if truly lived up to within every aspect of our being, is certain to expand the latter into a state of oneness with the Universe as a whole, with all that there is, equaling the ultimate destination of the spiritual voyage undertaken on this sad and beautiful rock whose orbit devotedly encircles the Sun, the everlasting sign of that One toward which all of us, with all our arts and sciences and loves and courtesies, stream.

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<sup>554</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>555</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 81.

<sup>556</sup> Watch *Histoire(s) du cinema* directed by Jean-Luc Godard, Chapter 4b: The Signs Among Us (1998).



**Edgar Degas' Orchestra Musicians** is a nice illustration of the juxtaposition of contrasts as a key to the secret of the moving character of the works of art. Herein one could notice a striking disparity between the world above the stage line and the one below it. This horizontal line divides a world of souls burning with the wishes to save all things around them with the sunbursts of enlightening energies emanating from their cores from a world of spirits confined in the webs of excessive rationalization. While the musicians inhabiting this underworld are insecurely huddled around each other, the dazzling dancer placed at the center of the sublime world above stands alone on the stage of life, with arms open and fallen to the side, signaling complete transparency and having nothing to hide. While the dark souls below her listlessly sit and blabber, she stands speechless, enshrouded only by an infinitely enthralling, yet an infinitely delicate movement that inspires, that dazzles and that instills starry shimmer in all eyes around her. They are all made of maps, while she is pure territory. They have their backs turned to the watcher, while she looks straight at us. They gossip and criticize, while she judges no one and smiles cordially, with the innocence and spontaneity of a child, to everyone - to them, to us and to the whole wide world. They are low and painted in black, while she is on the top and all made of light. They are confined within the cages of excessive conceptualizations, while she is liberated, floating freely like a seagull on the air currents of the momentum of her sunshiny intuition. They are many, while she is One. She is truly alive, but they are not. And so forth. The fundamental question around which, as if around the Sun of a kind, the culture of our civilization revolves, evolving our spirits a bit more with every spin around its axis, is whether the artist needs to be counted amongst these Dead in order to draw such fabulous celebrations of genuinely alive, as this painting and every other truly inspirational piece of art are.

In light of all this, there is a chance that the most thrilling pieces of art and perceptions that we will come across in life will turn out to embody a similarly dialectical pull in opposite directions that produces an enlightening paradox in the observer's mind. Does this mean that style, as I have come to believe, necessarily involves exhibition of opposites, the display of which requires boldness and a strength of character? Note that a similar point of view was held

by Arthur Koestler, who coined the term “bisociation”<sup>557</sup> to describe the quality shared by the finest exhibitions of creativity in the domains of arts, science and regular behavior alike: the ability to bring together elements whose conjunction has initially seemed quite counterintuitive. Therefore, it often seems as if the good-cop/bad-cop dichotomy, serving the role of bullying the suspect into building the bond of trust with the good cop, has its reflection in brilliant pieces of art seen from this, “bisociative” angle. Dissected, all of them may indeed reveal the coupling of the good cop and the bad cop in their core, the purpose of which is to invoke in us fear of the latter and attract us to the former, with the final aim of merging our soaring spirit with the inspiring sound of goodness and positivity emerging from it. A rewarding carrot is thus reached after one is being chased thereto with a stick, if we were to use a concordant, stick-and-carrot analogy often resorted to by conventional leaders and managers in attempts to painlessly change social systems. Concordantly, children who are most likely to help out a child in distress and display high levels of empathy are usually those nurtured by caregivers who are warm and affectionate, but who also provide firm and unyielding moral instructions<sup>558</sup>, which is yet another testimony to the power of mutually opposing character traits and other influences on the human brain. Conversely, although most, if not all, masterful artistic pieces exhibit this apposition of mutually antipodal qualities, many are works of art that on some of their levels contravene the need to engrain this pull in antithetical emotional directions, a rare number of which accomplish so to a stupefying effect, but most of which do so merely owing to the half-wittedness and vulgarity of their artistically immature creators, who could be too lazy to bother or driven by conformist cravings or perhaps have yet to mature into complex, multifaceted personalities. And just as the approach known as *reductio ab absurdum* is often applied in math to prove the correctness of a statement by demonstrating the invalidity of its inverse version, so could we tentatively use the artistic letdowns arising from a blatant neglect to think dialectically to demonstrate the point in question. Note that a similar invalidity could be proven in a context diametrically opposite to the one in which a hypothesis is assumed to be applicable to accomplish the same, and we need look no farther than an administrative framework of thought, a thorough opposite of the artistic one, and realize a creatively dismantling confusion that instructions ingraining antithetic directives in it cause to have our thesis of the dialectical cross that all inspiring pieces of art bear gain an even more stable support. In other words, with the administrative and the artistic standing as far apart from one another as possible, we could be sure that whatever stylistically benefits one is most probably going to be proven as detrimental for the other. Just as the Belgrade rocker, Bajaga composed his songs by compiling all the words he could think of that do not fit the moods of the song and then using their opposites in the lyrics, I claim that if a list of qualities proven effective in performing administrative or political tasks can be made, a list of their antipodes will be the one defining qualities important for being a prolific poet, painter or researcher. For example, when Kurt Vonnegut defines technical writing, that is, the writing of administrative documents, as the one where the writers are trained to “reveal nothing about themselves in their writing”<sup>559</sup>, we should be sure that inspirational

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<sup>557</sup> See Arthur Koestler’s *The Act of Creation*, Penguin Books, London, UK (1964).

<sup>558</sup> See Cory Turner’s and Anya Kamenetz’s *Kindness Vs. Cruelty: Helping Kids Hear The Better Angels Of Their Nature*. NPR (July 5, 2019), retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2019/07/05/731346268/kindness-vs-cruelty-helping-kids-hear-the-better-angels-of-their-nature>. See also Carolyn Zahn-Waxler, Marian Radke-Yarrow and Robert A. King’s *Child Rearing and Children's Prosocial Initiations toward Victims of Distress*, *Child Development* 50, 319 – 330 (1979).

<sup>559</sup> See Gary Blake’s and Robert W. Bly’s *The Elements of Technical Writing*, MacMillan Publishers, New York, NY (1993), pp. 3.

writing, writing for the heart and soul of the fellow human being is to be such that it opens the writer's own heart and tells as much about oneself to the reader, which is exactly the path that I followed in my effort to revolutionize the scientific writing and transform its fundamentals from the tenets of technicality to the premises of poetry. This noble aspiration of mine to repersonalize all the many depersonalized aspects of scientific papers has had much in common with the way Beethoven with his final, ninth symphony "transformed the symphony, for the first time in its history, into an act of philosophy and personal confession"<sup>560</sup>, a feat that I can draw inspiration from on most days, especially given my ambition to imbue the classical forms of expression with the romantic sentiment, that of free expression where melody, madness and melancholy seamlessly mingle with one another, which I share with this legendary composer, to many the greatest of them all, all along with his "irritable, passionate and melancholic turn of mind"<sup>561</sup>, his "restless eccentricity"<sup>562</sup>, his "untidy, clumsy, rude, and misanthropic"<sup>563</sup> personality "utterly lacking in self-control"<sup>564</sup>, as Goethe had it, and his overall attitude of "a temperamental, emo rock star"<sup>565</sup>, which culminated in his being "arrested by police who mistook him for a tramp"<sup>566</sup>. Hence, despite earning for living as a scientist all my life, I could describe myself any day in the same way Paul Klee, albeit a world-renowned painter, described his professional priorities once, not even mentioning painting among them: "First of all, the art of living; then as my ideal profession, poetry and philosophy, and as my real profession, plastic arts; in the last resort, for lack of income, illustrations"<sup>567</sup>. Colleagues with whom I shared academic hallways and meeting rooms as well as students who accused me more than once of the lack of professorial appearance would, of course, readily agree that my behavior at work, let alone outside it, has resembled that of a poet immersed in a translucent dream, chasing butterflies of fancy and caressing cocoons of fear and hugging it all, from campus trees to tumbling test-tubes, more than that of a stereotypical scientist of the modern era, stiff like a stick and of an intellect as dry as a desert. And since my way of marrying science and art has been unlike the safer and less strident routes taken by most other enthusiasts interested in tending this marriage, in the sense that it used science as a canvas to produce magnificent pieces of art on, it was naturally seen as the act of vandalism by the reigning scientific powers, who pointed their accusatory fingers altogether at me and tagged me for termination. And yet the poet in me never, to the very last day of my abiding in academia, accepted to sell his soul to the devils of prosaicness and he continued instead to amaze with the outbursts of lyrical metaphors and boisterous emotionality. Here may come the recollection of my contriving to end a grievance committee meeting following my dismissal as a professor of Orange County's largest private university with a summary that

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<sup>560</sup> See Ted Libbey's *The NPR Guide to Building a Classical CD Collection*, Workman Publishing, New York, NY (1999), pp. 26.

<sup>561</sup> See Cipriani Potter's quote from the *Musical World*, April 29, 1836 in *Beethoven: Moods and Manners* (By Some Who Knew Him), In: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* Vol. 33, Beethoven Supplement (December 15, 1892), pp. 34-38.

<sup>562</sup> See Mark Wigglesworth's *Why Beethoven*, retrieved from <https://www.markwigglesworth.com/writing/why-beethoven/> (2020).

<sup>563</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>565</sup> See the transcript of Emma Riggie's Lecture entitled *Beethoven: Symphonies & Shift from Classical to Romantic*, Study.com, retrieved from <https://study.com/academy/lesson/beethoven-symphonies-shift-from-classical-to-romantic.html> (May 11, 2015).

<sup>566</sup> See Mark Wigglesworth's *Why Beethoven*, retrieved from <https://www.markwigglesworth.com/writing/why-beethoven/> (2020).

<sup>567</sup> See the Wikipedia article on Paul Klee, retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul\\_Klee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Klee) (2019).

would go on like this, “Tomorrow, in the city of Irvine, I, for the first time, will be a chaperone, which is to say that I will accompany my son on a field trip to see, well, none other but the great bear, a.k.a. Winnie-the-Pooh and for this occasion I will dress up as Rabbit and Theo will be Piglet and we will walk to the site of the play where one big tree will be, which is special because it houses a house, that is, a treehouse and we will climb on it with the help of a rope and our raggedy shoes, which have really good friction because they are so old and worn-out, and when on it, we will feel lost to the world and what an amazing feeling it will be and then, we will spot a little hole in this house, which I knew was there, and I will tell Piglet about that episode from the adventures of Winnie-the-Pooh wherein many animals got locked inside this house, a shackle, or was it a cellar, and after hours of trying to break out and failing to do so, they found out that there was this small hole that only Piglet could sneak through, which he eventually did and ran out and found help and all of them were rescued – this, of course, being an instruction on the benefits of being small, for, then, one can escape all kinds of situations and help the world when help is badly needed”, all with the goal to counteract the hours of descending into the underworld of administrative and legislative lingo with a lyrical language that strives for heavenly spheres, a language that shatters the rigid rules of former languages, thus dismantling the lifeless machine of bureaucracy and pointing out where the heart of my interest and the interest of every creative spirit, be it scientific or artistic, lies: in nonconformist imagination, wild and wandering, that clashes with the convention and expectations at all possible levels. Needless to add, just as it is with art in which fundamentally different expressions lie paired, this conclusive comment of mine produced sheer bedazzlement in the heads of its hearers and made sure that this moment in the history of all grievance meetings that they will have attended will not be forgotten. Now, for immediately available scores of the aforementioned negative examples, where concurrent phrases accentuate each other instead of providing contrasts that augment the greatness of their standing by one another, one need look no further than one’s local CNN news station or showers of blatantly pestering ads with which TV channels are interspersed today, ads that piss on the pillars of sublime aesthetical criteria that took humanity millennia to chisel and sculpt from the shapeless crust of raw human expressions. Therein, messages uttered vocally are not imaginatively coupled with complementary sounds or imagery, but are accentuated even more by aural and/or visual aids, exerting thereby an apparently vulgar, insulting effect on the human intellect. Needless to add, this approach has comprised a standard one that the majority of musical conservatory and sound engineering school graduates have been taught at universities<sup>568</sup>, which makes it no wonder why music for movies or radio shows typically follows this model where the dominant emotion is not counteracted with expressions that excitingly expand the emotional content of the piece into a radiant and all-pervading aural sphere, but is rather reinforced by acoustic means and thus linearized or, so to say, squashed into a dull, predictable and wholly flattened, narrow plane. One of my favorite examples of such one-dimensional music is that made by a band from Montreal known as Arcade Fire, which in its sheer drawing of feelings of pain, grief, bitterness and anger paint quite narrow, tunnel-like audio landscapes that oftentimes appear to me as if poisoning the listener with subtle irritations that multiply like buzzing stars all over one’s aura, disrupting and disharmonizing it rather than integrating and instigating it to glow with some celestial beauty. To avoid producing such tunneled impressions that narrow our spirit instead of making it shine in all directions, it appears that we ought to crucify ourselves between opposing directions of feeling and thought, as in

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<sup>568</sup> See Ron Rodman’s *Tuning In: American Narrative Television Music*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY (2010).

accordance with the tenets of the Way of Love. The most blatant musical examples of this narrowness wherein broadening of emotions drawn all until they make a full circle and come into stylish opposition to each other is fearfully avoided at all costs come from songs wherein one could hear melodic lines of one or sometimes even a few instruments unimaginatively following the main melody of the song in all its upbeats and downbeats, neglecting the command to engage in “uncontrollable moving in multiple directions”<sup>569</sup> and thus giving rise to a tasteless and decadent piece of art<sup>570</sup>. To make a climactic moment of a musical piece truly striking and filled with an inexhaustible moving potential, then, the recipe lies not in having all the instruments explode at once in togetherness, which can be said to be as unaesthetic as overacting in movies; rather, the key can be found in coupling melodically and dynamically antithetic and yet complementary instrumental lines. That is, if one or a few instruments are on the route to undergo an eruption of emotions in synchrony, the other ones ought to be vowing antipodal threads through the tune. Some of the most wonderful examples of this kind include cases where the climactic emotional uplift of the song is paired with a soft and soothing melodic line traversing the background. Yet, it has been an incessant human tendency to blindly follow each other rather than to balance empathic unisons and differentiating originalities. Likewise, instrumental lines unimaginatively following the rhythm and melody that dominate the song, as if being enslaved by them, can be heard in innumerable musical pieces and righteously blamed for diminishment of the given song’s artistic qualities. This brings us over to what I have christened “the bass line problem” in modern music, referring to the failure of the bassists in a band to conceive of lines that would enrich the harmonic structure of the song as only bass lines can do, inconspicuously, from the shadow, resorting instead to dull repetitions of the tonic, betraying the beginnings of rock music rooted in the exciting boogie-woogie bass line, C-E-G-A-B<sub>b</sub>-A-G-E, and ignoring the call to serve as an essential and unassailable bridge between rhythm and melody. In search of examples that contrast this tendency of the bassists to conceive of lines that unimaginatively overlap with the bass drumbeat and/or merely repeat the chord tonics, one can always dig deep into the long tradition of jazz bass players, from Paul Chambers to Charles Mingus to Jaco Pastorius to the way Jimmy Garrison was able to “charge in tempo, change the texture, the angle, and the motion of the beat”<sup>571</sup> in Coltrane’s quartet to the way Ron Carter’s base on Herbie Hancock’s *Maiden Voyage* or Miles Davis’ *Nefertiti* complemented Tony Williams’ drum riffs and the harmonic tapestry painted by the rest of the band. Notably, Charles Mingus’ style of playing bass was such that he intended to provoke a confrontation, a conflict between himself and the rhythm section or the soloists, inflaming individual instrumentalists and

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<sup>569</sup> Listen to Darkwood Dub’s *Imamo situaciju* on *U nedogled* (1996).

<sup>570</sup> Listen to guitar riffs in Piloti’s *Kada sanjamo* on *Kao ptica na mom dlanu*, PGP-RTB, the climactic “I will be again tonight with you” sung by Arthur Lee in *Love’s Alone Again Or* and accompanied by the same rhythmical pattern of the instruments in the background, the ending of each verse in the opening track of Hüsker Dü’s *Zen Arcade*, where Bob Mould’s intensified yells are paralleled by Grant Hart’s unstylishly loudened banging of the drum, or the final stanza of Đorđe Balašević’s *Samo rata da ne bude*, the live recording of a moving song by the Serbian chansonnier released by PGP-RTB as a single in 1987, when the just-introduced solo guitar was supposed to add up to the climactic ascent of the song, but failed flat in that by simply repeating the song’s melody with irritatingly clichéd bending, for some of the most drastic and prototypic examples I could think of off the top of my head. Another, though a bit more obscure example pertains to the song *Trenutak radosti* by the band in which I used to play a lead guitar, *Tišina kod poluzvezde*, where the vocal melody and the lead guitar melody I composed overlap, particularly in its central D-C#-A-F# drop, and where a more imaginative encounter of the two passages could be imagined. Yet, it takes some exploratory curiosity and courage to wander off the imitative path and produce salient contrasts in sound that will dazzle, not dull, the listeners.

<sup>571</sup> See Stanley Crouch’s *Considering Genius*, Basic Civitas Books, New York, NY (2006), pp. 114.

impelling them to engage in a combat between one another, creating a sound of captivating wholeness as the result. Indeed, brilliantly conceived and played instrumental lines are such that they epitomize the principle of the Way of Love in their producing a dazzling sense of simultaneous empathic unison and sane and self-consistent diversification of the emotional content of the sound, as if the instrument faithfully follows the main thread and yet laterally hops so as to spread the essence of the song to all directions. For example, in order to avoid lame sonic similarities and build an enticing diversity in sound, it is a general principle that backing vocals ought to come from a singer other than the lead one, unless one intentionally attempts to give an impression of a mind maddeningly splitting into a multitude of voices, as brilliantly accomplished by Elizabeth Fraser. Another counterexample that comes to mind in this context is the singing style of Frank Sinatra<sup>572</sup>, with its accentuated uptightness and cold and elegant gentility, but with missing rapturous outcries for Yin flights of freedom and love from its heart, which altogether with his landmark tune, My Way, the anthem of selfish aloofness, helped in defining the overstrung, phony, boring, self-centered and inherently imbalanced capitalist culture of the Western hemisphere. In fact, owing to its unique combination of loftiness, arrogance, frigidness, dull predictability, emotionlessness, pretentiousness, snobbishness and stuck-up affectedness, the exact opposites of everything that is truly celestial in us, you could have heard me saying that Sinatra's voice is so devilish that it could easily be reverberating across the frosty rooms of the ninth circle of Hell. Luciano Pavarotti cannot be either said to have done favor to Neapolitan songs with his voice of pompous perfectness posed on the backdrop of a symphony orchestra, when these canzoni craved performances that more veraciously depict the littered streets of Napoli, the murky looks of the bystanders and a soiled and torn skirt on one sending out a voice from the heart as pure as the patches of the serene and sunshiny Mediterranean sky squeezed in-between the white façades, the little pieces of Heaven that one unflaggingly holds one's gazes fixed upon with feet mounted in dirt. This, of course, could be achieved only by arrangements that combine the sounds of cleanliness and clutter, allowing tonal imperfections to adorn the voices with an otherworldly beauty. Still, it is important to note that whether an artistic expression will be seen as one-dimensional or inherently diverse and splintered amongst many tracks of emotion reaching for the stars, resembling a sun with its rays radiating in all directions, greatly depends on the historical context in which we view it. For example, during the era of its immense popularity, the singing of Elvis Presley could have been characterized as composed of a blend of classical seriousness and tonality on one side and roaring explosions of raw energy, of sheer naturalness, on the other, thus breaking the reigning standards of operatically exaggerated singing, something for which it could have been definitely praised. However, from the modern perspective, Elvis' singing style appears as tediously monotonous, predictable and deprived of wide spectra of sympathetic overtones that would infuse subtle but infinitely charming imperfections to it. This viewpoint can parachute us straight to the doorsteps of the theory of evolution envisaged by Charles Darwin and its highlighting the natural propensity of living things to undergo variation, for in the hypothetical world of all-pervading uniformity and monotonousness, an organism or an object differing from the mainstream by accentuating the traits that are considered desirable by the populace would be the one found most attractive. Hence, no matter how innovative artistic spurs we produce may be, once they become copied by

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<sup>572</sup> Bryan Ferry has been typified by the same rigid theatricality of the poise as well as David Byrne, who got saved by the whimsical sound of his band, Talking Heads, which yielded a neat contrast to his spoofingly stiff singing style.

the masses and reproduced on a grand scale, they will naturally lose appeal and begin to be considered as unaesthetic and ordinary.

Still, in the amalgams of opposites forged inside of the furnace of our mind and heart kept ardent by the fire of devotion and love lie the keys to fabulous artistic expression, the examples of which abound all around us. As for singing, if we were to place Doris Day and Astrud Gilberto side by side, the former with her conventional style and the latter with lazy, hush and semi disinterested standing on the stage while soothingly chanting melodies with her typical blend of sadness and joy, we could glimpse an unexcitingly unilateral manner of expression of the former and majestic effects produced by combining the opposites in expressions of the latter, in this case striving to reach stars on the wings of godly *grace* with an earthbound pull of *gravity* downwardly, if we were to refer to the dichotomy proposed by Simone Weil<sup>573</sup>. Of course, I have always believed that in each and every one's oeuvre a diamond in the dust could be found, the task for whose accomplishment time, keen insight and patience are required. If you have ever wondered why the Philadelphian celebrity, Pink sounds most convincing when she acts emotionally wounded and helpless<sup>574</sup>, the reason lies in her naturally rough and sturdy singing style. The same can be said for the singing of Sam Herring of Future Islands, which can be characterized as "strong", but also "vulnerable" at its best<sup>575</sup>, perhaps explaining why I have always thought it to be the biggest strength, but also the biggest weakness of this band with origins from Greenville, North Carolina, the town with which I have maintained a strong scientific cooperation. For, confluences of opposites are over and over again proven as keys to ensuring enticing artistic performances and expressions. However, instead of filling the listener with precious insights and starry energy, the music of the most popular grunge band up to date, Nirvana, essentially empties the listener from all of these with its narrow heaping of emotions that all lie along the same line – depression, distress, fury and horror – when the key to producing marvelous pieces of arts from this skeleton of sound would be in adding flashes of contradictory feels to it, such as exhilaration, serenity, vividness and love. The very opening notes of the band's most famous record up to date, Nevermind, though hiding a clever wordplay in its title, alluding to the intrinsic ignorance of another and deprivation of illuminative, idealistic strivings of the minds that epitomized the culture that bore this piece, suggest exactly such unimaginative piling of matching impressions: namely, the starting, rather robust and syncopated guitar riff is being followed by the entrance of the vehement percussions that, quite sadly, turn out to follow the guitar rhythm in step<sup>576</sup>. Ever since the marriage of the steady drumbeat and the classical song format, percussionists have had the tendency to overly accentuate crescendos, but this particular example is the one where the drums blatantly and, I must say, unnecessarily stress each and every upbeat stroke of the guitar. Such an artistically saddening effect did hearing this had on me that sometimes I wonder whether the American musical comedian of Serbian origins, Weird Al Yankovic, failed to realize that this song he later chose to parody could have been intentionally recorded as a parody itself in the first place. Henceforth, I believe that the most triumphant artistic achievement of the song would have been admittance of their creators that it was meant to be a parody on the "smell of teen spirit" in its most bigoted and repulsive form that the authors of the song probably had in mind when they composed it. All in all, as in a

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<sup>573</sup> See Simone Weil's *Gravity and Grace*, Routledge, London, UK (1942).

<sup>574</sup> Listen to Pink's *Please Don't Leave Me on Funhouse*, LaFace (2008).

<sup>575</sup> See the description of the Future Islands' record *The Far Field* (2017) on Apple Music, where it is being referred to "the strong, vulnerable voice of Samuel T. Herring".

<sup>576</sup> Listen to Nirvana's *Smells like Teen Spirit* on *Nevermind*, David Geffen Company (1991).

hypothetic movie in which all characters would possess the same behavioral patterns and motives and which would thus come to lack a distinct character as a whole, diminishing the artistic experience on the part of the watcher, the same is with music in which each instrument is essentially telling the same story, expressing the same or closely related emotion as other instruments in the band do. Yet, when simultaneously told stories in musical language turn out to stand in opposition with each other, while a multidimensional harmony, a grand synthesis in this clash of a thesis and an antithesis is produced thereby, a triumphant and truly thrilling sound is given rise to. The two thrilling guitars whose sounds magically intertwine in the song *Veliki Duh* by the Belgrade band, *Darkwood Dub*<sup>577</sup>, the first released work of theirs and yet the most beautiful one in my humble opinion, offer an example I often give to illustrate how enlightening artistic perceptions arise where two expressional strands meet, seemingly opposite and mutually incompatible, but, in fact, immaculately complementing each other. Namely, while a bit quieter guitar is patiently weaving gentle threads of tones in the faraway distance, as if being played on a harp by a virgin whose mind and heart rest on some more sublime, ethereal plane compared to the life of a hasty and filthy city around us, untouched by the worldly sins and cruelties, the louder guitar is engaged in ecstatic jumping all over the place and sending sparkly sounds that break the glasshouses in which our soft hearts are shielded, all with an indescribable thrilling joy, as if being on the mission to pierce the listeners' ears with a touching beauty and deliver the venom of intoxicating spiritedness straight into their soul. For, out there where antipodal contrasts encounter and annul each other, releasing incredible amounts of enlightening energy, in the heart of a seemingly irresolvable paradox, is where the artistic mind patiently dwells, waiting for the split second to catch them both with the butterfly net of one's insight and skill, right in the magical moment of their soul-inseminating entwinement. This viewpoint also explains why I find impeccable profoundness in sayings such as that exclaimed by little Yotsuba as she gazed at a drawing of herself, "The picture's bad but really good too!"<sup>578</sup>, echoing Johnny Thunders' crucial realization that "you could be so good by being bad"<sup>579</sup> down the deep and dark vortices swirling through the ocean storms of my mind. Any Yogiisms, named so after the paradoxical observations popularized by the baseball catcher, Yogi Berra, I also heartily revel about whenever I find them drawn on the walls around my daring self, destined to tiptoe, like a mad Indian in a canoe, on cliffs overlooking the ravines of nonsensical tautologies, while holding in view the gorgeous wisdom lying beyond anything human words can touch upon. Needless to add, Yotsuba's viewpoint and Johnny's stance is what I too adopt on many occasions, openly arguing in favor of something being good and bad, light and dark, precious and trifling at the same time. And whenever I do so, you may be sure that it is an astonishingly rich product of human creativity or detail of reality that I have in mind. Be that as it may, next time you hear a song that has a moving effect on you, try to find its elements that stand in opposition to each other; you may eventually realize that those stand for emotions that typify your personality, despite the fact that they may be standing on the opposite sides of the spectrum of your emotions. Combinations of mystical awe and childish playfulness, of rupture and lethargy, of steaming energy and lazy, summer afternoon slowness, of ecstatic noisiness and prayerful quietness or of

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<sup>577</sup> Listen to *Darkwood Dub's Veliki Duh* on the compilation *Želim jahati do ekstaze*, Nova Aleksandrija (1991).

<sup>578</sup> See Kiyohiko Azuma's *Yotsuba & ! 1*, Yen Press, New York, NY (2009), pp. 92. That making things bad can make them eventually good is a classic pop art idea. It was nicely flirted with by the two heroines of Daniel Clowes' *Ghost World* as they stood and detachedly observed the unfolding of events on their prom night. "This is so bad, it's almost good", says Rebecca, to which Enid replies, "This is so bad, it's gone past good and back to bad again".

<sup>579</sup> Watch *Looking for Johnny: The Legend of Johnny Thunders* directed by Danny Garcia (2014).

anger and affectionateness could all be seen as exciting and captivating from this viewpoint. And such dialectical confrontations in music, as in everything else, humor included (namely, jokes are known to produce the most hilarious effect on the listeners when told with a serious face and the filmed version of the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy can illustrate a comedy that would have been saved from a falloff in quality had its intrinsically funny screenplay been paired with a dose of darkness, somberness and solemnity in the movie characters, music and scenography), may throw the mind into an enlightening state of paradox and an all-illuminating silent void, which has earlier been discoursed about by Søren Kierkegaard and certainly known by Zen masters who had come up with thousands of puzzles that shed light on the disciples' minds using this principle of breaking down the habitual rationality of human mind by facing it with a paradox, thus opening it to the flow of a great universal energy. Although music critics of the modern day are rarely familiar enough with the musical theory to be able to descend down to the musical bases of the songs, untangle the underlying harmonies and reveal such dialectical collisions, that such battles of the opposites have hidden keys to the greatness of artistic pieces of humanity comes as no surprise. Hence, to conjoin emotional streams that could be hardly imagined as able to form a coherent togetherness is the aim of masterful artistic creation. If on the right track, we may thus indeed be journeying towards producing enlightening impressions with our artistic creations or any other deeds: an ideal which we could stream to could be heard in the music of Gustav Mahler and its fascinating blend of (a) a sense of glimpsing the very rise of life as a gorgeous and pompous prelude, and (b) a feeling of being immersed in its tragic end as pathos sounds that mark the epitaph to its beauty ring everywhere around us. The operas of Richard Wagner, Mahler's main musical predecessor, are, then, often praised for their neo-Hegelian, dialectical character in which heavy darkness dances around with fairy-like lightness, and Wagner himself described his music as a "heroic funeral"<sup>580</sup>, clearly alluding to a clash between a heroic and triumphant shine of spirit and a deathful descent into perfect stillness. Similar battles of darkness and light could be found in many artistic pieces, from the works of musical classicism to the moments of brilliance that endow works of the modern music and unexpectedly dazzle us with their simple and yet genially moving glints of unearthly splendor. Sometimes they could be tentatively dissolved to their Lydian and Phrygian elements, if we were to refer to two of the basic ancient Greek musical modes, the former of which depicts a light, sensual and elegant nature in sound, while the latter evokes wild, unbound, volatile, impassioned and ecstatic resonance. Apparently, in confluences and clashes of these two mutually incongruent emotional streams, attempted to be distilled by the Bay Area minimalist, John Adams in *Phrygian Gates*<sup>581</sup> and other pieces, exciting and truly touching musical compositions are found. Hence, when another modern American composer, John Corigliano revealed that his aim in music is "to try to locate and develop the deep harmony between seemingly disparate materials: exotic and familiar, primitive and sophisticated, old and new"<sup>582</sup>, he merely reinvented the wheel of creative musical insight, possibly not realizing that every enticing artistic expression, as we see, comes forth as a concoction of contrasts. For, "musical form is the result of the 'logical discussion' of musical material"<sup>583</sup>, as Igor Stravinsky observed in support of the dialectical character of all the crucial elements of the musical composition and performance. A classical example of such a dialogue of

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<sup>580</sup> See Daniel Chua's *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK (1999), pp. 224.

<sup>581</sup> See K. Robert Schwarz's *Minimalists*, Phaidon Press, London, UK (1996), pp. 178.

<sup>582</sup> See John Corigliano's web page available at <http://www.johncorigliano.com/index.php?p=item9&q=1> (2009).

<sup>583</sup> See Robert Craft's *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky*, Doubleday & Company, Garden City, NY (1959), pp. 15.

musical elements in a piece may also come from the first movement of Haydn's comical symphony No. 88 wherein the opening tune of the allegro part and its accompaniment, representing two characters, "fight like Laurel and Hardy"<sup>584</sup>, with their roles becoming reversed towards the middle of the movement, before the flute heralds a restoration of the dominance of the original tune. One among innumerable romantic examples could be Antonín Dvořák's Symphony No.7 in D minor, in the first movement of which the Czech composer uses the concept of harmonic uncertainty by invoking a contrasting, lyrical major-key episode to reinforce the echo of mournfulness and fatality of the central, minor-key motif in the listener's head, the idea to which he would return again in the last movement when he lets the orchestra wrench the music from the somber sentiments to the enraptured ones before the piece eventually concludes with an uplifting touch. When it comes to the atonal modernism from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, one example may be the opening movement of Béla Bartók's String Quartet No. 4, where through glissandos, trills and homophonic gaps two themes contrast each other like day and night, the aggressive, dancelike theme and "a mysterious, dark and tranquil one"<sup>585</sup>. Then, when critics describe the symphonic works of Jean Sibelius as "Italian music gone north"<sup>586</sup>, the enthralling nature of their soundscape is being implicitly ascribed to the confounding concoction of the Mediterranean warmth and the Scandinavian iciness intrinsic to them. As for Wagner's music, the meeting of a passionate tempest of emotions and a "sonorous tide whose sunlit waves now came to expire at my feet"<sup>587</sup>, as Jean-Paul Sartre put it, found in it can also be invoked as the reason for the huge discrepancy in people's ascribing value to it; namely, some have tended to be enchanted by it, while others, including Rossini, who once sat on a piano to produce grandiloquent dissonance and illustrate what Wagner's music was leading to<sup>588</sup>, seem to have been thoroughly repelled by the "lordly pretension, self-aggrandizement and mystagogical self-dramatization"<sup>589</sup>, as Thomas Mann would call it. Whichever the response, Wagner's style was built on positing unexpected sentiments next to one another; or, as put forth in the first stanza of a humoresque poem entitled Direction for Composing a Wagner Overture, "A sharp where you'd expect a natural, a natural where you'd expect a sharp, no rule observe but exceptional, and then bring in a harp"<sup>590</sup>. The most renowned successor of Wagner's operas in which the sounds of a funeral and of a carnival are merged in a most rapturous way imaginable, Gustav Mahler faced an equal variety of critical responses to his works<sup>591</sup>, ranging from utmost repugnance to exhilarating adoration, quite logical in view of the dialectical nature of his characteristic sound, which has been unanimously labeled as the one of "painful wondrousness"<sup>592</sup>, a concoction of the tragically deathful spirit and the vibe of marble virgins dancing in timeless, ethereal spaces of the human mind. Among those who worshipped him,

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<sup>584</sup> See David Hurwitz's *Beethoven or Bust*, Doubleday, New York, NY (1992), pp. 53.

<sup>585</sup> See Ioannis Papaspyrou's *Béla Bartók – String Quartet IV, Movement I – Analysis*, retrieved from [http://www.academia.edu/11964409/B%C3%A9la\\_Bart%C3%B3k\\_String\\_Quartet\\_IV\\_Movement\\_I\\_-\\_Analysis](http://www.academia.edu/11964409/B%C3%A9la_Bart%C3%B3k_String_Quartet_IV_Movement_I_-_Analysis) (2011).

<sup>586</sup> See David Hurwitz's *Sibelius: The Orchestral Works: an Owner's Manual*, Hal Leonard Corporation, Winona, MN (2007), pp. 87.

<sup>587</sup> See Anthony Storr's *Music and the Mind*, Random House, New York, NY (1992), pp. 118.

<sup>588</sup> See Norman Lebrecht's *The Book of Musical Anecdotes*, The Free Press, New York, NY (1985), pp. 169.

<sup>589</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 119.

<sup>590</sup> See Norman Lebrecht's *The Book of Musical Anecdotes*, The Free Press, New York, NY (1985), pp. 169.

<sup>591</sup> See Karen Painter's and Bettina Varwig's *Mahler's German-Language Critics*, In: *Mahler and His World*, edited by Karen Painter, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (2002), pp. 267 - 378.

<sup>592</sup> See Ferdinand Pfohl's review of Gustav Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, In: *Mahler and His World*, edited by Karen Painter, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (2002), pp. 342.

Mahler, having taught himself a mastery in crafting dialectical clashes of opposites and yielding states of illuminative syntheses thereby, was praised for an exceptional ability to interweave “powerful fortes and scarcely audible pianos” and draw tonal threads that divide light from shadow, “as unique for their ascent to dizzying peaks climaxed by ecstatic force as for their pianissimo hovering at the point of dematerialization”, “evoking secrets and questions that are most consoling and threatening for every existence”<sup>593</sup>. Mahler’s drive to produce idiosyncratic juxtapositions of antipodes was allegedly, according to rather hostile critics of his work and personality<sup>594</sup>, caused by the conflicting relationship of the composer with his social milieu, which he simultaneously sought approval from and looked down on from the sublime vistas of his Apollonian mind whereon otherworldly muses prayed, sang and danced. More sympathetic critics confronted these allegations by outlining misery, sadness and joy, all entwined in Mahler’s life events<sup>595</sup>, as the key that unbolted the creative space in which he tamed the dragonish forces of darkness and let the pearly muses of paradise dance side by side with them.

Therefore, on one hand I am free to observe that all the awesome things in life are always *both*: infants in our hands grow both fast and slow; Beethoven’s symphonies sound both tender and thunderous; Dostoyevsky’s novels, as Mikhail Bakhtin noted, are such that “everything in his world lives on the very border of its opposite”<sup>596</sup>; Radiohead tunes are both soft and sore, loving and hateful, illumed and irate; characters on the connoisseurs’ most beloved religious paintings usually look both despondent and sanguine, while without this ambivalence they are often labeled as kitschy; life is both bitter and sweet, filling our souls with infinite joy and infinite sadness alike; a wholesome being is both introspective and expressive at the same time; the most captivating personalities owe their enchantment to seemingly incompatible traits majestically brought to unison in their expressions; a sustainable biological whole is both integrative and dissipative; a whole heart is both low enough to lean its ears onto the surrounding heartbeats so as to cordially empathize therewith and high enough to swim in the swarms of stars and the sea of ethereal cosmic joy so as to be able to channel these healing harmonies of the Heavens down to Earth, and so forth. A genuine artistic expression could be therefore thought to be the one that spontaneously embodies this multidimensional nature of the wondrous things in life and ends up resembling a crossroad whereon a pair or a plethora of theses and antitheses meet and create dazzling syntheses. Naturally, with apples not falling far from the trees, such expressions that reflect a whole universe in their breadth may arise only from minds and hearts akin to Mahler’s symphonies, harboring every single sentiment, emotion and mental state under the Sun. Such cognitive fountains wherefrom these geysers of enlightening expressions arise are, for this reason, as infantile as they are wise, resembling the emotional versatility of toddlers, always full of surprises, never leaving the viewer certain as to what emotion will burst out of them next. And if we ever become doubtful whether such protean mindsets are divine at all and start to think that they might be just immature, all we need to do is reread the eleventh chapter of Bhagavad Gita and consider the moment in it when Arjuna asks Krishna to kindly show him “that universal self” that Krishna beholds (Gita 11:4); before Krishna strikes Arjuna with the

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<sup>593</sup> See Charles S. Maier’s *Mahler’s Theater: The Performative and the Political in Central Europe, 1890 – 1910*, In: *Mahler and His World*, edited by Karen Painter, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (2002), pp. 76.

<sup>594</sup> See Robert Hirschfeld’s Obituary for Gustav Mahler, *Weiner Zeitung* (May 20, 1911), In: *Mahler and His World*, edited by Karen Painter, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (2002), pp. 344.

<sup>595</sup> See Peter Revers’ “...the heart-wrenching sound of farewell”: Mahler, Rückert, and the *Kindertotenlieder*, In: *Mahler and His World*, edited by Karen Painter, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (2002), pp. 173 - 183.

<sup>596</sup> See Mikhail M. Bakhtin’s *Problems of Dostoyevsky’s Poetics*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN (1984), pp. 176.

mercurial and inherently contradictory versatility of the manifestations of his being, now resembling the Holy Mother, a bearer of life, and seconds later turning into raged lightning that instills fear and awe even into the stoniest of souls, alternating from a creator to an obliterator in the blink of an eye, he utters the following words: “My dear Arjuna, O son of Pṛthā, behold now My opulences, hundreds of thousands of varied divine forms, multicolored like the sea. O best of the Bhāratas, see here the different manifestations of Ādityas, Rudras, and all the demigods. Behold the many things which no one has ever seen or heard before. Whatever you wish to see can be seen all at once in this body. This universal form can show you all that you now desire, as well as whatever you may desire in the future. Everything is here completely” (Gita 11:5-7). Thus, when we see children embodying every single emotion known to man in a single afternoon, we should know that they are the road not to be curbed, constrained and directed to foggy, scorched ridges that we, the adults, occupy in this world, but a road to be followed on our quest to rediscover that paradise lost long ago and reawaken our divinity once again. On the way there, we should always remember that the greatness of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* lies greatly in the ambivalence of Lucifer’s character, which tends to be casually discarded as purely wicked, but better be seen as a complex blend of angelic and diabolic traits because, after all, only when we recognize and accept this type of duality of features in every human committing a harmful act can we engage in his healing and become a Christ-like creature to others. The same goes for the artistic expressions as communications that overwhelm us with their multifaceted nature and enable us to find literally every sentiment and state of mind concealed beneath their semantic layers: they are to be embraced and allowed to expand our minds, not disparaged for their nonlinearity, contradictory content and the occasionally insatiable breadth of their form.

On the other hand, since the aesthetic experience of artistic expressions is inescapably subjective and there will never be a song unequivocally liked and found profoundly touching by each soul that inhabits this planet, sometimes I wonder whether my inclination to artistic pieces that engrain such dialectical encounters of opposites is simply a reflection of the conflicts of opposites that have tormented my own spirit from the inside. Schubert’s unrelenting admiration of Beethoven’s music aside, he wondered if Beethoven’s habit of “joining and confusing the tragic with the comic”<sup>597</sup> was but a sign of disturbing eccentricity and if it was “goading people to madness instead of dissolving them in love”<sup>598</sup>. Likewise, Leonard Bernstein found in the mishmash of influences dormant in the sound of Igor Stravinsky not an inspiration, but rather “an encyclopedia of misalliances, a concatenation of paradox, contradiction, and incongruity”<sup>599</sup>, that is, a bunch of “mismatched components producing indirection, obliquity, the indispensable mask of our century - the objectified emotional statement delivered at a distance, from around the corner and perceived, so to speak, second-hand”<sup>600</sup>. Therefore, it is likely that musical views of minds prone to be fascinated by the transcendental bedazzlement brought about by juxtaposition of contrasts, such as my own, would not find sympathy among listeners who seek another type of kicks from art and who might cherish more linear forms of expression, where concordant, not contrasting motifs are piled atop one another. And that pieces I find boringly one-dimensional and tediously predictable may be found moving by frames of mind prone to stay away from

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<sup>597</sup> See Harold C. Schonberg’s *Singing Schubert’s Praises*, *The New York Times* (March 19, 1978), retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1978/03/19/archives/singing-schuberts-praises-schubert.html>.

<sup>598</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>599</sup> See John Henken’s *The Fairy’s Kiss* (fragments from the ballet), Los Angeles Philharmonic webpage (2020), retrieved from <https://www.laphil.com/musicdb/pieces/4126/the-fairys-kiss-fragments-from-the-ballet>.

<sup>600</sup> *Ibid.*

paradoxes and adventurous collisions of worldviews and rather exhibit linear ways of thinking and emotionalizing certainly speaks in favor of the fact that personal preferences may stand behind one's aesthetic proclivity towards either self-critically and self-exploratory dialectical or self-approvingly linear expressions of human spirit. For example, lyrical, introspective personalities for whom the foremost purpose of music is to illuminate the inner orbits and spheres of the listener's mind and turn one into a statuesque cosmic epitome of muse in contemplation are naturally inclined to Miles Davis' melodic improvisatory lines abounding with subtle crescendos and sophisticated melodic twists, while those for whom the primary pleasure of listening to music emanates from its scatterbrained beat and rhythmic energy more readily embrace John Coltrane's rather deconstructive approach to jazz cadenzas where he would be endlessly transgressing, transposing, retrograding and inverting notes within a melody, "playing harmony as the melody, subsuming harmony within the melody, effectively blurring the distinction in an unthinkable act of dizzying symbolic significance - untethering the moorings of identity, obliterating the line between the self and the whole"<sup>601</sup>. In the jazz realm, we could also bring to mind a plethora of musicians who have managed to unexplainably touch the hearts of some listeners, while leaving others quite indifferent. For example, although technically similar in their melodic flows and outpours of lyricism, Dave Brubeck has regularly had an inspirational effect on me, in part due to the contrasting effect of the presence of Paul Desmond's sax, whereas the same cannot be said for the playing style of Bill Evans, always appearing sterily perfect in the aural sphere of stars shimmering in my head. This insight can prompt us to always keep in mind that music is eventually all about magic, that is, the ability to convey a message that touches people's hearts, mysteriously, by means impossible to formulate in terms of tangible and replicable principles. Although Bill Evans did incorporate quite a powerful dialectical principle in his playing and that in terms of the so-called "no-chord change where the same chord would just kind of hang in the air through the tune"<sup>602</sup>, constantly invoking a sense of statically dwelling in one place and not moving anywhere, while at the same time letting out "crystal notes like sparkling water cascading down from some clear waterfall"<sup>603</sup>, as Miles Davis poetically described his style, this did not help me sense the magically moving features in his music. Another feature he used in his piano voicing, most notably in *So What*, the opening track off *Kind of Blue*, was harmonic ambivalence built around fourths and thus levitating in the ambiguous space in-between major and minor, between a Dorian scale and a blues scale with pronounced flattened fifths, conveying emotional incertitude thereby and matching the norms of dialectical expression described here. Despite that, my response to the request to explicate the reason for my not being moved to any great extent by this sound could be the same one Evans, himself, gave when he was asked why he had not pursued and developed this harmonic direction in his later works: "Wasn't lyrical enough... wasn't lyrical enough"<sup>604</sup>. For, after all, art ought to be felt by the heart first and foremost and only then intellectually dissected into pieces, the act that, however, will only point out some vague guidelines of artistic excellence, whereas the latter, as a rule, will conform to these guidelines spontaneously and intuitively, without ever trying hard to rely on written principles of any kind, relentlessly rejecting doctrines and letting

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<sup>601</sup> See David Reitzes' *A Love Supreme: God Breathes through John Coltrane*, available at <http://www.reitzes.com/coltrane1.html> (1998).

<sup>602</sup> See Ashley Kahn's *Kind of Blue: The Making of the Miles Davis Masterpiece*, Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA (2007), pp. 72.

<sup>603</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 78.

<sup>604</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 205.

the artistic expressions simply happen and flow out of one magically, like a river. Be that as it may, only when coupled with Miles' charisma and serene confidence in the often minimalist passages and solos he had insisted on did Bill Evans bring "a quiet strength to Davis's music that complemented his sense of space and subtlety"<sup>605</sup>, as on legendary *Kind of Blue*, the record whose personally most striking detail is that it begins and ends with the same trumpet melody, although enwrapped in different aural milieus and yielding wholly different messages, the playful and hoppy one in *So What* and cosmically sad and sentimental on *Flamenco Sketches*<sup>606</sup>, subtly demonstrating the systemic principle that tells us how contexts define qualities of things surrounding us more than we normally realize. The extent to which Miles was aware that dialectical juxtapositions of seeming opposites hide the key to producing a captivating sound of sheer magic in the air is illustrated by an anecdote wherein, when complained to by the saxophonist Gary Bartz about the lack of style with which Keith Jarrett played piano in the background, he said to Keith, in a quiet room, when they were all alone, that "the saxophonist loved his playing, and wanted to hear even more"<sup>607</sup>. For, with the image of the road incessantly posed in front of our minds as a reminder of the need to attain a balance between empathic sameness and inventive difference in anything creative that we engage ourselves in, we ought to make sure to foster disparity where too much of respectful adherence is present as well as to feed the force of unity in the midst of times dominated by the individualistic diversion of spirits from one another.

Hence, whatever the aural impulse we find unexplainably moving, we should know that this is partly so because it has happened to reflect who we are at the given moment, while presumably handing us subtle answers to questions that spin like swarms of stars in our hearts. Or, as Gottfried Benn once noticed, "A poem is always a self-exploration, and in the answer all sphinxes and images of Sais fuse into one"<sup>608</sup>, letting all the starry insights that comprise the co-creational thesis coalesce into a recollection of how all that we perceive around us, be it a crooked blade of grass, a sunlit flagpole, a crumbly brick or a willowy nest, is literally us, its partial creator, opening paths that lead us to glimpse the deepest secrets of our spirit, as much as it conceals doors through which we may enter the road to untangling the mysteries of the divine origins of the Universe. Music critics familiarized with the ubiquitous co-creational principle would thus supplement each of their critiques with a dose of insight with regard to the extent to which their own subjective predispositions have guided them in their selection and appraisal. For, every critique speaks about the subject of the critique as much as it tells us about its creator. Interestingly, most of these critics of Wagner's and Mahler's sounds have tended to be fond of the music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, an Austrian classicist well-known for his ability to blend the utmost childish traits with the lucidity of an otherworldly genius, as effortlessly as he perfused the descending passages in the climaxes of the *Jupiter Symphony* with the idiosyncratic upward thrusts from the orchestra. Yet, the depths of darkness drawn in the majority of his music - sacred works aside - are nowhere as thrilling as those found in the works of his Romantic successors, where the synchronies between rising figures and falling figures, like those of the strings and the winds, respectively, in the introduction of the *First Symphony* by Johannes

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<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>606</sup> Listen to Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue*, Columbia (1959).

<sup>607</sup> See Philip Freeman's *Running the Voodoo Down: The Electric Music of Miles Davis*, Backbeat Books, San Francisco, CA (2005), pp. 82.

<sup>608</sup> See Camilla Bork's *Musical Lyricism as Self-Exploration: Reflections on Mahler's *Ich bin der Welt abhanded gekommen**, In: *Mahler and His World*, edited by Karen Painter, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (2002), pp. 171.

Brahms, would become far more commonly employed. It explains why the feelings of elation and joy emanating from his notes, on most occasions having no deep abysses of being to bounce off, do not carry a moving profoundness comparable to that delivered by the music of Ludwig van Beethoven, for one. This, however, does not diminish the glorious effect Mozart's sound had on the music of his times, infusing a revolutionarily childlike *joie de vivre* into expression styles dominated by fake ballroom formalities and thus shattering the stuck-up rigidity of the remnants of the baroque period with the waves of unprecedentedly flexibly expressed emotions.

If you have begun to wonder by now what this extensive elaboration of the supposedly dialectical nature of all monumental pieces of art has to do with meeting the divine essence of Nature in the course of a neo-Buberian, mutually venerating dialogue between our mind and the traces of divinity scattered all over the world in our eyes, the answer is simple. Namely, the same encounter of opposites dormant in touching artistic works can be said to be intrinsic to each facet of our experiential realities. Not only that every segment of physical reality could be dissected into such antipodal ingredients, but more importantly, the entire experience of each one of us arises along the intersection of the creative spheres of influence of one's mind and Nature. Stretch your arms as far as you can, bow your head as if leaning your mind deep into its essence and at the same time selflessly reach out to the entire world, and a neat symbol of the origins of reality as well as of magnificent pieces of art will be adopted, coincidentally or not resembling the image of the crucified Christ. More on this will be said when the turn comes for the ideas revolving around the co-creational thesis to flash on the screen of our mind; now, there are more things to be mentioned with regard to the consequences of the thesis that stylishly entangled expressions antithetic to each other characterize magnificent artistic pieces. One of them is that some of the most exciting works of art have arisen during the transitional periods in the evolution of the artists' styles in the course of their careers. These ephemeral moments that are often perplexing for the artist and his audiences alike I used to name Rubber Soul phases, in reference to the Beatles' record that marked their transition from the jolly and carelessly romantic juvenile sound to a more mature, psychedelic phase wherein songs were interwoven with more profound messages. This "rubber soul" phase during which the creative essence of an artist undergoes rubbery reshaping into something unpredictable and unforeseen opens the door for one to hold both the old and the new in one's hands, toss and mingle them in the air in front of one and give them in a conjoined form to the world. In a previous work of mine, I listed some of the exciting examples of such works that originated in the midst of a creative crisis into which an artist fell following the process of dying of the old ways of expressing oneself, while sad or joyous sunrises of new roads to creative being were glimpsed in the distance<sup>609</sup>. Some artists have learned to let the outbursts of inspiration yield new expressions exactly when they found themselves roaming across these transitional landscapes of their personality and history of being. Others have for the same reason tended to constantly switch expressional styles, hoping to come up with a recipe for an endlessly refreshed creativity. Yet, as we all know, where enormous benefits are dormant, challenges and traps await us too. Just like interdisciplinary research holds great promises but also entails risks arising from insufficient familiarity with one of the interconnected fields and futility of one's creative endeavors it may cause, so does finding oneself on the boundary between styles and signs of the times hold our creativity in jeopardy, constantly imposing risks that our expressions may appear overly banal and trivial from the perspective of the novel field that we have just entered. Works emanating from such transitional periods in artists' lifetimes are thus often subjects to controversies; namely, while some critics

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<sup>609</sup> See one of my previous books, *SF Pensées: A Peer into a Cosmos of Starry Thoughts*, Passage S.F.1.44 (2009).

will typically find them to be unequivocal masterpieces, others will consider them as nothing but trashy and trifling. Hence, “rubber soul” as the name I have ascribed to these critical stages in the flow of the ship of an artist’s creativeness along the river of time. This perspective also explains why the most artistically productive periods in human lifetimes have traditionally been those where the streams of youth have flown into adulthood. Later stages in life, when no big changes of the heart and groundbreaking mental and emotional paradigm shifts are underwent by the majority of us, as a rule yield more prosaic and clichéd periods of creativity during which artists typically reap fruits of recognition and rewards by languidly referring back to the creative principles conceived back in the days. For example, St. Dominic’s Preview<sup>610</sup>, the song I selected once as the best by the Northern Irish guru who famously favored “no guru, no method, no teacher” originated exactly at the transition between the early, adolescent phase in the artist’s career and the later one during which he fully established his sublime, sage-like persona. It was as if gazing at the icon of St. Dominic in the church that bears the saint’s name in San Francisco, the impressions of which were neatly captured in the song, provided a one-way entrance into the world of unshakably founded spiritual adulthood, while extinguishing some of the multidimensional wonder in the artist’s heart and putting to sleep some of the certainly moving facets of his creative work. Such and similar instances of two worlds colliding within one’s soul bear resemblance to the event during which male and female gametes merge and yield the stems of new life. Similarly, when we engage in artistic creation that lets two powerful emotional streams not suffocate each other or result in prevalence of one and suppression of another, but dancingly twist around each other like Yin and Yang on the Tai-Chi-Tu emblem, we should know that pieces of art that will survive us with their monumental importance are being born. One thing, then, becomes certain from this discourse: whenever we find ourselves in the middle of some stellar fields whereon galaxies of antipodal worldviews and feelings collide over our heads, we should be blessed for the occasion. For, not safe, predictable, unidirectional and leisured journeys along the streams of the world, but crucifying drags in the opposite directions, as challenging and strident as they could be, embodying a crossroad or, simply, a cross in the center of our being, are what fertilizes our spirit and makes us bear sundrenched seeds of divine beauty within ourselves, patient and careful nourishment of which will eventually yield magnificent fruits that are to be scattered all over the face of the world, beautified, sublimed and hopefully saved thereby from its temptations to descend into muddy realms of vulgarity and animalism, the sheer opposition to the artistic kingdom that rests among the heavenly clouds of thought.

I tend to see my musical works composed and recorded years ago as embodying one such dialectical confrontation between: (a) crystal clear purity of harmonies and starry twinkles that resembled angelic winks emitted by the sound of my guitar; and (b) a feel of graininess, ancient hum and anxious distortions. It was a mix of sparkly cheers of joy and teary-eyed waving of the melancholic sea of compassionate wonder over the inescapable evanescence of things, such as that posed as the final question of Pet Sounds<sup>611</sup>, that the emotionally swelling waves of the warm sea of my heart guided the inexperienced raft of my musical being to engrain in my tunes. On one hand, not only was every chirpy pluck of the guitar strings meant to transform my whole being into a funnel that reaches out to Heavens in a musical prayer and lets its divine energies slide down through the bottleneck of my Vishuddha chakra, trembling with the feelings of devotion to the Holy Spirit, but it was also performed with a whole lot of meditative focus and a

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<sup>610</sup> Listen to Van Morrison’s St. Dominic’s Preview on St. Dominic’s Preview, Warner Bros (1972).

<sup>611</sup> Listen to the Beach Boys’ Caroline No on Pet Sounds, Capitol (1966).

wish to awaken angels sleeping on starlit roofs and make their celestial silhouettes smile with each and every of their gracious moves by which they'd express their longings to give, give, give all they have had and even more, fluidly, shining forth with infinite grace, while on another hand the sounds emanating from my guitar strived to place the listener's spirit in fearful resonance with the awe-inspiring and unfathomably great karmic web of pleasure and pain that the reality of ours is, as if using the latter to pierce through the spirit of another before infusing it with a lifesaving nectar of sounds. Moreover, this was the same clash between blissfulness and fear I had heard in the humming sounds of the sea of the womb in which I swam my first days on this planet and the first twinkles of starry light I had glimpsed in this maternal pool of wonder and love, the same two qualities which I would later place as two central pillars of the foundations of my philosophic and aesthetic worldviews. For, I have known that "the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life" (Proverbs 14:27), as King Solomon prophesied, that Siegfried in the operatic saga about the Ring of the Nibelung discovered anxiety and fear at the very same moment as he glimpsed the face of Brünnhilde and felt love for the first time<sup>612</sup>, that "all the greatest blessings create anxiety"<sup>613</sup>, as Seneca observed, that care for the fragile beings of the world, such as the rose in the story about the Little Prince, as worrisome as it is, stands at the heart of all profound joy and wisdom in life, that "where fools rush in, angels fear to tread"<sup>614</sup>, as Alexander Pope jotted down, reminding us that a blend of humane fragileness, loving compassionates and heavy anchorage to human hearts around us and the divine, unearthly and unbound joy that streams towards stars is what lies in the core of angelic hearts that beat with enlightening music of love and wonder throughout the Universe. This is all to say that without a word spoken my music engrained in it equally great philosophic principles as those that the words which I have crafted here contain and is one of the reasons why I still claim that my musical works stand much higher on the ladder of my creative accomplishments compared to my written works. "Where words fail, music speaks", the king of fairytales, Hans Christian Andersen proclaimed, on one hand telling us that musical expression is much more capable of reflecting the enchanting nature of reality than human language, while on another hand insinuating that only when words become shattered and scattered into pieces in the space of the reader's consciousness, now at a higher level, aware that no words can express the essence of anything in life, can our written works claim to have attained their ultimate purpose, that is, "using writing as a weapon to kill writing and point at the beauty of living the ideals written about"<sup>615</sup>, as I stated in an atypical and quite

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<sup>612</sup> Watch Richard Wagner's Siegfried, Act 3, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra under the direction of James Levine, A Metropolitan Opera Television Production, New York, NY (1990).

<sup>613</sup> See the epigraph to Andi Watson's Little Star, Oni Press, Portland, OR (2006).

<sup>614</sup> See Alexander Pope's An Essay on Criticism (1709), retrieved from <http://poetry.eserver.org/essay-on-criticism.html>.

<sup>615</sup> See my biography at the end of the discourse entitled On Love in the Realm of Science, Technoetic Arts: A Journal of Speculative Research 10 (2-3) 363 – 378 (2012): "Vuk Uskoković is a verily strange scientist. He likes to roll on soft carpets, stare at the celestial ceilings, and spin all sorts of visions in his head, such as walking along beaches in sunset when red and glossy sun lies at the horizon and whispers the mysteries of Nature. He likes to collect strangely looking pebbles and play with them. He is curious. His mind is overflowing with inspiring visions and ideas, which, he thinks, makes him special. Of course, that is all his fancy, but that is what spurs his creativity, and, lo, let it be. He writes and publishes a lot. Aside from his most beloved books, he published solely written peer-reviewed papers on many different subjects, including Physics, Chemistry, Biochemistry, Biomedicine, Cognitive Science, Ecology, Philosophy, Theology, Arts, Science Policy and Social Science. Whenever he writes, his sentences resemble endless rollercoaster rides, a train of thought in which ideas are linked to each other by analogies as much as by ratio and logic, making the readers dizzy and lost amidst a firework of inspiring thoughts, "a shower of ideas, a flood of information that reads like a stream of consciousness", as a reviewer of one of his works noticed

quirky biography of mine. Hence, in the footsteps of the Sufis, who were the most prolific writers in Islamic history<sup>616</sup> despite the fact that their central literary aim spanned around showing the fallacy of bookishness as a route to religious experience, having ascribed the epithet of *ummī*, that is, “illiterate” to the Prophet Muhammad with a wish to demonstrate that only those “unpolluted by ‘intellectual’ knowledge of word and script”<sup>617</sup> may become the messengers of God and having claimed that the whole wisdom had lain engrained in *ل*, a plain vertical line that is the first letter of the Arabic alphabet and that was seen as a symbol of God in all its omnipresent glory, I write amply and the purpose of my writing has been the use of words as pointers beyond words, towards the necessity of living life in full spirit, choreographically and musically, rather than only theorizing about it. In a way, I dream of my writing crossing the path the visual arts crossed from the times of cavemen’s hieroglyphs to Renaissance to Realism to Impressionism to Abstract Expressionism, when paintings reached the endpoint of their makers’ striving to use them as formal apparatuses to challenge the concept of painting *per se* and finally liberated the human mind from its narrow holds. Of course, even realist painters of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century realized that the heart and soul of one’s work lie not in *what* is being painted, but in *how* it is being painted<sup>618</sup>, but abstract expressionists brought this point to the extreme by making this *what* completely irrelevant and nullified, echoing the endpoint of the path I envisage my writing to take me on, which is to drift aimlessly with the pen in my hands, in a manner totally freed from the binds of the plot, of the subject and of any semantic, let alone preachy points to make, *en route* to discover the infinity in a finest and least significant thought, even when broken down to millions of indecipherable pieces, like a Pollock’s painting, and reduced to sheer spiritual energy, as immaterial as it can be. Likewise, the path crossed by František Kupka, yet another forgotten spiritualist like myself, destined to die unrecognized by his peers lest the magical powers of his works be corrupted by stardom, from Symbolism to Expressionism, first regular and then color-heightened, Fauvist, to Orphic Cubism to pure abstract art of Amorpha and beyond, ought to be mine, albeit in a different artistic realm, I have vowed innumerable times. Hence, I hope that after this stage of belletristic writing, with romantic ideals illuminating my heart, a time will come to deconstruct every sublime structure erected here, to erase every last trace of verbal sophistication and intricacy impressed here and to begin to write with an *ad hoc* improvisatory style, turning design into discovery and letting the writing write me more than having me transcribe my thoughts veritably to these lines. Right after, I would begin to scribble with as much childlike chaos as it is in Helen Frankenthaler’s Mountains and Sea or other abstract expressionist paintings of her era, before everything descends into color field blotches, splashes and single brushstrokes, like in one of Morris Louis’ unfurleds or Rothko’s multiforms, and then whiteness, nothingness, a complete freedom from the limitations of rational thought. To

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once. Still, he uses writing as a weapon to kill writing and point at the beauty of living the ideals that he extensively writes about. Hence, his favorite art is jumping from one planet of human worldviews to another, looking at the world from the eyes of another and trying to sympathize with them. He dances and makes somersaults in water. He juggles the ball very well too. However, although he is a PhD researcher at University of California, San Francisco, a nanotechnologist and physical chemist, he is very sloppy with experimentation. Help him if you see him struggling with one. Finally, he has rejected any reference to things that boring grownups normally emphasize to build prestige. Instead, he focuses on small things and discovers great and wonderful meanings in them”.

<sup>616</sup> See Annemarie Schimmel’s *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC (1975), pp. 18.

<sup>617</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.26-27.

<sup>618</sup> Watch *A Sentimental Trip Home – Music of Russian Painting*, Episode 1 directed by Nikita Mikhalkov (1996).

break apart rather than to continually build, augment and perfect is where these lines head to, the reader must be warned, bringing about frightening falls into freedom at their final points.

Though, even music should sound as if it is being broken as it flies through the air, I have always thought; for, only as such can it convey a sense of angelic fragileness and profoundly touch human hearts. The entire idea that only when infused with imperfections as antitheses to pure perfection will our works of art gain a chance to glow with a sense of perfection has thus been quietly whispered to the listener with every tone of my musical compositions. From the charming dance of shadow and light along the edges of old celluloid tapes to the modern trend of adding graininess and pixilation to bleak photographs to make them more stylistic and exciting to the record collectors' mouthwatering enjoyment in hearing cracking sounds when the gramophone needle hits the dust to the distorted guitar sounds employed by shoegazers to convey a sense of beautiful dreaminess and immersion in an aural pool of stars, signs are indeed everywhere that what makes the fruits of our creativity verily brilliant is achieving the entwinement of the spirits of perfection and imperfection, order and disarray, in them and demonstrating how each one of them sleeps in the heart of its antipode. Invoking this idea brings to mind along one of its sideway tracks the way in which introducing a seed of imperfection into perfectly precise and monotonous visual spaces and thereby fantastically yielding "a field of color energy" to it, transforming its dull sense of statics to an exciting movement, has comprised one of the essential elements of Robert Irwin's artistic explorations of space. The magical and unexplainable enjoyment awakened as we find ourselves immersed in one such spatial surrounding, altogether with a sense of wonder enkindled in us spontaneously, stand as a proof of a magnificent effect that a single masterfully drawn imperfect line can produce. This viewpoint explains why Irwin, himself, spent years finding the perfectly imperfect dimensions of a blank square and eventually came up with the aspect ratio of not seemingly perfect 1, but 1.02424242... *ad infinitum*<sup>619</sup>, while concluding at the same time that not a perfectly flat square, but one just slightly and almost imperceptibly concave in the center was the perfect one for the visual effect he aspired to attain. After all, it is doubtful whether the charms of music could be so enlighteningly felt by us at all had it not been for imperfections inherently engrained in tonal music *per se*, evidenced by the fact that there could be no perfectly tuned twelve-tone scale instrument because the ratio between the frequencies of two adjacent tones should be ideally proportional to the twelfth root of 2, which is, like  $\pi$  and  $e$ , other two numbers that ubiquitously pervade the mathematical frameworks for our models of reality, an irrational number and a fraction the square root of 2, the number Andrea Palladio famously proclaimed in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century to be the perfect proportion in architecture<sup>620</sup>, following the early Renaissance attempts to reflect the harmonious relationships of the Pythagorean, diatonic scale in the newly conceived visual art forms. Namely, a simple comparison between pieces composed using the pentatonic scale, which lacks any dissonant intervals, and those built upon the chromatic, twelfth-tone one, relying on major sevenths, tritons and other common dissonant chords, could lead us to infer a more touching and emotional nature of the latter. A milestone in the evolution of the Western music corresponded to the moment when medieval and early baroque sounds that almost strictly relied on the consonant major triad expanded the diatonic scale and began to make more pronounced diversions into its dissonant regions. Moreover, just as silicon can be said to present

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<sup>619</sup> See Lawrence Weschler's *Seeing Is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees: Expanded Edition, Over Thirty Years of Conversations with Robert Irwin*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA (2009), pp. 93.

<sup>620</sup> See Andrea Palladio's *Four Books of Architecture*, cited in Richard Weston's *100 Ideas that Changed Architecture*, Laurence King Publishing, London, UK (2011), pp. 44.

an extraordinarily unexciting material, though if finely and controllably contaminated with specific impurities it transforms into a semiconductor, the crucial information carrier in computers and other electronic devices around us, so do perfect tones, such as those produced by a tuning fork, sound dauntingly dull and monotonous unless infused with imperfections in terms of overtones, that is, higher harmonics heard in the distance in addition to the major tonal frequency, which is why oboes or pipe organs sound much more aesthetically pleasing than MIDI pianos. And so, whenever I hear beats in Pet Shop Boys' Being Boring<sup>621</sup> or the cymbals and handclaps in Belle & Sebastian's Seymour Stein<sup>622</sup> and The Boy with the Arab Strap<sup>623</sup>, respectively, all introduced as analog, literally natural tones, and become thrilled beyond what words could describe, I am reminded of how imperfections engrained in the texture of reality are like cracks through which the light divine enters our eyes. Sitting in a dusky room lit by the candlelight whose flickers of light dance across the walls like some shadowy spirits of ethereality, speaking tongues which only the deepest senses of our beings may be sensitive to, inspiring me to creative thought much more than uniform and isotropic artificial lights, unfailingly potent and powerful in their workings, my mind arrives at the same insight, laying bricks of imperfection as the foundations of every perfect tower we may conceive of and build in life. In other words, perfection is far from perfect unless it becomes pervaded with humane and earthly imperfections. In fact, such "perfect" sounds free of overtones as impurities of a kind have been increasingly used in the modern pop songs not so as to deliver a sense of stellar perfection, but quite opposite, i.e., with the purpose of awakening the feelings of glimpsing bleeps of a sympathetic, sloppy and inherently imperfect android with the eye of our heart. Such sounds also serve the purpose of nostalgically reconnecting us with the memories of old computer days when they were parts of the embryonic phase of animation and programming, spinning us in dizzying circles around the question of how perfect is perfect and bringing us face-to-face with the realization that only blends of perfect and imperfect can claim the epithet of truly perfect. And this idea that celebrates interplays between a symmetrical order and an asymmetric disarray reflects nothing but the dialectical roots of the evolution of the world, the understanding of which makes us inscribe the legendary Gregory Bateson's words, "the oversimplified ideas will always displace the sophisticated and the vulgar and hateful will always displace the beautiful; and yet the beautiful persists"<sup>624</sup>, on the revolutionary red stripe tied around our forehead, firmly believing that although the history of the human race has been a history of wars, hatred and destruction, the history of beauty has had its wings spread underneath it ever since, as Béla Hamvas had noticed<sup>625</sup>, reflecting on sadness and poverties of the world and thereby adding fuel to the fire of compassionate drive to create ever more blasting expressions of beauty and love and hand them over to the world as the keys that unlock the greatest creative potentials of ours. Hence, like our warrior of light in the epic battle depicted in the book of Bhagavad-Gita, urged by Lord Krishna to pick one of the two confronted sides, fight and touch the sublime skies of divine consciousness thereby, lighting up millions of lampions of starry thoughts inside of his head, or like Rocky Balboa and many other martyrs who found a way to

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<sup>621</sup> Listen to Pet Shop Boys' Being Boring on Behaviour, Parlophone (1990).

<sup>622</sup> Listen to Belle & Sebastian's Seymour Stein on The Boy with The Arab Strap, Jeepster (1998). Nowhere in a pop song did cymbals sound so strident and moving as here, leaving behind many other notable examples, including all-but-minimal cymbals in Radiohead's Let Down or the digitally smeared cymbal in Future Islands' A Dream of You and Me.

<sup>623</sup> Listen to Belle & Sebastian's The Boy with the Arab Strap on The Boy with the Arab Strap, Jeepster (1998).

<sup>624</sup> See Gregory Bateson's Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity, Hampton Press, Cresskill, NJ (1979).

<sup>625</sup> See Béla Hamvas' Anthologia Humana: 5000 Years of Wisdom, Dereta, Belgrade. Serbia (1948).

the realization that love is the greatest treasure in any man's life while fighting till the last drop of blood, so do we encounter sparkles of celestial beauty and dances of muses while looking deep into the abysses and darkest alleyways of human being in this life.

Holding malign and animalistic expressions of humanity on the palms of our hands and inspecting them one by one might instill a sense of hopelessness in the ability of humanity to evolve into emanations of extraterrestrial and highly elevated consciousness, while glancing at perfectly pure expressions only may allure us into thinking that all is perfect and in the right place, putting our drives to get creatively involved in saving the world and bringing the light of our divine spirit to it to sleep, equally endangering our creative potentials in the long run. From Beethoven to Radiohead, the most accomplished artists have known that tempests in which light battles against darkness ought to be impressed in their beings first before they could hope that the same antagonism could be impressed in their artistic endeavors too and that these works of art could turn into impetuses that evolve humanity toward something greater and diviner. Reggae is the type of music in which one could hear the portentous sound of the dub of dark woods blended in with the echoes of a laidback love, alongside the similarly Manichean mix of calls for political rebellion and those exclaiming love and respect for all, being the reason for which this musical genre native to Jamaica was said to resonate powerfully wherever poverty and inequality thrive<sup>626</sup> and explaining why my hometown, Belgrade, became the European capital of the reggae movement during the war-stricken 1990s, when the ominous and the dark glided side by side with the gentle and the loving through the atmosphere filling the heads of many of my compatriots, including myself. Listening to the Baltimore magician of sound, Dan Deacon, and his song Snookered in a constantly evolving video version<sup>627</sup> with annotations switched on and irrational, brainless and hateful messages posted side by side with clever and inspirational ones, while only one question, What is in This Tent, followed by carefully spelled L-O-V-E, appeared quietly and blushing at one moment near the worn-out wickiup, reflecting all the facets of humankind, a sense of sympathy was invoked in me for even the most ridiculous posts which might have maddened me otherwise had I seen them alone, for an impression produced in me was the one of a giant Gaia streaming towards ever more wonderful evolutionary horizons as it progresses from days to nights to millions of other alternating polar opposites wherein theses meet their antitheses and produce enlightening syntheses, as the sounds of the song were smashing and snookering the ideas in orbit around the sun of my awareness, making me bow down with awe and respect and happily recollect a few blades of grass, the smell of which brought to mind once and for all that only when we let chaos and freedoms mix with perfect orderliness in our thoughts do we get a chance to let ever more beautiful ideas sprinkle from the fountainheads of our beings like geysers that refresh the tired and depressed creatures on warm summer days with jumpy joy and luminous love. For, in order to inspire millions with our being in this world, we need to be simple, approachable and unpretentious, joyously strewing each and every one with stardust of grace from the bottom of our heart, but also be mysteriously withdrawn inside of our inner landscapes of feeling and thought, just as the Way of Love has instructed us. Or, as it stands stated in the scriptures written by the Serbian Saint Ava Justin Popović, "Virtues are dead unless they are being fed by the holy mysteries"<sup>628</sup>, suggesting that secretion and sacration are not so far from one another and that, lest the nectar of our creative

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<sup>626</sup> See the documentary on Jamaica aired on Travel Channel (2000).

<sup>627</sup> Watch Dan Deacon's Snookered on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ysUbo4bED4> (2009).

<sup>628</sup> See Nevenka Pjevač's *The Evangelical Ladder of Virtues of Saint Ava Justin*, Blagodarnik, Belgrade, Serbia (2009), pp. 32.

energies be spilled across the worldly floors, never to restore itself, its sustainment in us requires that one pole of our being be sacredly shiny and the other one mystically veiled by dimness and obscurity. And so, from an intoxicating and perplexing plethora of ecstatic sounds and drumbeats, hundreds of posts flashing on top of each other, I have arrived at an enlightening simplicity, visualizing only a blue planet of ours, one and only, as it gracefully spins like a colorful cosmic carousel through the starry spaces in my eyes. And then, all of a sudden, a pyramid became magically built in an instance in my eyes looking inwardly and outwardly at the same time, as if standing on the thin line of the Way of Love like a sacred trapeze artist of a kind. To climb to its central areas, a wholly intuitive part of my mind whispered to its logical side, we need to pile concordant impressions on top of each other, combining sad with sour and vivid with sparkly, but to reach its apex from these middling areas of artistic creativeness, we need to cleverly, with great subtlety and ingenuity, introduce dialectical opposites to our creative progenies. In such a way, I have arrived at the final dialectical confrontation in this musing on its merits in the kingdom of art and beyond, readily derivable from the balance between balance and imbalance outlined many times before as the ultimate systemic balance in all aspects of life. In other words, literally taking to heart the principle that impels us to base our divine expressions on concoctions of opposites, while ignoring the natural call to couple expressions with their likes, would predispose our pyramids of artistic pieces to end up being rather unstable and shaky, as if we have strived to reach the tops without adding bricks of similarities one over another and patiently setting up its bases first. After all, had the sunflowers in Monet's *Studio in Vétheuil* not open in the very same direction in which the little girl gazing back at the viewer of the painting looks and walks, the painting surely would not have had the same moving capacity as it does. Another example that comes off the hook of my head is the music of Simon & Garfunkel wherein the aural vibe of estrangement, of alienation, of the feeling of being "lost in the superficial signs at the border of our lives"<sup>629</sup>, of distancing of the hearts, like galaxies, with every passing moment would have been done a better service to if it had not been coupled by singing in duet, the style that rather disparagingly evoked the spirit of brotherly communion. As a matter of fact, a recipe that defines when to choose to fortify the already existing emotional streams of our artistic creations and when to ingenuously contradict them will not be given to us, not even in millions of years of continued evolution of our collective artistic creativity, and it will always be up to the artist to pick one or the other when the time comes. And whatever the composition one conceives, be it musical, architectural, oratorical or gestural, there will always be apices to strengthen and nadirs to deepen with agonistic pairings of expressions as well as crests to curtail and troughs to uphold with antagonistic pairings thereof should we wish to come up with something grandiose in the end. Another example where conjugation of opposites would do a disservice to the art is the following: namely, if we were asked to pair either a comic strip or a short movie with a musical piece, guided by the principle that accentuates the merits of clashes of opposites solely, we might opt to adorn the former, not the latter, with music, the choice that would be quite unnatural in view of the fact that flowing movements of images on the movie screen obviously call for their pairing with a similar flow of music, far more than sequentially arranged static images of a comic book, despite their apparent rhythmical nature at times, unless, of course, we find an utterly inventive moment to stand at odds with convention and produce a splendidly surprising encounter of opposites. Therefore, creating extravagant crossovers for their own sake and expecting ghosts of dazzlingly aesthetic impressions to be released from them like

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<sup>629</sup> Listen to Simon & Garfunkel's *The Dangling Conversation on Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme*, Columbia (1966).

genii from a bottle is by no means the road I encourage artists in any domain of life to follow. Crossovers can often bring new life to each of the sentiments, genres or disciplines crossed, but there are cases when they can mark their death and one notable example comes from Degas' *A Woman Seated beside a Vase of Flowers*, a painting that attempted to combine a still life and a portrait in one and do so in an innovative fashion, portraying a lady that falls out of the frame, a bouquet on a tilted table and the obliqueness of the water level in the pitcher misaligned with that of the table, creating a subtly surreal impression thereby, along with possibly paying homage to an older and even more salient misalignment between the level of the ground and the wine in a titled chalice held up by a party reveler in the center of Tizian's *Bacchanal of the Andrians*. The painting depicted a dialogue between the two, the still life and the portrait, and provided a whole new way of representing both, challenging conventions along the way, but effectively, in the timeline of the history of the art of painting, killing both instead of breathing new life thereto, in spite of the brilliancy of the idea and the excellency of its execution. And that death in a more direct sense can be tied too to striking concoctions of opposites is illustratable by the personality of Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, the Soviet communist dictator who "shattered any attempt to contain him within binaries... closed and gregarious, vindictive and solicitous, a ruler both astute and blinkered, diligent and self-defeating, cynical and true-believing, a despot who was utterly charming, fastening obsessively on slights while being a precocious geostrategic thinker, an ideologue who was flexibly pragmatic, the cold calculation and the flights of absurd delusion being products of a single mind"<sup>630</sup>. At the end of the day, no recipe will ever be here to guide our creative efforts along predetermined expressional channels; rather, incessant questing, wondering and renewing both the surface and the essence of it all will be the only path that would lead to sustained brilliance in our artistic output. After all, if we were to succeed in verbally explaining the reasons why we like what we like in music or any other art, it would be a defeat like no other. It would be an epitaph to the gift from gods that art is because transcribed into words, it ceases to have the reason to exist. In that sense, the most important doctrine, the one that we should keep closer to our hearts than any other one, is the doctrine that teaches us that there are ultimately no doctrines to pursue when it comes to conceiving creative action. Thus, for instance, although the Way of Love is a principle that I invested my heart and soul to elaborate and transmit, I always emphasize that "when the road begins, the journey ends"<sup>631</sup>, and that one should not take this or any other Way for granted nor embrace it as a universal dogma, or else one's fall from grace would surely ensue; rather, one should always doubt it and be prepared for an occasion on which it will be all but applicable. Consequently, whenever we come across a recipe that unilaterally highlights a fruitful thing to do, we should be sure that there is always a place for its antipodal action to be creatively performed. For, in this world triumphant are not spirits that selectively embrace one and discard other features of reality, but those who manage to find beauty and meaning in them all, from the most puzzlingly adored to the most unequivocally disparaged ones, and bring them all into the home of their heart, which may happen to be a little tent soaked up in rain and unnoticed by anyone, but from which enticing views of Cosmos as a whole open up in their eternal bliss.

After all, as I stated before the onset of this undyingly long interlude on the juxtapositions of opposites in all striking pieces of art and personalities crafting them, each complexity in this world rests on an underlying simplicity and *vice versa*. Should scientific minds hold on to this

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<sup>630</sup> The quote is attributed to Stalin's biographer, Stephen Kotkin and paraphrased in the 21<sup>st</sup> episode of the *Music as a Mirror of History* documentary series on Shostakovich's *Symphony No.13* directed by Robert Greenberg (2016).

<sup>631</sup> Watch *Uccellacci e uccellini*, a.k.a. *The Hawks and the Sparrows*, directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini (1966).

principle in their explorations of Nature, great treasures would they arrive at on their ways. For, when multidimensional complexity becomes too high, it naturally calls for the proposition of a simplified generalization that somewhat disentangles its tight knots and brings about a sense of resolution and relief, which, on the other hand, should not be taken for granted in its simplicity, but rather incessantly probed for its complex substructure, given that simplistic principles and natural complexities have historically evolved in parallel. Hence, when we protrude from a complex dialectic collision of opposites into the daybreak of a simple light, and when this light of oneness begins to cede its place to the multitude of stars and their dizzying diversity, we may enjoy both, knowing that one without the other could not exist: the Sun without the stars nor *vice versa*, as well as oneness without the multitude nor *vice versa*.

Many times ahead of this line I have mentioned that it matters more how our expressions are delivered to the world than what they will be taken to mean according to their superficial interpretation. After all, since the largest slice of the pie of impressions created by our expressions belongs to the body language, it should come as no surprise that if I were to convey this idea orally by hopping on the lectern or the school desks at the same time, leaving the audience in a horrifying state of suspense, the point of the message would be wholly subdued to the way it was delivered. Journalistic coverage of worldly events by means of which fuel is oh so often added to the fire of chauvinistic intolerance and on much rarer occasions the spirit of reconciliation is instigated among the sides in dispute can illustrate that storytelling is oftentimes more influencing the world than the stories being told. Being aware that a manner in which we assert our ideas can be far more important for sustaining in the mission of saving the world than these ideas *per se* does not only expand the expressional repertoire of our being from mere words to every single physical movement of our ultimately dancing bodies and every single impalpable feeling or thought of ours, infinitely miniscule and evanescent, though released like a butterfly to forever and ever circle across the cosmic vastnesses, making us more complete thereby, but it also has a liberating effect on the easiness with which our spirits glide through this planetary realm. Ultimately, we come to realize that even pure silence and expressionless, blank-faced nothingness brought about in the right context and with the bright state of mind might have a more fascinating effect on others than the most elaborate concepts spoken to the wrong audience at the wrong time. Along the sideways tracks of my mind this evokes the vision an artist on the stage, of whom I read in a Williamsburg bookstore many years ago, who would at the end of the show quietly gaze at the audience with a blank expression on her face rather than smile, wave and bow in a clichéd manner, thus bringing forth the thunderously echoing effect of sheer silence and nothingness in a strangely powerful way.

Therefore, after the long interlude and hundreds of examples mentioned in it, it could be reiterated that *how* we perform our actions defines their effect on the other, interpretative horizon of their existence and is more often than not, in the divine eye overseeing it all, more significant than *what* we have performed. And yet, if we look close enough, we would realize that the beauty of *how* we do things that we do, the subtle waves of the endless and all-pervasive metaphysical ocean of sheer divinity upon which all our actions float, is sustained on permanently asking *why*, on pondering over the deepest questions that underlie our existence. For, it is the pillars of gracious metaphysical values and philosophical grounds that all the visible achievements of ours in this world stand upon. But, then again, to sustain this innate wonder that constantly asks *why*, that turns every detail of the world of our experience into a crossroad, finding crisscrossed paths of unforeseeable past and wondrous future therein, of divine origins and earthly beauty, we do not only need to perceive ourselves and all the magnificent creations

around us - in the spirit of the long interlude that is now behind us – as similar intersections of diametrically opposite stimuli, but we also need to get involved in converting the world to forms more phenomenal and wonderful than it has ever assumed, the scientist in me reminds me. We need to be driven by passion to ingrain ever more of the dream-inspiring neon glow in it with dedication to selflessly use the practical skills that our beings are endowed with. It is thereby that we draw a full circle, from inspirational human values and dreams to outlines of the reality and back to the deepest ends of the alchemical pots of our minds where even greater visions, ideas and dreams would be stirred. It goes without saying that in order to be successful in these practical endeavors of ours, we need to stay orderly, pragmatic, cooperative, objective and controlled, and thus complement our nurturing their very opposites in terms of disorderliness, spirituality, solitariness, solipsism, contradictoriness and intuitive goings with the flow, so that the creative forces brewing in us do not fly out the window. In other words, we need to be firmly focused on *what* and yet incessantly nourish imaginative freedoms to turn the visible products of our creativity upside down and curiously subject their metaphysical roots to profound scrutiny.

I, for one, have remained faithful to this balance between the pragmatic and the aesthetic, between *what* and *how*. These, as a reminder, are not the *what* and the *how* implied in the following Wittgenstein's ontological remark, where *why* (everything exists) disguised itself as *what* and *what/that* took the form of *how*: "It is not how things are in the world that is mystical, but *that* it exists"<sup>632</sup>. Rather, these are the two complementary questions springing to life after the ontological mysteries are come to peace with in one's head and turned into a whirlpool of ambiguities that drives the limitless spin of creative energies within one. These are the questions tied not to understanding, the absorption of meaning, but to a later and far more complicated step, pertaining to the giving of the semantic sunlight awakened inside of one to the world, marking the grandiose phase transition from seeing to being, from observing to acting, from comprehending to shining. Correspondingly, to maintain this balance, with scientific rigor I have dedicated my time and effort to creating things of importance for the building of an ever more magnificent structural order of the world that surrounds us and that sparks the flame of wonder, spirituality and ever more fabulous visions enlightening the spaces of our minds, while with the artistic passion glowing inside me I have never forgotten to enwrap it all in expressions and thoughts that radiate with marvelous aesthetics and beauty and that will inspire generations to come. For, I have always thought that without arts this world would swiftly become drowned in an animalistic muddle of selfish and bloodthirstily competitive relationships, bringing our civilization on the brink of its existence. Scientists, engineers and others dedicated to the use of technological tools to building the world at its palpable levels, but being ignorant to the crucial importance of investing in arts, which helps in sustaining the very world that they have built on its invisible and intangible foundations, have thus always seemed blunted to me. Science and technologies do inconspicuously tame the animal that man is, but their tendency to spark Wonder and ignore Love, two of the central pillars that sustain the edifices of creative human being in this life, predisposes them to give rise to rather tilted and skewed towers of knowledge. The role that emotions, aspirations and, more than anything, Love play in guiding the growth of these Babylonian castles of science has thus been so greatly ignored by the leading scientists that they have begun to resemble cold Kafkaesque castles inhabited by thoroughly alienated and profoundly unhappy souls fallen prey to the Orwellian curse of "squeezing you empty and then filling you with ourselves"<sup>633</sup>, wholly seized by a sense of authority towering ominously and

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<sup>632</sup> See Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Line 6.44, Routledge, London, UK (1918).

<sup>633</sup> See George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four: A Novel*, Secker & Warburg, London, UK (1949).

gloomily above their heads, the authority that they unquestioningly obey rather than inventively dissent against. Having witnessed myriads of academically affiliated scientific souls how they drag their spirits across the university hallways, droopingly, like mean-spirited goblins, I have come to be certain that everyday incentives to enrich one's intellect with flickers of aesthetic and ethical insights, which theologies and arts have held in abundance in their arms, are absolutely vital and irreplaceable in ensuring the success of our streaming towards the destinations of complete, emotional and spiritual intelligence that stands at the basis of thinking that produces not misery, but radiant happiness. After all, by recollecting Paul Dirac's advice that "if one is working from the point of view of getting beauty into one's equation... one is on a sure line of progress"<sup>634</sup> and Joseph Brodsky's thought that "aesthetics is the mother of ethics", among innumerable other philosophical, scientific and common celebrations of divine and timeless beauty akin to the one Dostoyevsky's Prince Myshkin believed to be the force that would "save the world"<sup>635</sup>, one has no intellectual resort to escape to from its graceful grasp that sets itself deep into the foundations of one's worldviews, be they the most rigorously scientific one could conceive of. On the other hand, the very fact that science itself instills humility and aesthetical appreciation of the reality in us has indicated to me that science *per se* stands forth as an art of its kind. Vladimir Nabokov claimed that patches of color on the wings of a butterfly are more aesthetically appreciable than any human paintings, and innumerable intellectuals nurturing a mutual respect for science and arts could take on a stance that endows scientific articles with a superior aesthetic character compared to traditional human arts, evoking distantly Gregory Bateson's goddess of arts coming across a scientific scheme left behind the god of science, at whom she would earlier "spit out insults in a quite unladylike manner saying that he was indeed a thing, subhuman, and nothing but a small boy interested only in silly noisy toys"<sup>636</sup>. But then, "one day the engineer carelessly left one of his maps beside the track and the lady found it. Gingerly, holding it only with the tips of her fingers, she picked it up. She handled it as if it had been left there by the devil. It was curiosity that led her to open the map, unwilling to see what it might contain and therefore not really looking at its details. Looking at this from a distance through half-shut eyes, she was surprised to find that thus half-seen, the document was in itself beautiful"<sup>637</sup>. Moreover, looking at the scientific models as sets of logically intertwined metaphors created by human minds and Nature in their co-creational dialogue, as in accordance with Albert Einstein's abovementioned message that "physical concepts are free creations of the human mind, and are not, however it may seem, uniquely determined by the external world"<sup>638</sup>, makes us glimpse the artistic nature of theirs, speaking in favor of an entwinement of the scientific and the artistic traits that are impossible to untangle. It has, therefore, been my decision to combine in my work the three greatest cultural forces that elevated humanity from its animalistic grounds to something more sublime, albeit still far from the firmament of Heaven: art, theosophy and science. Celebrating their entanglement is what I have decided to dedicate my lifelong career to. And walking along this majestic and glossy road of the Glass Bead Game, as I love to call it, I have never intended to ask for any monetary or materialistic rewards in return for my years of selfless dedication to edifying the wondrousness of worldviews of people of the planet through the musical and literary works and the philosophical discourses of mine. To avoid

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<sup>634</sup> See Paul Dirac's The Evolution of the Physicist's Picture of Nature, *Scientific American* 208 (5) (1963).

<sup>635</sup> See Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Idiot*, Prosveta, Belgrade, Serbia (1869).

<sup>636</sup> See Gregory Bateson's Allegory, *CoEvolution Quarterly* 44 - 46 (Spring 1978).

<sup>637</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>638</sup> See Albert Einstein's and Leopold Infeld's *The Evolution of Physics*, Simon & Schuster, New York, NY (1938).

the fate of the dewy-eyed apprentice witch, Kiki<sup>639</sup>, who lost her magical flying abilities after she started using them for living, and only retrieved them when she took off to save a carrot-haired boy, Tombo, who hung helplessly from the Spirit of Enlightenment, a broken dirigible that crashed into the city's clock-tower, I have deliberately decided never to engage in artistic creation with the purpose of monetarily profiting from it. Rather, I have been aware that my literary and musical endeavors need to remain selflessly performed activities, sacrificial to the fullest of their extents, never asking for any rewards in return for the hard work invested in their making, in order to bear truly lifesaving fruits, just as the animated tale about Kiki, one of my most beloved anime characters, has demonstrated. For this reason, I gave a vow to myself, before the altar of the church of my heart and under its bells that toll for thee and thee only, to always protect my works from being shoved into the toxic web of commodification, commercialization and economic interest, where their wings would be tied down like those of a butterfly caught in a gooey cobweb. For, created they were by intentions as pure as the mountain streams, with absolutely no financial or pedigree-wise profitability on their creator's mind, and so must they remain in this pure state for as long as they are being shared between the earthly souls sunken in the state of summery starriness, of bedazzlement by the ever-present beauties of the world, of trancelike inebriation by the nectar of theophanic poetry, of supersensitive softheartedness that tumbles and turns and shudders their insides like a bumboat in the rough southern seas. In other words, as pointed out by Arthur Schopenhauer, "To be useless and unprofitable is one of the characteristics of works of genius... all other human works exist only for the maintenance and relief of our existence; only the former exist for their own sake, and are to be regarded in this sense as the flower of existence"<sup>640</sup>. These musings of the artist's philosopher echo the norm I have cordially lived up to, "One way the marketplace, the other way the roots of the beautiful intellect", having recognized that the nature of reality is such that so long as we evade the traps of mammon that open up ravines into the world of materialism populated by parched spirits and dead souls, we become spontaneously ascended into sublime states of consciousness and modes of existence. Also, by being immersed in the spiritual world, far, far away from any materialistic considerations, anything we do affects the essence of life rather than its surface; in turn, by beautifying the world at its invisible foundations, the spiritual foundations of the beautifier will be enlightened by Nature along the way. And in further turn, this spiritual purity of our being nurtured thereby predisposes us to maintain a keen, phenomenally intuitive eye for the moment so as to masterfully conduct our practical endeavors in this world. To many people it was a surprise when Wassily Kandinsky, the pioneer of abstract, purely spiritual art, announced in his final years that he preferred his art to have been called "concrete"<sup>641</sup>, and a similar shock awaits any purely practical mindset upon becoming aware of the infinity of the extent to which spiritual predispositions can serve as guides toward tangible discoveries. Finally, our thirst to enrich the world with practical inventions and thus bring happiness to the lives of people around us naturally infuses our being with the nectar of godly spiritedness, boosting our artistic sensibility along the way and closing the feedback loop running from the heart to the hands and back. Of course, it takes a lot of courage and freeness from ego for an artist to admit in his works that a neglect of practical efforts for the sake of creating art and art only is undeniably devastating for

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<sup>639</sup> Watch Kiki's Delivery Service. Directed by Hayao Miyazaki, Studio Ghibli (1989).

<sup>640</sup> The quote was found in Philip Freeman's *Running the Voodoo Down: The Electric Music of Miles Davis*, Backbeat Books, San Francisco, CA (2005), pp. 205.

<sup>641</sup> See Harriett Watts' Arp, Kandinsky, and the Legacy of Jakob Böhme, In: *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting, 1890 – 1985*, edited by Edward Weisberger, Abbeville Press (1986), pp. 239.

one's prosperity, the point notably made by Satyajit Ray in *The Music Room*, which is why most pieces of art have adopted rather narrow views, advocating the way of the grasshopper, not of the ant from the famous Aesop's fable and potentiating the importance of abstractions over practicality, even though one without the other, at the end of the day, cannot be imagined. Although shortsighted observers may be impelled to see artists celebrating practicality in their works and scientists talking fondly of the importance of artistic senses for the prolific scientific activity as shooting themselves in the leg, so to speak, a farseeing, holistic eye would glimpse a true care for oneself in such glorification of the importance of one's diametrical opposites. Here I am too, telling you that practical achievements enable ever more thunderous artistic voices to be heard ever louder and in ever more distant corners of the world, contributing to the wellness and the growth of our spirits, whereby constant feeding of our artistic senses is the best guide for our creative engagement in the scientific enterprise. As you can guess, this leads us to conclude that one and the other in us, artfulness and practicality, are best fed together. The story of my scientific and artistic creativity has consequently been all about the dance of one around the other whereby excess of one results in awakening of the other and putting the former to temporary sleep, as if the two are the epitomes of daytime and nighttime or of the black and the white on Tai-Chi-Tu insignia. That is, to shake the overly ordered constellations of thoughts settled down through excessive exhibitions of analytical reasoning by plunging into the waters of music and poetry, and then to bring order into overly emotively dispersed interiors of the mind when the artistic winds of passion have begun to flood the river of my thoughts and crash the windmills of logic and reason that were to subdue its course and derive pragmatic results from it. Henceforth, despite my devotion to arts and writing these very words, I have never forgotten the need to create something palpable and pragmatic out of my creative endeavors, and my professional devotion to synthetic aspects of the materials science, which has been the only aspect of my creativity rewarded with true earnings, serves as an evidence for that.

And so, as the years passed by, I have found myself looking back at the tiny thread of my endeavors in science, glimpsing the train of my creativeness in it journeying along parallel lines. One of them has been practical and the other one fundamental, although at times wandering off from its strictly scientific, empirical grounds to authentic metaphysical realms upon which, however, all things perceptible rest. For, I have known that plucking the fruits, spraying the stem, decorating the branches and protecting them from bad weather is nowhere as important for the thriving of any tree in life, including that of our knowledge, as watering its roots and feeding the invisible soil from which it draws its lifesaving saps. Asked by his nephew why he had not devoted his life to chess, an art for which he had been extraordinarily talented, Apostolos Doxiadis' Uncle Petros, a retired mathematician by occupation, says that the only lives worth living are those lived "in line with its fundamental axioms, and chess is not among them – only math"<sup>642</sup>. Accordingly, one hemisphere of my creative life has been a shrine dedicated to exploration of the most essential epistemological and ontological concepts that lie at the invisible bases of the cloud-piercing towers of human knowledge and being, respectively, while the other fraction of it has been a holy factory churning out practical ideas that would edify these visible emanations of human knowledge and being. In other words, fundamentality and practicality have occupied an equally important place in my creative endeavors, including the scientific ones. So, for example, my research on reverse micelles yielded new magnetic materials applicable in electrical engineering and biomedicine, while at the same time my insatiable thirst to ask fundamental questions made me reach quite a few profound insights regarding the mechanisms

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<sup>642</sup> See Apostolos Doxiadis' *Uncle Petros and Goldbach's Conjecture*, Plato, Belgrade, Serbia (1992), pp. 126.

by which these ultrafine emulsion entities interact with the particles crystallizing in their watery interiors. As if arising from my inclination to act as a renegade paradigm shifter in any setting I'd find myself, my fundamental findings showed that the established model in the field was far from correct. Namely, although it was believed that reverse micelles rigidly impose their size and shape on those of the particles growing inside of them, I demonstrated that the effect is mutual and that in as much as the micelles act as templates for the particles, the growth of particles affects the structure of the micelles<sup>643</sup>, somewhat similar to all physical interactions conceivable, from atomistic to social ones, wherein unilateral exertion of effects is more of a rare exception than a rule. And yet, all of this time, I never ceased to diligently work on optimizing synthesis protocols, knowing that practical and basic results in science and life alike come best to us when they hold each other by the hand. Then, during my work on the chemistry of cholesterol, I succeeded in obtaining the first stable dispersions of uniformly shaped cholesterol crystals by precipitation from solution and at the same time showed that surface charge effects, controllable by means of ionic strength, can be manipulated with to prevent or force aggregation of these particles<sup>644</sup>. It was an important finding for the field of medicine, as it clearly indicated that high salt intake leads to a more facile formation of atherosclerotic plaque and proneness to disease. My subsequent involvement in the research aimed at growing artificial tooth enamel yielded a plenty of attractive particle morphologies; at the same time, though, it resulted in shattering of the dominant paradigm in the field. According to it, certain protein species that guide the growth of extraordinarily elongated apatite crystals of enamel had a role to block specific faces of the growing crystallites. However, I managed to demonstrate that rather than being blocking agents of a kind, these polypeptides act as bridges that deliver ions to the crystallizing surfaces<sup>645</sup>, all the while being moved by the grandiose view of the Golden Gate Bridge from my lab window and Friedrich Nietzsche's words: "Man is but a bridge between ape and superman". Finally, my stay in the pharmaceutical research realm has been crowned not only by adding bricks to the towering efforts on behalf of the scientific community as a whole in the direction of (a) creating drug delivery platforms for oral intake of otherwise only intravenously administrable drugs, (b) creating more sophisticated carriers of antibiotics for the localized treatment of bone infection and (c) creating "spaceship"-like vehicles for the transport of drugs across the blood-brain barrier and the targeting of tumors nested behind it, but also by inducing systemic and fundamental principles based on precious research insights collected along the way. Accordingly, during this whole time, the number of published research papers versus that of released philosophical and other critical review papers which I authored, at least in the peer-review realm, has been well balanced. At the end of 2014, this ratio between analytical, research articles and synthetic, review ones was 38/40; two years earlier, at the end of 2012, it was 30/30; finally, four years earlier, at the end of 2010, it was 20/20, which is nothing but a sign of perfect vision, and vision *per se* is, as we all know, perfect only insofar as it is lateral and contextual and not only finely focused and tunnel-like. For, holding eyes on the way of the whole and on the way of the small

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<sup>643</sup> Vuk Uskoković, Miha Drogenik – "Reverse Micelles: Inert Nano-Reactors or Physico-Chemically Active Guides of the Capped Reactions", *Advances in Colloid and Interface Science* 133 (1) 23 – 34 (2007).

<sup>644</sup> Vuk Uskoković, Egon Matijević – "Uniform Particles of Pure and Silica Coated Cholesterol", *Journal of Colloid and Interface Science* 315 (2) 500 – 511 (2007); Vuk Uskoković – "Insights into Morphological Nature of Precipitation of Cholesterol", *Steroids* 73, 356 – 369 (2008); Vuk Uskoković – "Surface Charge Effects Involved in the Control of Stability of Sols Comprising Uniform Cholesterol Particles", *Materials and Manufacturing Processes* 23 (6) 620 – 623 (2008).

<sup>645</sup> Vuk Uskoković, Wu Li, Stefan Habelitz – "Amelogenin as a Promoter of Nucleation and Crystal Growth of Apatite", *Journal of Crystal Growth* 316, 106 – 117 (2011).

has to be evened up, lest we transform into a holist blind to the little beauties that flap their wings right in front of our noses or a narrow-minded specialist confined in the tiny bubble of his own interests, if the former or the latter prevail, respectively. Henceforth, our minds should indeed be transformed into stellar ballerinas on the stage, incessantly pirouetting due to wonder and amazement over it all that surrounds them, while at the same time never losing sight of the starry patterns gazed at and researched with great carefulness, devotion and scrutiny. For, if the Way of Love teaches us something, it is certainly the need to fly away in fancy at all times in order to be fully present right here, right now, and *vice versa* – to water the roots of empathy that bind us to the creatures of the world in order to be able to retain angelic wings that enable our astral travels to remote realms of blissful feeling and thought. “Naively, she searches in her memory for the *why* of present times; enigmatically, she looks at you”<sup>646</sup>, Paul Gauguin wrote in his diary in an attempt to describe the directness and the mystique, the wide-awake attentiveness and the dreamy absentmindedness, the sense of being here and the sense of being dissipated everywhere that were combined quietly in the gazes of Tahitian muses he so avidly painted, a concoction of intimacy and remoteness that is, according to the Way of Love, a prerequisite for the infinite cosmic energies to be transmitted to the nearby souls. And when I look at the planets of the solar system aligned on an imaginary thread spanning from the Sun to the Kuiper belt and notice that all of them are reddish except the Earth and the two farthest ones, Uranus and Neptune, I think of it being yet another astral sign out of favor of the way of being that becomes exceedingly blended with a star in its vicinity, maintaining an insufficient dose of distance with respect to it, thus losing its cool and becoming red in the face, so to say, and in favor of the way of being that sustains its realness and aliveness - like the artist standing eye to eye with the goddess of Venus de Milo and responding with a “nay” to the disbelief of the buddies of his fancy who poke him with the question of how he come he does not feel low<sup>647</sup> - by being as remote as these two most distant planets circling the Sun, by floating through the melancholic blue of one’s fancy, being far, far away as much as being present right here, right now and blended with the soul of another person and of the world as a whole. Thus, we should be sure that it is always a balance of seemingly contradictory and not balanceable at all that presents the ultimate Gordian knot in life that we are all to unknot if we are to become true warriors of light, Peter Pans on flying carpets or angels with balls of light held firmly and lovingly in our arms.

This balance between practicality and fundamentality that pervades all creative human endeavors explains why I rejoice when I recognize grains of two character traits among scholars: laziness and rebelliousness. Whereas most other mentors and supervisors would try their best to sanction and eradicate any signs of these personality traits in their mentees or subordinates, when I catch a student pensively gazing through the window for hours or slyly evading hands-on work, I surprisingly praise them for that instead of criticizing them. On one hand, I adopt the teaching approach stemming from the grounds of unconditional love, the same one through which my creativity during childhood and adolescence flourished, neatly depicted by the Zen story in which the master quietly and lightly leaped over the sleeping disciple who was meant to guard the shrine and who was stunned to hear the words “sleep, son, sleep” instead of a harsh punishment that he expected to receive instead, probably along the line of the Christ’s asking his three apostles who fell asleep and left him to agonize alone in the Garden of Gethsemane, “What, could ye not watch with me one hour?” (Matthew 26:40) For, the greatest educational gift one could give to disciples in my world is the feeling of a seed of devotion and enlightening

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<sup>646</sup> See Ronald Alley’s Gauguin, Hamlyn House, Feltham, UK (1961), pp. 16.

<sup>647</sup> Listen to Television’s Venus on Marquee Moon, Elektra (1977).

responsibility starting to warmheartedly sprout from within the depths of their hearts upon recognizing the scope of selfless sacrifices one has invested in opening the roads to happiness in front of their feet and launching them to the sublime skies of divine thought. Besides, it has been my conscious decision in this life to bring smiles to children's faces and comfort to their hearts rather than to make them sad and disappointed, regardless of whether the latter emotions may be more instructive to them sometimes, and I plan not to retreat by even a step from this position I have vowed to hold. Moreover, considering the merits of moderate laziness, I indeed believe that had it not been for faineance that prompted the ancient philosophers, Greek ones in particular, from which the ball of yarn of the Western philosophy began to unwind, to sit in the shade and escape from working in the sun, they would have never arrived at gorgeous insights about the nature of reality. In fact, if we were to trace the origin of the word "school" as the site of education and discovery, we would eventually come to Greek σκηολε, i.e., *skhole*, which means "spare time, leisure, rest, ease, idleness"<sup>648</sup> and which neatly describes the value that the ancient Greeks found in reluctance to work. Although the development of science and our civilization in general demands obedient and hard-working edifiers of the existing towers of knowledge, it is also in constant need of those who know how to revise and scrutinize the stability of metaphysical foundations upon which we stand, which accounts for artists, philosophers, theologians and other free thinkers and creators of the soulful and intangible. But to be able to insightfully inspect these foundations, not only are lazy retreats into fading loci to contemplate in peace needed, but investing a dose of courageous rebelliousness, of which more will be said later in the text, in our ways of being and thought is needed too. After all, the very words "groundbreaking", "breakthrough" and "revolutionary" that are routinely used to describe important discoveries in science signify the act of going against the streams of worldviews that have been established as paradigmatic and undeniable in the scientific circles. To succeed in this marvelous task, however, intellectual renegades, those who bravely, uprightly and selflessly question it all and rarely follow the mainstream, most of the time being at odds with their peers and authorities, are required. In that sense, to be boldly opposed on the podium of science is the sign of a true victory for our teaching approaches and our steering a little ship of science and arts over the immense seas of the mysteries of Nature. Or, as Alfred North Whitehead noticed, "In formal logic, a contradiction is the signal of a defeat: but in the evolution of real knowledge it marks the first step in progress towards a victory"<sup>649</sup>. A genuine scientific mindset is therefore the one that quite comfortably swims in the ocean of ambiguities, heartily contradicting its own inferences every now and then, knowing that eternal doubt and incessant adventurous questioning is the fuel for the progress of scientific thought and our entire civilization on its wings. One such frame of mind, my own included, could readily sympathize with the following words by Edmond Jabès: "My work has often been said to be subversive. If it has appeared so, it is simply because, tormented by my uncertainties and determined to overcome them, I have shamelessly and without hesitation exhibited my contradictions"<sup>650</sup>. And yet, "without being torn by the pangs of inner discord, nothing enduring would have ever been begotten"<sup>651</sup>, if I may paraphrase the already quoted thought of Erwin Schrödinger. For, a sense of insecurity and chaste wonder has provided that magic carpet on which sublime human minds were let fly away

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<sup>648</sup> See the definition of School (n.1), Online Etymology Dictionary, retrieved from <https://www.etymonline.com/word/school> (2019).

<sup>649</sup> See Alfred North Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World*, The Free Press, New York, NY (1925), pp. 187.

<sup>650</sup> See Edmond Jabès' *The Book of Margins*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL (1993), pp. 175.

<sup>651</sup> See Erwin Schrödinger's *Mind and Matter*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK (1944), pp. 100 - 101.

into a world of visionary fancy and derive blueprints for beautification of their milieus; or, as Alfred North Whitehead would have simply put it, “without adventure, civilization is in full decay”<sup>652</sup>. At the same time, this English mathematician and philosopher openly outlined that the healthy progress in science depends not only on excellence in analytical and experimental works, but in brilliantly conducted synthetic, philosophical and “prophetic” studies too; for, “the higher your structure is to be, the deeper must be its foundation”, as Saint Augustine observed in one of his sermons<sup>653</sup>.

Sticking to this norm of well-balanced *what* and *how*, that is, of the need to tell things of palpable importance and yet always to support our words and deeds on invisible foundations of love and devotion to Nature and creatures of the world is what makes the art of being a stellar teacher, the one who sheds stardust of sheer grace and invisibly shows the way to his disciples, to sprout within ourselves. All of those who enter the starry training of one such masterful teacher will emerge out of it and into the fresh air of independence while walking along triumphant and spiritually rejuvenating ways, without even being aware of why that is so. On the way there, one will craft beautiful minds, those whose sunrays of attention incessantly revolve, like starships, around the balance of logical, analytical and intellectual on one side and prayerful, intuitive, visionary and imaginative on the other. With one of their hemispheres being insightful and penetrable with its laser-like intellectual focus, and the other hemisphere carelessly flying in fancy and shedding it all with the stardust of loving grace, minds of the man become surrounded by the wizardly powerful aureole. In such a way, minds become reminiscent of the bridges on which two monks, allegedly Chuang-Tzu and Hui-Tzu, stood and argued, the former judgmentally claiming to know how the fish in the river below them are happy, and the latter non-judgmentally saying how one could never know if the fish are happy and remaining happier that way. One part of our minds will then always be busy building concepts and models out of the astonishing impressions that our experiential reality flashes with, whereas the other one will plunge in the city lights and leisurely glide with them while riding on some starry carpets of fanciful imaginations. While the former, intellectual hemisphere will be incessantly shrinking the ocean of reality and pushing it into a microcosmic bottle of our mind, the latter one will work in the direction of broadening our views by concluding to it all that “God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform”<sup>654</sup>, erasing all the traces of judgmental limitations that planes of even the most sublime contemplative flights leave on the sky of our mind, keeping it blue, translucent, untainted and free from the clouds of thought, and opening the way for the sun of our soul to meditatively wash the entire surface of our being with its divine light. In the incessant dialectical confrontations between the two poles, in the dynamic balance in which a static equilibrium is never reached, but emphases always flow from one side to another, lies the guide that makes us gallop towards some brilliant destinations in the adventurous quest for treasures that our mind engages itself in.

To forgetfully erase in meditative bliss and yet to adeptly edify with an analytical lucidity, to wipe things off the whiteboard of our mind and yet to relentlessly write new and exciting things on it, to incessantly forgive and thus become ever angelically lighter like a feather and yet to build the firm and stony foundations of faith that would enroot us in earthly reigns so as to spread the branches of lovingness throughout the world are all complementary microcosmic operations that ought to be precisely balanced in our heads if we are to build the states of

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<sup>652</sup> See Alfred North Whitehead’s *Adventures of Ideas*, The Free Press, Florence, MA (1933).

<sup>653</sup> See Sermon 19:2 by Saint Augustine of Hippo (around 400 AD).

<sup>654</sup> This verse is originally found in William Cowper’s poem *Light Shining out of Darkness*.

ultimate harmony therein. For, without being sure in something, without believing firmly that we could be a channel for the transmission of a divinest energy to the world, that we are a superstar on the world's stage, we would never be able to attract immense amounts of cosmic energy which surrounds us and become a brightly shining star of spirit, while on the other hand being overly certain about our knowledge, shutting the gates to the inflow of different worldviews into the pot of our mind and blindly indoctrinating others with our own limited perspectives on life would develop a creatively deadening stiffness of our spirit and would bring the train of our imaginative being to a halt. Complete freeness from certainty and a total neglect of the need to doubt, wonder and be ultimately uncertain about it all, always leaving space for a more supreme alternative explanation than the one we may be holding on to are both extreme stances that distance us in the long run from the balance of certainty and uncertainty which we should strive to attain as the key to truly productive thinking. All our senses, including sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste and the very reflective thinking which according to Johann Wolfgang Goethe "is no more and no less an organ of perception than the eye or ear - just as the eye perceives colors and the ear sounds, so thinking perceives ideas"<sup>655</sup>, exert an equilibrium between incessantly exploring the environment and accepting perceptions with confidence, neither fixing themselves into frozen, unchanging and essentially blinded visions of the world, uneager to explore anything any further, nor renouncing any judgments and thus plunging into another form of blindness, facing thereby immediate existential threats for the integrity of our being in the world. In view of this, we could be sure that certainty and uncertainty are yet another dualistic polarity that resembles the black and white fields in the Tai-Chi-Tu symbol, not only accentuating and flowing into each other, but also lying within each other's heart. For, as Ludwig Wittgenstein noticed, "a perfect doubt would not be in doubt at all"<sup>656</sup>, paying our attention to the fact that even the firmest doubt always springs from foundations of presumed and unquestioned beliefs or ideologies, while on the other hand, common sense reasoning can tell us that every well-affirmed knowledge was discovered and substantiated during the process of exploration, which at its heart holds questions and doubt. The very concept of faith, moreover, can exist only inasmuch as its subjects are shrouded by the veil of mystery. This insight must have prompted one of the companions of St. Francis, Blessed Giles of Assisi to proclaim, "I have known one who saw God from such a great proximity that he lost all faith"<sup>657</sup>, and Friedrich Hölderlin to add the following: "Because they are so near, the present gods, I must be as if they were far away, and shrouded in clouds must their name be to me"<sup>658</sup>. In other words, the objects of our faith are implicitly presumed to be unstable and uncertain; what is perfectly certain does not require one to have faith in. This is how we come to a definitive insight that faith can only flourish on the grounds of doubt and that, inversely, doubt can only emerge from the grounds of firm faith in specific propositions, unquestioned and taken for granted in the given logical framework of thought. With this cyclic vision of causes and effects merging into one swirling in our heads, we could evoke Kahlil Gibran saying that "doubt is a pain too lonely to know that faith is his twin brother". All in all, the firmest knowledge can thus be seen as resting on more or less shaky

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<sup>655</sup> See Rudolf Steiner's *Goethean Science*, Mercury Press, Rochester, NY (1883).

<sup>656</sup> See Ludwig Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*; Translated by G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, Wiley-Blackwell, New York, NY (1951), pp. 18. On another occasion, Wittgenstein phrased the very same thought differently, saying, "Doubt comes after belief" (Watch Wittgenstein directed by Derek Jarman (1993)), which, for the sake of clarity, I could rephrase into "Doubt comes atop belief", meaning that any meaningful doubt could stem strictly from the foundations of premises assumed to be doubtlessly valid.

<sup>657</sup> See Béla Hamvas' *Anthologia Humana: 5000 Years of Wisdom*, Dereta, Belgrade, Serbia (1948), pp. 109.

<sup>658</sup> See Durs Grünbein's *The Bars of Atlantis*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, NY (2010), pp. 255.

grounds of its votaries' faith in the validity of improvable propositions sustaining it, whereas "questions are remarks"<sup>659</sup>, as Wallace Stevens noticed, since each expression of doubt is always underlain by one's steady embracement of specific axioms of thought. Furthermore, we should know that the profoundest metaphysical and theological ideas share the fate of unproven mathematical conjectures for which, according to Turing's principle of undecidability, it cannot be determined if they are provable or not. For, only when an idea levitates before our minds like a rainbow, appearing readily seizable while at the same time possessing an untouchable distantness, as if being a veritable embodiment of the Way of Love, can we know that it has a shade of greatness to it, going along with its ability to foster our faith in the incessant communication between divine Nature and our minds, as flexible and undogmatic as it can be. In other words, the greater the body of knowledge, the broader the ocean of mystery that it conceals within itself and evokes upon the attempts to comprehend it. As we see now with crystal clarity, knowledge and ignorance flow to and fro each other over the course of time, vitally depending on one another as the island of knowledge surrounded by an ever greater sea of the unknown expands across the landscapes that occupy the interiors of our mental spheres.

As we proceed along this river of progressive thought, we resemble a canoeist who alternately paddles to the left and to the right and yet advances forward along, more or less, a straight line. "Truisms have the disadvantage that by dulling the senses they obscure the truth"<sup>660</sup>, Heinz von Foerster said, evoking the image of Ouroboros, the alchemical dragon or a snake that bites its own tail, levitating above our heads like a halo and reminding us that even the most truthful findings would be transformed into their opposites if we were to cease to constantly subject their validity to doubtful reevaluations. The reality we reside in is such that moving inertly along a single direction is a guaranteed recipe for disaster and, as Newton's first law of motion states, if an entity is left on its own, untouched and physically unquestioned by its surrounding, so to say, it will continue to unresponsively move down the same path. Our survival and wellbeing thus crucially depend on willingness and the ability to ceaselessly subject our linear streams of thought to crossfires of views that question its validity and subject it to potential pointlessness. For, dogmatic rigidity and resistance to alternate our beliefs, be they shallowest or the deepest, in the blink of an eye is what accounts for being on the road to abyss, in the intellectual and, more often than not, physical terms because a failure in the former domain can easily lead to calamities in the latter one. Or, as Béla Hamvas pointed out in the course of his critique of the lofty and disdainful puritanical insistence on having gotten hold of the absolute and the most correct set of morals, which everyone else is to abide to, "The puritan is an aggressive man and his aggressiveness is largely supported by his believing that he has found the only right means of living... the bloodiest battles and the most horrific revolutions are to thank themselves to the puritan man. And all of that because he, himself, a miser, has found a principle instead of God"<sup>661</sup>. On the other hand, flexibly inquiring about the soundness of the direction of thought along which our ideas travel instates a dialogical, egoless frame of mind in us, the one that finds itself to be merely a corporeal computer of the universal consciousness, free to incessantly contradict itself internally and thus bring about the wisest solutions to puzzles arising in front of one in the course of one's goodhearted quests for the treasures of life. "Human head", after all, as pointed out by the French painter, Francis Picabia, "is round so thought can often

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<sup>659</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 92.

<sup>660</sup> See Heinz von Foerster's Perception of the Future and the Future of the Perception, *Instructional Science* 1 (1) S31 – 43 (1972).

<sup>661</sup> See Béla Hamvas' *The Philosophy of Wine*, Tardis, Belgrade, Serbia.

change the direction”<sup>662</sup>. What is most certain, therefore, is that a cloud of uncertainty, doubtfulness and incessant questioning over whether we are travelling on the right path will always surround our thoughts as we take on a balance between judgingly solidifying the towers of our knowledge and non-judgingly letting them weaken and be rearranged under the force of creative scrutiny. For, judgment and non-judgment, like all other profound polarities in life, seem incompatible and only by dialectically jumping from one to the other can we find a dynamic equilibrium between the two; hence, the metaphor of a canoe paddler. Like music, intrinsically containing interspersed moments of sound and silence, so is with the harmoniously flowing human mind in this world. It likewise does engrain discrete judgmental beats during which the substance of reality is solidified in a single conformation, although always preceded and succeeded by the moments of silence whereby the whole infinity of possibilities is sent out to fly in the air. For, claiming one’s complete freeness from the grip of a judgmental attitude is, as the abovementioned Zen story about the two fishermen discussing whether one can know if the fish below the bridge on which they stand are happy or not subtly tells us, a misnomer like no other, for judging about one’s own judgeless nature presents a judgment in itself. Hence, when I glimpsed a message tagged onto the pavement of San Francisco’s North Beach, saying how “there are forgiving spirits and unforgiving son-of-a-bitches”, I could not help but laugh at the author’s falling into the same trap in which liberals who aggressively and intolerantly impose their liberalism and are thus, in essence, all but genuinely liberal have found themselves. For, to a truly forgiving person, all people in her eyes appear chaste and beautiful, including those ensnared by the snakes of burdensomely judgmental thought. Likewise, when people come up to me with the phrase, “Worry not, for I will judge you not”, I cannot help seeing that as an epistemological nonsense *par excellence* because not only is the very fact that one sees another a proof of a judgment of a kind having occurred inside of one’s head, but if our brains were to suddenly stop forming any of the millions of fine judgments, as they do in each second of their existence, we would quickly become first mentally dead and then shortly after that also physically dead, which is why the given saying should be more meaningfully rephrased to “I won’t put a blame on you”. In that sense, it is not ceasing to judge, that is, bring decisions that spring forth as answers to our innate wonder about it all so as to steer the ship of our spirit across the waters of the world, but judging in the most blissful light possible, something that requires a lifetime of training to rewire the hardware of our brains, including their subconscious departments wherein the majority of these delicate judgments that parallel our elementary perceptions occur, that comprises the essence of our transformation into an enlightened sentience. For, as the tiny thread of sane thinking that runs through the history of human race can teach us, the mental appearance of others as selfish and mean, carrying forth the soul-corroding feelings of hatred and vengefulness, is best healed not by cutting the train of judgmental thoughts and waiting for the river of time to slowly cover it with the waves of forgiveness, but by contrasting it with the images of the given others that draw attention to goodness that they must have concealed within or have expressed in the past, that is, by confronting judgments that highlight maliciousness with those that accentuate benevolence and beauty of the things or creatures judged about. Also, as the key message of a Brazilian movie from 2002, *City of God*, tells us, in a world wherein everyone’s mental universe fires judgmental shots that aim at destroying another, it is not renouncing judgments, but bringing them to a different level, firing shots of a different kind, is how our spirit, untouched, will find its way through the gloomy

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<sup>662</sup> Watch Francis Picabia – Very Rare Picture on Earth episode of Masterworks documentary series, Arthaus Musik (1988).

predatory forest that the humankind has grown into. And as the starry train of our mind continues to journey over the tracks of time, each point on its rolling wheels will keep on alternating between moving down and up, between judgmentally, weightily sliding down and meditatively, lightly soaring high, producing along the way musical waves of a kind that are emitted to farthest cosmic spaces, crashing against the shores of other minds inhabiting this Universe and subtly delivering its unique beauties thereto. And just like a flat, constant amplitude of sound would swiftly turn it into a baseline noise, imperceptible in its nature as much as pure silence is, and just as stars lining up the celestial sphere above our heads without leaving any dark spaces between them would produce a single, blinding source of light that would become imperceptible after a while, so can the music of the mind exist only insofar as judgments and non-judgments are interspersed in it like notes in a musical notation or stars in the night sky. For instance, while on one hand an ability or unwillingness to read other people's body language leads to empathy-deprived mental disorders, on the other hand overly ascribing conscious cues to gestures and moves of persons around us not only does result in regular misunderstandings, but is also, more importantly, related to an obsession with their intentions and expectations which our passive being then tries to comply with and satisfy at the cost of diminished sanity and expressional creativeness. The same can be said for inanimate details of the world surrounding our self; to put it simply, not judging at all about the wall towards which we walk would make us unstoppably bump into it, whereas being obsessed with judging about it to its most miniscule detail would induce an incapacitating fixation of our attention. Thus, in general, although on one hand without incessantly judging about our interaction with the surrounding world we would never be able to navigate ourselves through the forest of perceptions which we call experience, on the other hand I have always seen the message with which Lao-Tzu ended his Tao-Te-Xing, reminding us that "a man who argues is not a good man" (Tao-Te-Xing LXXXI), as the first step on the spiritual path, for only after we switch our consciousness onto a different level, that of saving the world instead of judging about it, as the Christ would have had it (John 12:47), a spark of enlightenment, never to be extinguished in our being, can be said to have been lit. Regarding my own repugnance to judgments, as if the persecution syndrome I was born with as the member of the Serbian nation was not enough to feed my aversion to verdicts or stigmatizations of any kind, persistently, from the time I was an elementary school pupil to the time I was a university professor, I have been labeled as a miscreant and persecuted as such. For example, when I was 13, on an autumn day in 1989, I stood behind a wire fence during an intramural handball match refereed by my physical education teacher, Krivi, and together with dozens of other boys, dissatisfied by the referee's call, we began to chant "*Krivi, pederu*", literally meaning "Krivi the gay", which infuriated the teacher so much that he called the game off and began to chase us, grabbing us one by one and taking to his office where he subjected us to physical and psychological torture. Protected against any penalties, even when physical force was used in or out the class, teachers were in those days and he launched an unprecedented campaign to dismiss all the supposedly offensive chanters from the school. An immense investigation ensued, during which I was repeatedly interrogated and sent to numerous psychiatric examinations after I and only two more pupils out of twenty five or so of them involved in the chanting admitted during one-on-one meetings that we did open our mouths and exclaim those words. All of a sudden, an elitist, exemplary student, as I had been, found himself in the company of delinquents and traditionally poor performers, namely Rus, a skinhead and a classmate whose habit was tossing cats into furnaces and from tops of skyscrapers, and Blagoje, a Libyan expat who was spending time in the company of notorious hooligans and who, sadly, got drowned in a river years later.

To this day, I am perplexed at over twenty or so of my fellow students who turned their back and denied chanting the aforementioned line when it would not have been even heard had it been sung by three boys only, notwithstanding that they gave me a clear and direct insight into what 90 % of humanity is composed of: filthy souls who would lie and pretend so long as there are palpable benefits to it. And delinquent I went on to become after witnessing first-hand the hypocrisy and the ugliness of the whole judicial process of discriminative denigration and after finding oneself on the accused, finger-pointed side of things. For, a whole life gets into a vicious circle once one gets indicted as a perpetrator and a deviant so young, so naïve, so innocent. One gets disgusted by the world and everything that is authoritative and power-driven in it, being the same insight that countless free thinkers throughout the history arrived at after being exposed to the dogmatic and tormenting clerical system. It was with this Krivi affair that my life reached the point of no return when it came to being an outlaw and reject from the mainstream social circles and my being labeled as a problematic kid, a villain continued through my high school and college and spilled over to my workplaces, including academia, from which I was expelled following a long and humiliating process of expulsion based on sheer falsities proclaimed by a mob of greedy scavengers. All of this has been a simple perpetuation of the persecution syndrome set this early on in my life and has made the sound of the blow of that hammer of which Morrissey sang in his ode to public humiliation very audible in my head: “When you slam down the hammer, can you see it in your heart?”<sup>663</sup> This is how I have become one of the biggest enemies of academic assessments as well as censures and judgments in any other walks of life that the world has ever seen. Hence, as on one of these days I came across an online avalanche of accusatory comments directed by one of my Facebook friends from Philadelphia at a friend of hers who got caught in the midst of a sudden hysterical burst of anger and left a complementary one on her wall, “Why judging without knowing the context and the cause?”, I judgmentally attacked the essence of the very judgmental attitudes which are prerequisites for any arguments in life, thus using a weapon to eradicate that very same weapon. Like a commenter to a fiery online discussion over whether people who wear flip-flops or jingly jewelry, who have a strong body odor, who ate garlicky food for lunch or who talk loudly or snore are the most irritating fellow passengers on a plane, saying how “what irritates him most are people irritated by other people”<sup>664</sup>, offering a judgment that kills all other judgments and instantly produces a sense of peace and harmony in the air, so did I do on this occasion by means of my remark. Another thing I wished to point at with this comment was that the real virtue lies in seeing a multifaceted diamond in everything, explore it from all sides, just as a mineralogist would do, and come to conclusion that all is verily relative and that empathy, the only quality that could supply us with enough fuel for our journey from this earthly realm to the stars, is far greater than knowledge, empathy that is enkindled in us when we begin to look at the world from another’s eyes, taking us back to the start of this sentence and signifying the inextricability of love and knowledge in this life. “The great man is not he who most closely adheres to truth, but he who is most adept at reconciling truth and falsehood”<sup>665</sup>, Diderot used to say and the point of all this battle for knowledge that we put our heart into is indeed to find veracity and relevance in every single story told by a human being, even when it sounds hopelessly irrational or false, and, like when

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<sup>663</sup> Listen to Morrissey’s *Speedway on Vauxhall and I*, Parlophone (1994).

<sup>664</sup> See the readers’ comments to the article, *What Kinds of People Annoy You Most on a Plane?*, available at [www.b92.net/putovanja/komentari.php?nav\\_id=621523](http://www.b92.net/putovanja/komentari.php?nav_id=621523) (June 26, 2012).

<sup>665</sup> See Nina L. Dubin’s *Futures & Ruins: Eighteenth-Century Paris and the Art of Hubert Robert*, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA (2010), pp. 11.

the varying accounts of a dreadful event were evoked under Rashomon gate, show that even mutually exclusive descriptions can prove to be true on this magical plane of reality that is but a station on an endless journey of our souls and that not rationality, but care for the fragile and love for all is the solution to all the enigmas that torment the human intellects<sup>666</sup>. Only then will the endless torrential rains that beset our miserable minds confounded in the tangled web of logic, like in the timelessly beautiful ending of Kurosawa's movie, give way to the sunshine of happiness. Besides, one impressive aspect of the structure of the New Testament is that it resisted Marcion's 2<sup>nd</sup> Century idea to apply Occam's razor and reduce the redundancies intrinsic to the fact that four different gospels in this book describe the very same events, often nearly identically but also often with a wholly new flavor. In this redundant form, however, the book has immersed us in a state of multitude, where we must navigate through multiple overlapping realities to make meaning out of the book's little and overarching messages, perhaps to teach us that the very same approach is needed if we wish to cruise seamlessly across the hermeneutic sea of the social reality. What I earned, however, at the end of the day, despite my multiversality, was a lost Facebook friendship, an outcome quite expected if we know how the story of the Christ, of the one rejected exactly because of his proving the habit of ordinary people to judge as inherently wrong, incessantly perpetuates itself in life around us. Moreover, one of the often overlooked, yet essential traits of the individualistic society is that blame is nearly always put on individuals<sup>667</sup> and never on societies under whose umbrellas these individuals develop into who they become. One catastrophic corollary of a society stemming from such false premises is its being incessantly ripped up by arrays after arrays of arrows of accusations of one person by another and *vice versa*, while disregarding how every human is a cell of the single organism called Gaia and how social norms and values define the individuals and predispose them to certain types of actions. Still, every standoffish judgment can be said to be intrinsically hypocritical since it always presents recognition and finger pointing at the flaws that one has formerly or, ever worse, currently exhibited by himself. For example, when another online commenter, who happened to be affiliated with a group of liberal Christians<sup>668</sup>, displayed an image of a couple of banknotes used to pay the restaurant bill photographed right next to them so as to illustrate barely any gratuity left by the payer and then accused him of stinginess, meanness and greediness, it was a reprimand of greed that, ironically, emanated from a greedy attitude and, as such, merely reinstated greed in the world by disseminating an intrinsically greedy point of view. Therefore, every time we come across expressions of disapproval of someone else's actions, we should know that such denouncements are essentially akin to the act of "a monkey mocking the mirror image of one's own", of which Njogoš's Abbot Stefan talked<sup>669</sup>; or, as the Persian poet, Jalāl ad-Dīn Rumi put it in one of his theological discourses, "when you see a fault in your brother, the fault really lies in yourself but you see it reflected in him; likewise, the world

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<sup>666</sup> Watch the movie Rashomon directed by Akira Kurosawa (1950).

<sup>667</sup> "The individualistic approach risks pathologizing victims of injustice and diagnosing the human cost of broader social ills as individual deficits", say Pat Dudgeon, Abigail Bray and Roz Walker in Embracing the Emerging Indigenous Psychology of Flourishing, *Nature Reviews Psychology* 2, 259 – 260 (2023), citing Pat Didgeon's Australian Indigenous Psychology, *Australian Psychologist* 52, 251 – 254 (2017).

<sup>668</sup> The group in question is Christians Tired of Being Misrepresented and this post appeared on the social networking platform Facebook on October 1, 2014. The group was "liked" on the platform and on that date by 78,350 individuals.

<sup>669</sup> See Petar Petrović Njogoš's *The Mountain Wreath*, rendered into English by James. W. Wiles, George Allen & Unwin, London, UK (1847).

is a mirror in which you see your own image”<sup>670</sup>. Usually, all our inculpatory thoughts are entailed by Nature’s promptly handing us a mirror in which our own faults that helped us distinguish them in others will be reflected, all so as to subtly disapprove our accusatory acts and tell us in her ineffable language composed of soft, breezy moves and sounds that acceptance of everything and incessant strivings to find unutterably beautiful features in each and every observed object, creature and deed are the way we ought to follow in life. After all, if Harold Pinter’s *Homecoming* and innumerable other dramaturgical pieces of art in which subtle changes in perspective are shown as sufficient to switch and fully reverse the worldviews of characters involved (subtly showing us thereby that we are all ultimately one and the same) teach us something, it is certainly the need to exhibit exceptional carefulness when prematurely judging about anyone or anything in life, for our judgments are always predestined to be imperfect, exactly because contexts inevitably co-define the qualities of any physical system and they are by definition infinite and ungraspable. Asked to define courage in Plato’s *Laches*, the Greek general Nicias, caught off guard, did not know what to say and only shrugged his shoulders to Socrates, stating that “one must have a knowledge concerning all goods and evils under all circumstances”<sup>671</sup> before describing it properly; similarly, any quality under the Sun is ultimately undefinable because the existential contexts co-defining it are infinite, ceaselessly changeable and inapprehensible as such. Judging about others and the world as a whole in light of perfect certainty is thus always foolish and unreasonable because neither the history of the judged systems nor their final causes nor contexts in which they exist could be ever fully known. If it is true that “to understand something, you must go to its origins”<sup>672</sup>, as Aristotle observed, then all our strivings to comprehend the motives behind another’s actions must be destined for failure; what is more, even if we were to arrive at this elusive destination, we would realize that the world seen from it is greatly determined by the path that we have taken to reach it, meaning that we are doomed by fate never to have two worldviews perfectly consistently coincide with one another, the incongruity of which is akin to a gap whose ardent bridging, though never achievable without creating bigger gaps around it, is what drives the intellectual and the informational progress of humanity forward. The famous violinist, Yehudi Menuhin correspondingly warned the initiates on the stage of life against assuming the attitude of superiority, a trap which intellectuals particularly easily fall prey to, and went on to advise them the following: “Don’t say ‘were I in his place’ – you are not; proceed rather to understand the situation from the assumption that in his place you might do neither better nor worse, and might even conceivably do exactly as he does”<sup>673</sup>. The old Cheyenne seer’s praying “not to judge anyone unless they walked two moons in their moccasins” is thus indisputably wise, but even if we extend our walk in other people’s shoes to a million moons or to the very eternity from this moment on, our judgments regarding their decisions would still bear the sin of faultiness because we could never know the history of their being prior to our meeting them nor could we ever walk along the labyrinths of their own cerebra, the corridors of thought that they were genetically gifted to roam through. A rather trivial example I could give to illustrate this point, having heard it coincidentally from a TV playing in the background as I typed the previous sentence, is that of

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<sup>670</sup> See *Signs of the Unseen: the Discourses of Jalaluddin Rumi*, Introduction and Translation by W. M. Thackston, Jr., Shambhala, Boston, MA (1994), pp. 25.

<sup>671</sup> See Paul Tillich’s *The Courage to Be*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CN (1952), pp. 1.

<sup>672</sup> See Apostolos Doxiadis’ and Christos H. Papadimitriou’s *Logicomix: An Epic Search for Truth*”, Bloomsbury, New York, NY (2009), pp. 33.

<sup>673</sup> See Yehudi Menuhin’s *Theme and Variations*, Stein and Day, New York, NY (1972), pp. 88.

a French drawer of children's stories from the 1930s and the creator of a graphic novel whose last two frames showed first a tailor pulling up a pair of scissors and cutting two fingers of a toddler, who had sucked on them seconds ago, and then a close-up of the two fingers all covered in blood. Had you not known the historical context in which this shocking story was told, that is, in the times of stale and clichéd ways of artistic expression, in which freedom of expression was sought at all costs, you might have labeled its creator as a psycho at least, when in reality he might have been a persona as innocent and benevolent as the poor child at play he had portrayed. Similarly, when Francisco Goya drew his famous *Caprichos*, creating the world's first images of sinister sorcerers, zombies, satanic scarecrows, horror picture shows and Frankensteins, this same world might have rejected him as a lunatic and a mentally ill person, when, in reality, with these scabrous images he wished to make the point that "the sleep of reason produces monsters", as the caption for this series of etchings said, to which end his mind was sane and pure like the whitest snow. Likewise, when we are about to judge someone for what appears at first a wholly blasphemous act, let us make sure that her deeds, when viewed in the context of the social, evolutionary and cosmological wholes to which they belong, do not open gateways to expressions of unsurpassable beauty. Aware of the need to take that million moonlight mile walk and beyond before a truly acute judgment could be made, genuinely holistic thinkers, whose eyes the ocean of the spirit of the whole incessantly flows into, would under such circumstances rather keep their mouths shut for the next million years, happily pointing at birds in the sky and hugging trees in the forest, than utter a single judgmental word, be it complimentary or condemnatory, it matters not. Like the Sicilian boy from Visconti's *La Terra Trema*, 'Ntoni Valastro, throwing a scale overboard, from the top of a cliff and into the sea, and liberating himself and his fellow fishermen thereby, so do these wise men abolish any judgments and the inherently erroneous - and, thus, sinful - weighing of worth in a world wherein none is measurable and all is incommensurable, knowing that in such and such manner only do the doors to salvation and happiness open before human spirits in life. On a side note and in line with Cicero's maxim *summum ius summa iniuria*<sup>674</sup>, they have known that, throughout the history, the total of tragedies that ensued the revolutionaries' fighting against the worldly injustices on the wings of inherently imperfect judgments has, more or less, equaled that caused by the committers of injustices that they vociferously stood against. Judgments stemming from the original sin of the first man's tasting the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden, having given him and his descendants the illusion of the ability to discern good from evil, thus wholly vanish from their heads and their commitment to the Christ's intention not to judge the world, but to wholeheartedly save it (John 12:47), becomes complete, bringing them over to the embracement of unconditional love for all, the good, the evil, the ugly, the beautiful and all else under the Sun. Thus, as we see, a direct corollary of this nonjudgmental viewpoint is the collapse of any individually deducible or humanly imposed system of justice, a genuinely anarchistic notion whose adoption comprises one of the first steps towards hearing the divine guiding voices deep inside of us, dispelling the disempowering spirit of followers in us and transforming us into a self-responsible, Christ-like star on Earth. The failure of the concept of justice, one of the most essential drivers of human ideologies, of frameworks of thought that eclipse very life with their significance in the heads of their bearers, can be a powerful lesson for

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<sup>674</sup> The phrase, meaning "The utmost justice is the utmost injustice", comes from Cicero's discourse *De Officiis* (On Duties) (44 BC) and is correlated with the Roman philosopher's belief that the rigorous application of the law can lead to extreme injustice.

all those “cruel and righteous”<sup>675</sup> ones who pose themselves as worldly authorities and gate-guardians, who, like the teacher from the cover of 10,000 Maniacs’ In My Tribe, instruct children, chaste and innocent, to grab the bows off the ground and hit the soft and loving human hearts with the arrows of Law, all until they turn just like those of their instructors: callous and cold in their insistence on rectitude and justice, albeit blind to the injustice committed in the course of their obsessive and illusory quest for the worldly justice. But not being driven anymore by the concept of justice in our daily actions and considerations is a source of an immense liberation for our spirits, which only then, freed from these worldly ties, become able to lift themselves into the skies of divine being and thought. Otherwise, in this world wherein only traces of justice lie scattered here and there, perseveringly built foundations for supreme spiritual stances using the bricks of prayerful musings and the mortar of mellow meditations would be swiftly crushed by the cannons of bitterness over injustices that will always abound around us, so that all that we build during the day will be ruined by night or *vice versa*. To walk along this sacred path whereon judgments are none and love is all, of course, we ought to know that the nature and purpose of even the most miniscule physical entities are bound to forever remain the sources of an endless mystery to a masterful mind. On the other hand, in those who tend to carelessly judge about all things known and habitually preach to others as if they know for sure what is best for them I helplessly see Job’s friends gathered around his deathbed, asking “who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?” (Job 4:7) and claiming how he must have gone astray from the path of the Lord if such troubles and agonies had turned out to strike him in life, not knowing that the temporary hardships were shed on him by the hand of God precisely because he was considered the best servant in the eyes of the divine (Job 1:8). In the same passage of the Ray of the Microcosm in which Njegoš impressed that timeless verse “ми смо луча тамом обузета”<sup>676</sup>, the Prince-Bishop of Montenegro also says, “From all angles look at man, judge about him whichever way you want – (but know that) the greatest secret unto man is man”<sup>677</sup>, yet our world is filled with souls that hardly wait to accuse their brethren for the same mistakes that they, themselves, would have committed had they only been in the shoes of the wrongdoers, as exemplified by my coming across the online comments to the news of a single-punch murder of an intrusive tourist who photographed an eight-year old girl at a Spanish beach by her angry father, all six of which were unequivocally condemnatory: “He just did us all a favor and saved a lot of tax dollars; let him go and give him a reward”, “He did the right thing one less pervert to deal with now I would have done the same thing”, “Awesome! We need more people like him, in my book he is a great DAD and a HERO”, “This guy deserves a handsome reward and a Medal of Honor”, “Justifiable 100 %”, “So? Good for him”<sup>678</sup>. Thence, I could not help recalling how fixed judgments lead to clandestinely signing many death sentences in our lives, whereas ignorance and abstinence from judging lead us on the trail of sacred exploration of the wonders of the world, bringing forth true lifesaving attitudes along the way, as it was masterfully depicted in 12 Angry Men. Along the same line of thought that judges none other but

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<sup>675</sup> See Danilo Kiš’s *The Anatomy Lesson*, Nolit, Belgrade (1979).

<sup>676</sup> “We are light seized by darkness” would be a rather ungainly, but veritable translation of this verse to English. This is exactly what stars are: infinite sources of light enwrapped by an equally infinite darkness and void.

<sup>677</sup> See Petar Petrović Njegoš’s *The Ray of the Microcosm*, Nolit, Belgrade, Serbia (1845).

<sup>678</sup> The heartless comments are by Katie Addison, Sukh Atwal, Eddy Mascarenhas, Richard Kupsch, John Hall Jr., and Vona Priest, in the order of their appearance. See *British Father Arrested for Allegedly Killing Man with Single Punch for Filming his Daughter*, *Vancouver Desi* (February 11, 2015), retrieved from <http://www.vancouverdesi.com/news/british-father-arrested-for-allegedly-killing-man-with-a-single-punch-caught-filming-his-daughter/844704/>.

the very judges and judgments falls the old Hasidic story wherein a Hasid standing the trail right beyond the pearly gates looked safe before an angel accused him for delinquency and scornfully laughed at him after he claimed that he was misled by a woman – as a verdict, the angel had to go down on Earth and get married<sup>679</sup>. In fact, much greater damage has been imposed on the heritage of humanity by people playing God, so to say, believing that they know for sure what is best for those around them, let alone demanding sheepish obedience along the way, than by those who have adopted humble attitudes hesitant to judge and take the stance of an authority. Maybe in the distant past, when chaotic beastliness oh so often seized the voice of reason and the strivings for peace and wisdom from the human soul, the demands for the unruly populace to follow the benevolent precepts set forth by kings and queens may have made sense in the evolutionary terms, but in the modern world wherein peaceful coexistence and tolerance are the norms and wherein we witness an unprecedented diversity of worldviews across generations<sup>680</sup> as well as from one individual to another, anything but the fosterage of creative difference makes little sense. Wiping out any cravings to assume the role of authority in us before we engage in managing any given social organization thus comes forth as an absolute necessity. This may be the reason why the Christ insisted on people's assuming the position of servants of each other rather than omniscient masters (Matthew 20:27-28), in the most authentic and loving form of anarchism conceivable, before they knock on Heaven's door. God knows how many times in life I have been lain blame on and reprimanded as such, and those were all situations I humbly saw as God-given, carrying profound learning potential on the burden of hardships they were bringing to my life. What they essentially taught me was how to live in accordance with the two fundamental ethical premises of the Montenegrin culture: heroism and humaneness, the former dictating that we always ought to defend others from others, and the latter prescribing that others ought to be equally defended from our very self. What this couple of norms implicitly stipulates is that we should never be obsessed with judging, but only with defense, and that never of ourselves, but of others only. Innumerable unfair accusations I experienced on my skin therefore strengthened my willpower and decisiveness to bravely step up and defend the accused ones in various arenas in life, without questioning whether they were guilty or not, quite in the spirit of jurymen Davis in *12 Angry Men* as well as the holy belief that "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17). For, I have known that to an angelic mindset which sees everything with an eye for the whole, giving one a second chance while avoiding the Christian sin of judgment could be as inspiring and fulfilling as liberating an indisputably innocent earthling from the terror of discriminatory finger pointing. "The just is close to the people's heart, but the merciful is close to the heart of God", Kahlil Gibran thus noticed and opened a magical gate in us that allows for divine energies to start flowing through our veins and guide our spontaneous surf on them towards an unutterable excellence, ethical and aesthetical, expressional and impressional. The Lebanese poet, though, only reiterated the words of St. James the Apostle, "Mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (James 2:13), the words that have quietly paid the attention of generations of men and women to the fact that sheer intelligence, irrespective of how brilliant it may be, without love and bright intentions enlightening it stands forth as hollow and futile. For, it is with the invisible hands of the heart that we grasp the things that we crave for in life before we reach out to them physically, and should we fail to catch them into the net of our heart first while illuminating them with the shine

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<sup>679</sup> See Béla Hamvas' *Anthologia Humana: 5000 Years of Wisdom*, Dereta, Belgrade. Serbia (1948), pp. 186.

<sup>680</sup> See Jeanne C. Meister's and Karie Willyerd's *The 2020 Workplace*, HarperCollins e-books, New York, NY (2010).

of love and beauty divine, our worldly runs after them would turn into a grand failure. Since the essence of true goodness and brilliance of our acts in life lies not in what their face value in the eyes of the world is or in the way in which others will superficially interpret them, but in what sort of shine of intentions, aspirations and love of ours they originate from, all the judgments of ours should cede their place to pure and chaste astonishments over the omnipresent beauties of the world, while adopting the mindset of Mary of Bethany, Martha's sister, a character from the Gospels. And whenever we witness other people's judging and accusing others for this or that, we should recall the Christ's stepping up when common people were about to stone a woman, quite possibly Mary Magdalene, because of committing adultery, and proclaiming the famous words: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (John 8:7). When all the accusers dropped their stones, the Christ "again stooped down, and wrote on the ground" (John 8:8), like an unadulterated and innocent child playing with pebbles in his fancy, showing us how judgmental attitudes turn us to miserable beasts, while repentance, love and understanding for all return us to the state of mind that resembles Paradise, the Garden of Eden before humans tasted the fruits of the tree of knowledge and gained the ability to discern good from evil, thus setting the grounds for exhibiting condemnatory attitudes in life. From this, we could conclude that the Christ's teaching with its pointing at the fact that we could indulge in the most sinful activities, but if our heart is bright, loving and shiny, we would still be on the divine road and all the acts of ours would turn out to celebrate the beauty divine all over the face of it, was nothing but revolutionarily anarchistic for its times. Yet, how much the world fundamentally learned from this teaching of his can be questioned, especially since we know about the tragedies brought about in the centuries that followed by the Christ's most arduous followers with their embracement of preaching what is good and what is bad, enforcement of dogmas and beliefs onto others and establishment of the Church as the reigning magisterium, the supreme court of law of the Western world. The tragic fate of the Christ was sealed primarily because he questioned and challenged the authority of the then dominant Jewish theology and pushed it to evolve forward by introducing, perhaps most critically, the concepts of forgiveness and unconditional love in lieu of the keen judgments and reciprocity of favors and announcing, shockingly, everyone to be inherently divine. However, this openness to alternative points of view that the Christ incarnated ended up not being embedded in the tradition of the Christian church, which somehow failed to recognize this antiauthoritarian character of the Christ; rather, it turned his credos into dogmas and thus prevented the evolution of the Christian theology into as progressive directions as the Christ's worldviews were for the comparatively backward Jewish theology of his time. Therefore, the reason why the religious thought has not evolved as much as it could have since the times of the Christ can always be sought in the greater affinity for the power than for the generation of freedoms and of new knowledge amongst the official representatives of the given thought, a point that applies to any body of knowledge backed by a social hierarchy, academia included. In fact, by craving to exert the power of judgment and thereby governance and authority over people, the Church as an institution completely inverted the original teaching of the Christ, which was law-breaking and nonconformist in its essence, banishing judgments of anything and anyone and allowing one to perform what may be universally considered as blasphemous deeds for as long as the shine of the soulful beauty is sent out of one's heart so as to heal the world. The aim of the Christ's teaching, quite anarchistic in its essence, was to empower others on the account of humbly dropping oneself down, below the wonders of the world which one can then selflessly marvel over, instead of manipulating them while elevating one's sense of supremacy ever higher. Of course, when a person says no to

manipulation, of oneself and of others alike, he is bound to be labeled as “difficult, selfish or crazy”<sup>681</sup>, as the common wisdom has it and as it has been demonstrated by the destiny of countless anarchists all the world over, from the Christ to myself, leading to their heartless expulsion from whatever the hierarchical social spheres they got to be affiliated with. Since such social systems are always in demand of docile, sheepish spirits who are at their safest and most comfortable when guided by the strong and sturdy shepherd’s hand, they cannot tolerate the presence of neither the person nor an ideal nurturing a holy mindset that perceives any manipulation of another as intrinsically immoral and sinful, including judgments thereof, which are but subtle, abstract forms of manipulating a fellow human being. Like the chorus of commoners in Arnold Schoenberg’s opera *Moses and Aaron*, the masses want guidance by the godly figures who are palpable, who tell them what is right and what is wrong and who reward and punish rather than by the gods that the wise prophets have offered them, the gods who are invisible, untouchable, omnipresent and undefinable, who do not command and who are, in essence, anarchic, imposing no definite rule to follow, but remain veiled by the shades of mystery from now until the eternity. To these gods, wonders, not dogmas, lay the path that leads to them, whereon questions over the deepest foundations of the existence and the bliss of the holy spirit in us and in the world arise in parallel, notwithstanding that treading on such a path induces unbearable discomfort in these android masses who merely want to conform and do as they are told. Therefore, it should not surprise that the establishment of the Church as an institution endowed with the task of propagating the Christ’s teaching prompted it to ascribe supreme social power onto itself in the effort to excel in this task, which, on the flipside, inadvertently upturned and corrupted the essence of this teaching. “The citizen secures himself against genius by icon worship. By the touch of Circe’s wand, the divine troublemakers are translated into porcine embroidery”<sup>682</sup>, Edward Dahlberg mused many decades ago, paying our attention to the way in which conformism to any idealized authorities in this world can extinguish the flame of our otherworldly creativeness. By insisting on following its rules that allegedly define the sole path to salvation, rather than fostering infinitely innovative visions of these paths to be born from within people’s hearts, which would have been in concert with the essence of the Christ’s teaching, the Church has sown seeds of its own destruction in the eyes of true Christ-like creatures of this world, the divine rebels against the spiritual corrosiveness of human societies, whose hearts have burned with wishes to give rise to utmost bursts of creativity from the core of their spirits. Clergymen all the world over thus became labeled - sometimes for good reason, sometimes not – as the epitomes of the Grand Inquisitor rather than of quiet, yet mountainously powerful souls that say no words and merely kiss the lips of these parched and insipid represents of the Church before the gate-guardians release them from the prison cells and into the dark night of the world<sup>683</sup>. Coupled to the belief that disciples can never exceed the greatness of the teachers (Luke 6:40), of which more will be said later in the text, the oft-cited claim that Satan is a fallen angel, a rebel against the godly order (Isaiah 14:12-14), has been enough to discourage generations of pious people to be averted from any thought of disagreement with the church authorities and fail to recognize rebelliousness as an inherent aspect of an utmost religiousness, the Christ’s included. Religiousness, catastrophically, became

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<sup>681</sup> See my friend, Olgica Vezmar’s Facebook post (February 19, 2020), which she topped with saying, “I love being pronounced ‘crazy’... it gives me no boundaries”.

<sup>682</sup> See David Foster Wallace’s *Joseph Frank’s Dostoyevsky*, In: *Consider the Lobster and Other Essays*, Back Bay Books, New York, NY (2006), pp. 255.

<sup>683</sup> See Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*, Prosveta, Belgrade, Serbia (1880).

a synonym for bigoted and backward finger-pointing and for sacrificing life to word instead of quite the opposite: the submersion of any judgments and verbosities in the ocean of love and its waves that have one aim in mind: how to save the world, into the darkness of which they have ventured. This change of the heart that Christianity underwent decades and centuries after the Christ left this planet could have been anticipated from the following striking words of St. Paul the Apostle, owing to whom Christianity could have even been renamed to Paulinity at some point during its history, as some theologians have noticed: “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life” (Corinthians I 6:2-3)? These crooked apostolic musings were topped with the striking call to relentlessly judge others: “For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged” (Corinthians I 11:31). In that manner, they wholly reverted the Christ’s outcry to “judge not, lest ye be judged” (Matthew 7:1), that is, to abstain from judgment and thus avoid the fate of Adam and Eve who were expelled from Paradise because they tasted the fruit of the tree of knowledge and became indulged in the illusion of an ability to discern good from evil (Genesis 3). With judgmental, accusatory attitudes having been foreign to the all-forgiving mindset of the Christ, their pervasion into the minds of his followers, self-proclaimed Christians, is disconnected from the origins and as preposterous as chocolate eggs’ and bunnies’ becoming the trademarks of Easter, the day for the remembrance of the Christ’s Calvary. This archetypical distortion of an original doctrine exemplifies what has come to be the inevitable fate of humanity: namely, followers, despite their absolute devotion to teachings that they adhere to, inadvertently turn them on their heads. History shows that regardless of the ideology in question, they steer it away from the purity of its original vision and practice and corrupt it by subjecting it to the peccancy of three Ps: polarization, politicization and prostitution<sup>684</sup>. Verily, how in the world the magisterium of Christianity transformed the Christ’s original teaching based on abstinence from judgments of any kind and embracement of everyone and everything within the umbrella of Cosmic love, epitomized by his condemnation of those who wished to stone a prostitute and the legendary utterance, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone” (John 8:7) and then fanciful, detached and dreamy writing on the ground (John 8:8), with judgmental authoritativeness that is so pompously pretentious that it even allows the priests to forgive laymen’s sins often puzzles me during long hours of contemplation on the darkest subconscious cellars of the human psyche. For, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (John I 1:8), as John the Apostle noticed, pointing at the hypocritical irrationality of each and every judgment, which sooner or later turns into a sprout from which unspeakable miseries of the world originate.

Ultimately, what we are all up to in this life is learning how to cordially and passionately love imperfect creatures and circumstances instead of judgmentally dividing them to perfect and lovable on one side and imperfect and detestable on the other. This task is equivalent to the one of learning how to openheartedly embrace it all with the glow of loving trust from our heart over merely looking askance at the world, discriminatory and suspiciously. And since the burden of life is weightier on the shoulders of those who seemingly deserve less love considering the

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<sup>684</sup> This brings to mind that one of the songs of *Tišina kod poluzvezde* was named P. P. P., yet aside from Željko, who wrote the lyrics, no one ever knew what this acronym meant, even though everybody had a personal interpretation of it. Perhaps that was the lyricist’s intention. Mine was *Prži Puno Plama*, meaning Dazzling Full of Blaze and being a part of the first verse of Jovan Dučić’s poem *Podne*, but I am sure that it was not Željko’s nor other people’s association too.

selfish motives of their unkind actions, it is them that we would strive to comfort, uplift and reward with hugs first and foremost, prior to those who walk in the light with the compass pointing towards the sun of sacred spiritedness in their hands, if we only had a heart to give and a grain of understanding of the complexity of life wherein saints can become sinners and sinners saints in the blink of an eye should the right paths be laid by Nature before their feet. The turning point in Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, the first play written by an African-American to have been performed on Broadway, appearing at the apex of its climax to transform rain into rainbow, was the moment when, following the daughter's reprimanding her brother for becoming unscrupulously rapacious after having his money stolen in a filthy deal and saying out loud that "there is nothing left to love" in him, Mama Lena, the head of the Younger family, rises up and delivers the following monologue: "There is always something left to love. And if you ain't learned that, you learned nothing. Have you cried for that boy today? I don't mean for yourself and for the family 'cause we lost the money. I mean for him: what he been through and what it done to him. Child, when do you think is the time to love somebody the most? When they done good and made things easy for everybody? Well, then, you ain't through learning – because that ain't time at all. It's when he's at his lowest and can't believe in hisself 'cause the world done whipped him so! When you starts measuring somebody, measure him right, child, measure him right. Make sure you done taken into account what hills and valleys he come through before he got to wherever he is"<sup>685</sup>. After all, when a young disciple approached the Christ, kneeled in front of him and exclaimed the following words, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17), instead of being pleased by this eruption of veneration and worship, the Christ responded with another question: "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God" (Mark 10:18). In other words, no one in this world is perfect, including us, even if we happened to have attained the supreme heights of spiritual being, such as those on which the Christ had surely stood. If no one is perfect, demanding from people with whom we share life on this planet to be perfect in order to be loved is unrealistic and will lead to failure of our emotional clockwork. On the other hand, that even we, ourselves, including our worldviews, are predestined to be imperfect under all circumstances simply predisposes all our judgments as well to be unavoidably warped and flawed. From one such viewpoint, focusing on beautiful traits of creatures around us becomes natural, while unnatural is seen every attempt to pride ourselves on deeds traditionally seen as good and charitable; resisting to talk about any benevolent deeds we have performed, in the spirit of the Christ's advice that "when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (Matthew 6:3), thus follows based on both epistemic and ethical insights. In the evangelical spirit, one can then argue that every grain of effort to boast and inflate our egos following a beautiful deed for the benefit of another we have carried out is, in reality, erasing its beauty. Or, as Blaise Pascal mused, "Fine deeds are most admirable when kept secret. When I see some of them in history, they please me greatly; but of course they are not completely secret because they have become known, and, although everything possible was done to keep them secret, the detail by which they came to light spoils everything, for the finest thing about them was the attempt to keep them secret"<sup>686</sup>. "Nature", for one, "loves to hide", as Heraclitus pointed out; for, the divine intelligence which is omnipresent and yet invisible to the senses never craves to reap rewards by being recognized for its supernatural faculties by the eyes

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<sup>685</sup> See the script for Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun*, Act III, retrieved from <http://www.myteacherpages.com/webpages/tpalacios/files/ela11araisininthesun.pdf> (1959).

<sup>686</sup> See Blaise Pascal's *Pensée* No. 643, Series XXV, Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK (1669).

of humanity. Although it is an all-pervading “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last” (Revelation 22:13), it still rather enjoys staying out of sight, unrevealed, behind the clouds that provide the content to the skies of our mind, with a glistening smile on her face peering at the paths she laid before us, paths that lead to setting the starry shine of our spirits ablaze. In that sense, Nature has conducted the co-creational evolution of the world in such a way that the more of the providential, Platonist signs that astonish with their unearthly beauty and subtly indicate the immediate godly presence to a sensible spirit, the greater the challenges to our faith posed by Nature before our feet simultaneously. For this reason, one can argue that the times of Renaissance pervaded with a more devotional theistic thought were challenged by more miserable living conditions, while in the developed parts of the modern world, where details that capture our attention with their heartwarming amusingness are everywhere, Wonder over their origins, which directs the arrows of our thoughts to the center of the target wherein the heart of divinity lies, is being confronted by the ever more pervasive atheism and scientifically proclaimed obsolescence of any religious feelings that may sprout within our souls. Be it carnal destructiveness of the past or prosaic and passionless existential darkness of the modern age, the threats for endangering our faith are indeed omnipresent and multifold, multiplying in parallel with the all-pervading twinkles of divine beauty that open the magic door in our consciousness through which an incessant communication between our mind and God can take place. Hence, if we ever need to look for an example on how benevolent deeds in this world ought to be carried out in a fanfare-free fashion, gracefully and clandestinely, with no pomp or hype, we should know that Nature, the grand Co-Creator of this world, holds the key. Even the supreme artistic creativeness, which ideally emulates the concepts of the natural creation as it arises from the principles of co-creation, where a room has to always be left for the side encountering our works to edify their structure and message, at all times conceals some of its creative essence behind the mysterious veil of its embodiments; or, as put into words by the 18<sup>th</sup> Century dancer, Jean-Georges Noverre, “true art consists in concealing art... a manner of composition which conceals the composer’s labors from the eyes of the spectator”<sup>687</sup>. For, by hiding away from the showy, ceremonial and celebratory processions that are to walk behind us wishing to place laurel wreaths onto our head, seeing the praise from Heaven, invisible to an ordinary eye, as the most valuable one, firmly knowing that innumerable creatures who have spun the world around the sunny glow of Love within their hearts have never become widely enough acknowledged for their workings and worshipped in proportion to the value of their deeds, the demeaning drives to judge shrink within the space of our minds, while the doors revealing a blissful shine of an unconditional Love for all open. The awareness of an inexhaustible beauty dormant in little and forgotten details of the world is simultaneously spurred with this magnificent phase transition in the space of our mind, leading to our being flooded with the feelings of godly presence glimpsed in each gritty corner of reality.

Furthermore, just as there are no perfectly good creatures on Earth, there are no perfectly evil ones either. Not only do evil actions in the big picture helplessly accentuate their diametrical opposites in this world evolving exclusively, like a travelling train, on dialectical railway tracks, but even the vilest souls around us always have spots of goodness inside of them, which we ought to find, touch and expand in our imaginative interactions therewith, let alone that more often than not it was miserable circumstances, the intrinsically ill social spirit or, at times, the genetic makeup to which they were born that are responsible for their exhibition of tendencies to

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<sup>687</sup> See Jean-Georges Noverre’s Letter I from Letters on Dancing and Ballets (1803). In: What is Dance? Edited by Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen, Oxford University Press, New York, NY (1983), pp. 14.

cause harm to others. The sooner we grasp this and cease to blatantly place people in black and white categories, infinitely idealizing ones and blemishing others, the nearer we would find ourselves to pure paradise in terms of our perceiving the social realm and interacting in it. Once again, we need look no farther than children in search of a living proof of this statement. Namely, children, true fireworks of emotions, changing like four seasons with each heartbeat of theirs, exhibit each and every one of them, save one: guilt. Guilt, of course, is grounded in constant discernment of good from evil in the backdrop of our minds and is, as it seems, socially instated rather than innately natural to us. It is also inversely proportional to the magnitude of light forgiveness for all the unfortunate things that have befallen upon us and our shining like a sun, unconditionally, with the rays of kindheartedness. The absence of guilt also signifies an implicit acceptance of the dialectical nature of life, wherein exhibitions of antitheses of divine qualities are necessary to reinforce and deploy them into something ever more beautiful. And the fact that children develop most intensely while they are guided internally, by pure nature, whereas their growth starts to stagnate once they become inculcated with a sense of guilt, at which time they usually enter the stage of sterile adulthood, points once again at the inherently corruptive nature of social being and the need to remain like a star, immersed in darkness, distant from other astral bodies, in order to uninterruptedly bless the living souls with the shine of our spirit. This also brings us over to the Biblical story about the Garden of Eden and the fall from grace initiated by tasting the fruit of the tree of knowledge and gaining a lifetime interest in the discernment of good from evil, thus turning ourselves into slaves of judgmental ways of navigating through reality and getting readily expelled from the paradisiacal state of mind. In that sense, in order to restore this Paradise Lost in our hearts and minds, we need to start by erasing the difference between things and actions considered good or evil in our heads and see it all as infinitely purposeful in the streaming of the Cosmos towards ever more blissful emanations of godliness in each and every one of its corners. A sense of guilt will thus gradually disappear from ourselves, while the capacity to forgive, the most basic quality of gods on Earth, would skyrocket and gallantly take its place, as we begin to approach everything with a gleaming heart, immaculate and wicked spirits alike, and see bedazzling beauties in it all.

Many are, of course, favorable corollaries of embracing such an elatedly childlike frame of mind. By knowing that ethical ignorance is like color blindness that causes us to see the world profoundly wrongly as black and white, we would, first of all, begin to approach things unambiguously considered as spotless with natural, healthy criticism, which is an essential trait of genuine open-mindedness that stands forth as total opposite from indoctrinated attitudes that bear blind worship of one and condemnation of other things in life. In my universe, therefore, no piece of art has ever been ornamented with five stars, but, likewise, not a single one of them has ever reached a zero-star status either. Rather, all things in it are illuminated by the sun of knowing that whereas perfection yields no incentive for action and, as such, results in static sterility, an intention to tackle an imperfection of one kind or another underlies every movement in life. Consequently, every action and creation are inherently imperfect, as they arise from imperfections and naturally lead to them, and it is only up to the insightfulness of the critic to discern these patches of faultiness concealed in all that is. When in one of the characteristic final lines of a 10,000 Maniacs song, wherein one encounters a question that reverses what may have seemed to the listener as a solid premise of the song, Natalie Merchant says, “Abraham had his war too, but an honest war or so it's taught in school”<sup>688</sup>, she hints at these tinges of black paint dispersed all throughout even the whitest and the purest of all things, touches and thoughts. The

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<sup>688</sup> Listen to 10,000 Maniacs' The Big Parade on Blind Man's Zoo, Elektra (1989).

Little Prince, in turn, in an instance of an adorable loveliness, would flip the meaning of this line on its head and say that “what makes desert beautiful is that somewhere it hides a well”<sup>689</sup>, which would be, of course, his way of telling us that even the blackest of things, the vilest and the wickedest of them all, hide a white light, something utterly beautiful, somewhere deep inside them, whereas I, also knowing that opposites of great truths are equally great truths, as Niels Bohr loved to say, would flip this saying of his once again and put it back on its feet, adding that, at the same time, what makes a piece of art utterly beautiful is that it hides a crack of imperfection somewhere deep inside of it, without which it would live up to the epithet of a peak from which one can only fall downwards, not of a true stairway to Heaven. After all, anything that is adorned in our heads in the clothes of perfection is never subjected to useful criticism, but unquestioningly worshipped, promoting fanaticism, idolatry, bigotry, arrogance and intolerance, locking us inside the cages of dogmatism instead of making us free. On the other hand, imperfect creations and objects are free to be critically analyzed, leading to our better understanding of the entire sphere of knowledge that they belong to. Second of all, even things considered as blackest of them all, as if they have just emerged from the ninth circle of Hell, from the Third Reich ideology<sup>690</sup> to dungeons of Inquisition to the Indian caste system<sup>691</sup>, would then be freely acknowledged by us for at least some of their meritorious characteristics, even when they are as hard to notice as a needle in a stack of hay; for, only when we do so will we be able to attain the enlightened consciousness that typified sages of the world, including a Serbian guru of whom many heroic stories were told, describing him on a memorable occasion as blessing the torturers who were cold-bloodedly hammering the nails under his nails, calling them his sons and caressing them with infinite gentleness and indestructibly sunny spirits. After all, hand-in-hand with the drive to forgive, all and everyone, being an essential trait of the Christ-like mind, goes a belief in fundamental transformation of people, from vile to blissful, in the blink of the Cosmic eye. If the cases of Bill Gates and Steve Jobs, the former of whom was only yesterday subjected to sizzling criticism regarding ravenous business practices and is today celebrated as a spotless philanthropist, while the latter prompted Thom Yorke, a devotee of benevolent political philosophies, to have an Apple sticker glued to his guitar back in the days and is today being

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<sup>689</sup> See Antoine de Saint-Exupery's *The Little Prince*, Mladost, Zagreb, Croatia (1943).

<sup>690</sup> How liberating for the human mind it is to perceive even one such conflict between the Allies and the Axis powers in World War II not as the one between good and evil, but as the one between two sides, both of which *dream of a better world*. If this is true and the means to fulfilling these dreams differ, we might be tempted to conclude that the path, not the destination, defines how great the destination itself is.

<sup>691</sup> History and everyday life show us that haughty imperiousness is demonstrated most notably not by members of families that have been wealthy for generations, but by those who made it from rags to riches practically overnight, which brings even us, socialists at heart, to acknowledge that miniature grain of truth present in saying that the burden of aristocracy is best born by those who have received the appropriate upbringing, in the aristocratic spirit, need I say, at home. Whether this holds for academic aristocracy too I, frivolously winking at ye, leave it up to the reader to contemplate. One clue to look for is the more pronounced conformism among the newcomers to any social system than among those who have been a part of it for generations. This is the result of their survival in it being their first and foremost aim, as opposed to their blue-blooded counterparts who have taken the membership in it for granted and who have, consequently, more often gained the freedom and curiosity to question its most fundamental workings and propose fixes for it. This explains why, throughout the history of human race, rejuvenations of stale and rotting social systems into something fresh and fecund, from Classical antiquity to Renaissance, have almost exclusively proceeded in a top-down fashion, receiving the crucial impetuses from minds who have belonged to the upper caste, so to speak, and who have, either literally or indirectly, reached down to their brethren from the lower castes. On the wings of a great wish to bridge this gap, they have often made crosses out of themselves, crosses on which they would sacrifice their earthly, transient selves for the sake of bringing benefits to the invisible soul of humanity.

pilloried owing to his disregard of the need to ensure decent working conditions to people who built his digital empire and a tyrannical management approach, let alone a lack of dedication to humanitarian causes, can teach us something, it is that what is one day considered as good or bad can easily be reversed on another day in this world in which sinners regularly become saints and *vice versa* with the passage of time. Kenneth Lonergan's movie from year 2000, *You Can Count On Me*, is only one amongst innumerable artistic narratives that comes off the top of my head wherein the classical inversion of the roles of the sinner and the saint is allowed to take place during its course, alongside a myriad of worldly hypocrites and a boy, quiet and nonjudgmental, being the only one to occupy the central referential line that separates the two, teaching us that judgmental attitudes on the road to sacred living are not a viable option since sooner or later their application would make us fall from grace. Just as it usually happens in life that we become the victims of the very weapons whose usage we have self-righteously resorted to, so do we eventually become cut by the sword of sharp judgments if they become our means to clear the way forward through the forest of social being. Yet, to occupy a stance beyond all the confronting polarities that have crucified humanity, like Arjuna and Krishna in the epic story of *Bhagavad-Gita*, is the way that leads to our ascent to angelic heights of being. If we were to honestly live up to the Christ's words, "judge not, lest ye be judged" (Matthew 7:1), we would become immune to other people's judgments that eventually turn out to be the arrows that pierce and impale the spirit of all the hypercritical creatures in this world, and continue to shine with love for it all, as if we have never tasted the fruit of the tree of knowledge from the Garden of Eden, laughing and dancing spiritedly, like a star whose light cannot be put out under no circumstances, irrespective of the judgments that become bestowed upon us by the spiritual planets or asteroids that roam around in our vicinity. Such pure and nonjudgmental approach to seeing life around us is what expands the shine of our spirits in the long run and stands in opposition to our sinful indulgence in sharp judgmental distinctions between creatures raised to stars in our eyes and those whom we dislike and with respect to whom we come to bear only malicious thoughts, the habit that, as the first chapter of the grand allegory of the human life that the Bible insinuates, catapults us far beyond the realms of Paradise in our head and heart. On one hand, even the wickedest people we could think of always possess seeds of goodness somewhere deep inside of them, on whose watering, sprouting and budding we could be focused in communication with them; on the other hand, every idealization sooner or later leads to disappointment, from which a spiral downturn in the sense of belonging felt in the presence of the given creatures typically proceeds. "Nobody's perfect", Osgood says to Jerry as they ride off towards horizons of horrendously hilarious living on a speedboat and the curtain draws on *Some Like It Hot*, a contagious comedy of its times, and we should similarly be sure than only when we accept the imperfections of each and every one in this world and learn to accept and love them as such would we make an angelic leap away from naïvely tagging people as black and white to seeing a colorful rainbow in it all, leaving our tacit frozenness by an unending streak of judgments behind and making ascertain that our joyful glide across the sea of reality can begin in full blast. If we aspire to transform ourselves into a creature "so alive", as Tom Verlaine would have put it in his dreams of *Venus de Milo*<sup>692</sup>, shedding stardust of inspiring stimuli with every move made and every word that comes out of our mouth, like a white dove of peace sent out to fly all across the globe in celebration of the beauties of life, we ought to "take a little bad with the good, for it ain't just black and white"<sup>693</sup>, as the rock 'n' roll Iguana would have whispered to

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<sup>692</sup> Listen to Television's *Venus on Marquee Moon*, Elektra (1977).

<sup>693</sup> Listen to Iggy Pop's *Living on the Edge of the Night* on Brick by Brick, Virgin (1990).

our ears, and learn how to see the world through the glistening eyes of Chihiro, the heroine of the beautiful coming-of-age animated movie, *Spirited Away*<sup>694</sup>, dropping teardrops upwards, as a gift to the Heavens, as she freefalls to the ground while holding hands with the dragonish Haku, ready to embrace the entire Earth with her infinite nonjudgmental capacity to understand even the most evil sprites surrounding her, seeing beauty in and making friends with each and every one and making efforts from the depths of her heart to enlighten the whole wide world, unconditionally, without asking for anything in return, truly seeing others always as aims and never as a means, as Immanuel Kant advised in his ethical musings. Guided by the idea that “none is good, save one, that is, God” (Luke 18:19), when it comes to pieces of art too, my analytical self is always eager to criticize even those that I consider standards of artistic excellence, from pinpointing the seeds of sulkiness sown across the soundscape of the Beach Boys’ *Pet Sounds* to bashing the overly conventional production and string arrangements of R.E.M.’s *Automatic for the People*<sup>695</sup>, as much as I never cease to look for invaluable meritorious insights in the most critically belittled radio songs. In such a way, I merely try to point out that categorically embracing one and rejecting other fruits of human creativity, whatever they may be, is more of a product of phony trendiness and spurious categorization than of a profound and truly wise insight, which is always tied to golden eyes able to find praiseworthy details in even the dustiest and most disparaged segments of reality. It is thus that a balance between clear cut acuity and abstinence from judgmentally dividing traits of reality to good ones and evil ones becomes built within our cognitive apparatuses.

Modeling the world based on the premise that people in it are either spotless or irremediably evil is ontologically unfounded, and the erroneousness of such models can be proven via a simple *reductio ab absurdum* approach. For, were people indeed perfect, an evolutionary status quo would result, whereas if they were all utterly wicked, the world would become predestined to plummet into demise. Teleological arguments aside, both of these extreme stances provide a rather shaky philosophical foundation for our standing on the Way of Love. To transform ourselves into a living epitome of the image of the Way, of the way of being that is as remote and distant in one’s stellar feelings and thoughts as incredibly intimate and able to magically touch and light up a nearby soul by the gentlest of all gestures, as in concert with the simultaneous distantness and relatedness that every way, road and line drawn between points A and B symbolize, we ought to stand in the middle and be aware of the disadvantages born out of either being pulled into the space of spiritual light surrounding creatures in close proximity by trust in their impeccable goodness and benevolence or being repelled from them for good by letting our co-creative consciousness constantly draw them with shades of sheer malevolence and intrinsic, insurmountable egotism. For, while belief in immaculate goodness of people around us builds links of trust that pull us in the direction of becoming masochistically subservient to them, extinguishing our creative potentials along the way, belief in the irreparably spoiled nature of theirs yields an inward pull of awareness that separates us from the world and builds a solipsistic wall around our ego. And as pointed out by the Little Bear, rejecting others because of their

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<sup>694</sup> The structure of the movie is irresistibly reminiscent of the Zen story about the sage to whom rivers had appeared as rivers and mountains as mountains before he became introduced to Zen. They appeared no longer as rivers and mountains as he began to study Zen. When he reached enlightenment, however, rivers once more became rivers and mountains once again became mountains.

<sup>695</sup> Three CDs melted into blobs when Željko’s home got burned to the ground, along with all of our musical equipment, putting an end to our dreams of becoming a band that would be as important to the history of music as the Beatles: I do not remember anymore what the first one was; the second one was Portishead’s second record which I had received two months earlier as a birthday gift; the third one was *Automatic for the People*.

egotism while highlighting one's own humble nature is but a little bit more sublime version of egotism, quite often seen in those to whom, as I, myself, could add it, religiousness presents nothing but a powerful toy for one's ego, as Gregory Bateson would have had it<sup>696</sup>. But to stand in the middle between I and Thou, to strike "the balance of being able to exist in plain sight and also to have something left for yourself"<sup>697</sup>, of which Molly Rankin of Alvways talked, is to avoid all these traps that complete withdrawnness into oneself or total, unreserved submission to another carry, needing not to lie helplessly on the floor, cocooned like a fetus, and repeat "I am not here, this is not happening"<sup>698</sup> when we become overwhelmed by otherness nor sell our soul for two cents of attention to escape an unbearable monasterial loneliness. This balanced outlook, instead, proves to be an excellent basis for sparking the flame of divine creativity in and around us, as we may then begin to bounce back and forth between our inner world of visions, dreams and thoughts and the worlds magically coming to life behind the eyes of emanations of life that surrounds us, never becoming permanently glued to any of these realms, but remaining to be on the road forever and ever, like the Little Prince, the celestial traveler, covering tremendous cosmic distances to alternately (a) unite his eyes of the heart with those of other creatures and (b) water the beloved rose kept under a big glass bell and uproot the little baobabs threatening to overgrow her on the little planet of his own, never losing out of sight that "stars are beautiful because of a rose one cannot see", as he, himself, pointed out in what could easily be the most beautiful saying ever uttered. Everywhere we look, thus, we can glimpse divine and demonic forces dormant in human creatures swirling around each other in vortices, holding one another in a dynamic, constantly flowing embrace akin to Tai-Chi-Tu circle. Gazing at them is like gazing at Rubin's vase, as we cannot discern whether it is the embrace of lovers or wrestlers; for, as we see, one without the other cannot be imagined nor feel free to flourish in this dialectically developing world of ours where seeds of the traits of pathologically indifferent and destructive creatures are sown side by side with those from which features of angels and new Christ-like beings on Earth can suddenly spring into life. Careworn sadness and carefree joy are naturally prompted to flow like waterfalls into the ocean of our heart from the sublime summits of this worldview, alongside pushing us just about enough in the direction of carelessness as to how others will judge us in the midst of our stunning eruptions of enthralling energy, preventing us from becoming a deadbeat conformist, as well as providing a counterbalancing pull towards the hearts of people, joining the angelic hands of the heart with whom is, eventually, the only way to sustain the bliss of our introspective roaming through the world inside. Being aware of the blends of goodness and evilness brewing in each and every one of our spirits provides a basis for uprooting the feelings of bitter resentment over the state of world and substituting it with benevolent condolence as well as for putting an end to a Pinocchioesque pliability that allows us to be a tool for manipulation by authoritative others and establishing pillars of philosophical prudence springing upwards from the depths of our spirit and straight into the heavenly clouds of thoughts floating in our dreamy head constantly intoxicated with cosmic joy. Finally, one such worldview to which all things rest on an ethical middle ground is the one from which the power of love for all can spread its wings, not in a superficial and secretly selfish manner, but with

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<sup>696</sup> See Gregory Bateson's *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity*, Hampton Press, Cresskill, NJ (1979).

<sup>697</sup> Watch A Guide to Alvways: Molly Rankin by Roger Vee, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoFCSGcLw7Y> (2018).

<sup>698</sup> This is the mantra suggested by Michael Stipe to Thom Yorke to repeat on tours in order to restore the contact with one's inner self where the wells of creativity reside whenever the crowds rupture the links leading thereto.

profundity of which the greatest philosophers of the world would be proud and beauty in front of which the greatest artists would merely blush.

For as long as we are biting into the forbidden fruit from the Garden of Eden by judging diverse emanations of reality, ascribing good traits to one and evil to others, the inner “pushes and shoves” that expel us from Paradise and erase the heavenly chiaroscuro coloring our experience will continue to be in full operation. The ancient Hindu theologians coined the word *maya* to describe the clutches of mental illusions that are always looking out to cease our spirit and prevent its heavenward flights of imagination, and although most people routinely ascribe the word “illusion” to its literal translation, the word *maya* is most faithfully translated as the verb “to measure”<sup>699</sup>, signifying the spiritual downfalls led to by any attempts of the human mind to dissect the features of reality into qualitatively weighable segments. The act of labeling experiential traits and dividing them to admirable and despicable is thus indivertibly tied to our fall from grace. “Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man” (John 8:15) is how the Christ therefore offered us the key to his glory and delicately drew the sketches of the judgeless road that leads to the summits of spiritual excellence before our bedazzled eyes, whereon less is more and the more we give away, the more we gain, that is, the more we scatter the treasures held within us, the more enchanting the flights of our creative being across the worldly skies become. For, in the holistic, fractal world of ours, where the same features are found on local and global scales alike, every judgment of a judgment is bound to be as fallacious as the judgment that is being judged. What is more, picking a single member of a set and attributing one property to it implies that most, if not all other members of the given set are free of that property or perhaps attributable with its complete opposite. For example, as pointed out by a criticizer of a group of judgmental journalists engaged in recommending scientific papers for retraction based on their fallaciousness, such labeling is, philosophically speaking, “misfounded on some very serious fallacies, namely if a paper is retracted we can assume that therefore it was (seriously) wrong, and if a paper is not retracted we can assume that therefore it is not fraudulent and not seriously unsound”<sup>700</sup>, when in reality the entire system of scientific result reporting is corrupt by “corporate profiteering, institutional egoism, and careerist self-interests, especially in medical fields”<sup>701</sup>, and every study, because of the partially correct approximations that form its logical basis, occupies a fuzzy, middle ground between soundness and falsehood. Every quality assessment, for this reason, has to be aware of disillusionment consequential to it. Ludwig Wittgenstein correspondingly realized in his tractate that every Yes implies a No, drawing on Lao-Tzu’s many-millennia-old idea that labeling specific traits of reality, mentally or verbally, as good or desirable must inherently spoil human spirit because it simultaneously outlines what is evil or uninvited. The Chinese sage at one point went on to humbly extend this insight to an even bolder claim that from the first prophets and sages, such as the one he, himself, had been must have belonged the initial spur that pushed humanity from its golden age liberated from judgments of any kind and into its modern state permeated by good and evil alike. “Renounce scholarship and disturbances will disappear: how tiny the difference is between ‘yes’ and no’?” (Tao-Te-Xing XX), he wondered, calling for the extermination of judgments of any kind on the basis of the recognition that every approval of one act entails the disapproval of another act. For,

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<sup>699</sup> See Steve Ross’ and Olivia Rosewood’s *Happy Yoga: 7 Reasons Why There’s Nothing to Worry About*, Harper Collins, New York (2003), pp. 249.

<sup>700</sup> See the comment by Samizdat on Retraction Watch: What People are Saying about Retraction Watch (November 2, 2011), retrieved from <http://retractionwatch.com/what-people-are-saying-about-retraction-watch/>.

<sup>701</sup> *Ibid.*

awareness of one raises awareness of the other, as one without the other could not exist; or, as lucidly pointed out by John Milton in the context of tasting the fruit from the tree of knowledge by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, “It was out of the rind of one apple tasted that good and evil leapt forth into the world, like two twins cleaving together”<sup>702</sup>. To reenter this magical state of mind wherein dichotomizations between virtue and wickedness have ceased and wherein everything becomes caressed by the flaps of angelic wings of our golden heart, good and evil, bitter and balsamic, is, in a way, analogous to restoring the consciousness of a child, infinitely pure and innocent, resting in the same blissful locus in which Theo rested on his third birthday, when he and I built a dialogue worthy of inclusion in the finest selections of Zen and Chan stories; namely, asked if he loved when his favorite, Bermuda buttercup flowers were open, he, holding one of them in his hands and staring at the ceiling wistfully, said Yes; asked if he loved when these flowers were closed, he said Yes with the same calm and joy. Everything in the magical microcosm of his was a Holy Yea untainted by the idea that valuing one thing must come at the price of depreciating another, the reason for which it safely resided in the Garden of Eden, not tempted at all to taste from that fruit of the tree of knowledge that is the ultimate cause of all misery that has befallen human spirits on this karmic station of their everlasting journey through the kaleidoscopic universe of divine being. Nature, of course, speaking the language of God who metaphorically expelled humans from Paradise following their endowment with the power of judgment, incessantly sheds signs on our path to make us aware that neither perfectly benevolent nor absolutely malign traits can be ascribed to any emanation of life nourished under her celestial umbrella. With the words uttered by my Mom, who leaped from the water like a curious sea otter, when I, as an innocently swimming *kouros*, could not help seeing utmost wickedness in a local fisherman who struck me with the hook of his fishing rod, “We need to find sympathy even for those whom we may not like at first sight”, reverberating restlessly in my head, I find solace in believing that the purpose of Nature’s yielding logically fuzzy answers to our questions, blending Yes and No to various extents, is to awaken the eyes of a sage in us, those that helplessly recognize only traits of divine goodness in each creature that pops up in their sight. For, just like perfect knowing and perfect ignorance both possess no room for the further evolution of our knowledge and being, so does both painting others in perfect clothes of spirit and representing them as hopeless emanations of the most extreme malice leave no space for the evolution of our relationship therewith, yielding merely fearful respect and infinite loathe to take over and extinguish the interactive liveliness of our spirits. Yet, to learn to recognize the flowers of divine grace, concealed at times but always ready to blossom and fructify if watered with the right incentives, and fragile branches of spirit whose revitalization requires our patient care, as dwelling side by side in the inner landscapes of surrounding people’s hearts, is to set ourselves on the most beautiful ride on the carousel of divine seeing and being that this world offers.

Hereafter, looking at the world with the eyes of the heart, we could realize that every man hides a sprout of innate goodness and benevolence in his heart. Standing on one such perceptual vista wherefrom all becomes seen as pervaded by goodness and light, we become one of those godly souls “whose hearts are fresh and simple, who have faith in God and Nature, who believe that in all ages every human heart is human, that in even savage bosoms there are longings, yearnings, strivings for the good they comprehend not, that the feeble hands and helpless, groping blindly in the darkness, touch God’s right hand in that darkness and are lifted up and

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<sup>702</sup> The quote found in Paul Auster’s *City of Glass*, Adapted by Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli, Picador, New York, NY (2004), pp. 38.

strengthened”<sup>703</sup>. And if goodness consists mainly in seeing goodness in others, then the heart of us as a viewer from this stellar panorama becomes instantly purified and holier than it was each time we recognize timeless benevolence behind the veil of fugacious malice. Even if we could imagine an immaculately malign creature, we could be sure that his acts would face repugnance and disgust in innumerable eyes of the world, which would thereby receive a useful example on how life should *not* be lived. Such examples are, of course, oftentimes million times more useful than those that demonstrate how things should be done. For, many times exhibition of pure and divine beauty produces nothing but outbursts of jealousy, disbelief and angering confusion. Joan of Arc envisioned by Carl Theodor Dreyer’s camera, bursting with love, passion and wide-eyed wonder and in striking contrast with her arrogant interrogators who had embodied the curse brought forth whenever judgmental answers eclipse loving and intrinsically forgiving questions in us, thus said a simple No when the judges asked her to recite the Lord’s prayer, shedding tears at the same time while remembering how her mother had taught her this sacred hymn. Just like she was aware that the beauty of singing emanating from her heart would have been swallowed by the black holes of the surrounding dead spirits rather than absorbed by planets flourishing with life, craving for light and yearning to become similar stars of spirit, so should we know that whatever comes out of our mouth or is shaken off our body with graceful gestures, like enticing stardust, can be given a wholly different connotation by the neighboring souls from the one we had in mind when we conceived it. Or, as the Christ himself noticed, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you” (Matthew 7:6). Hence, because: (a) we could never grasp the complete contexts in which deeds are executed and which partially define their goodness in the light of the whole; (b) whatever we do will always be semi-autonomously interpreted by others in a manner which is out of control of us as originators of these acts; (c) we are inherently limited in our ability to bring forth perfectly precise conclusions on the effect of experiential insights, it is impossible to determine how good or bad any given acts are for the world. And this claim of impossibility is not posed here as a wall to lament in front of, but as a sacred dot that is to put an end to our attempts to become a perfectly insightful judge and instead open the door to the shine of Love for it all. For, whatever the circumstances around us appear to be, hopelessly gloomy or radiantly harmonious, we can be sure that their mirrors would soon show up and the dialectical syntheses of opposites would elevate our minds and the physical reality to novel and more advanced experiential platforms. Knowing this, we can continue to play the dialectical game of life and pretend to be a member of any of the confronted sides, knowing that being black in face of the white improves the contrast and the purity of the latter, and *vice versa*. We could thus carry on with our involvement in one dialectical battle or another, just as Lord Krishna would have advised us, while never ceasing to rest the eye of our mind on sublime vistas of consciousness wherefrom the Sun of unconditional and heavenly Love sends its sunshiny rays down to Earth and each and every creature and worldly detail on it.

In that sense, we could be reminded that just as a doctrine that tells us that there are no doctrines to be followed stomps over this very doctrine too and, in fact, allows the following of any doctrine, renouncing judgmental attitudes brings us over to the liberty to abandon this very judgment that tells us that there should be no judgmental gates posed in our heads and to make any judgments we would like to make, freely and guiltlessly. Thus, getting back to my comment in which I implicitly condemned the condemnatory judgments demonstrated by my friends, I wondered later whether by offering it I presupposed that those whom I have targeted therewith

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<sup>703</sup> See Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s *The Song of Hiawatha*, Introduction, Nolit, Belgrade, Serbia (1855).

prejudged improperly and thus exerted yet another instance of prejudgment, when the ideal of true ignorance, in its most constructive connotation, whereupon none is condemned and all is accepted, would predispose me not to offer any comment at all, in fact. After all, in today's world, where the most widely read, mainstream psychologists advise canceling out and excluding from the workplace anyone who exhibits any dark personality features, a category that would undoubtedly include every world renowned scientist and artist that has ever lived, practicing a little less judgment and confrontation and a little more unconditional acceptance would greatly contribute to healing this deeply divisive world. This brought me face-to-face with the verses of the final poem of Lao-Tzu's Tao-Te-Xing: "The truthful words need not be well chosen words; well chosen words need not be truthful words. A good man does not argue; the one who argues is not a good man" (Tao-Te-Xing LXXXI). Right after the recollection of this timeless precept, a verse from a Billy Bragg's folk punk ballad swooshed through my head, "The temptation to take the precious things we have apart to see how they work must be resisted for they never fit together again"<sup>704</sup>, the verse I always interpreted as hinting at the deadly effects of any verbal discussion on the human spirit owing to its analytically dissecting views and taking life out of their holders in the process. On the other hand, however, without making judgments, in our daily navigation through the physical reality and in the domain of cognitive reflections, neither could we perceive and coordinate ourselves properly nor would any original and progressive thoughts arise from our mental sphere. Hence, the balance between judging, as inherently imperfect as it inevitably is, and absentmindedly watching the world, as unconditionally lovingly as it can get, has to be spurred within the space of our minds.

From one such balance between analyticity and meditative intuitiveness, we could glimpse yet another crucial balance that columns of our creativity stand on. It is the one between emotions and intellect, between the beautiful heart and the beautiful mind. And through his extraordinary orderliness and intellectual and emotional discipline, Nikola Tesla, the renegade scientist<sup>705</sup> who could talk to pigeons and yet spin rigorously detailed equations and schemes of apparatuses in his head, born at the stroke of a midnight in July, in the midst of a lightning storm, managed to bring electric lights to the face of the Earth and not only change the patterns of information flow and materials-wise organization of it, but also give rise to an endless number of wired-up dreams and visions in the eyes of humanity, including both those that question the great *Why* in an ever more beautiful and imaginative light and those that pertain to how to furthermore build and beautify the *What*, the material sphere of our planetary home. Although often subjected to ridicule for his exceptional spirituality, even though the latter was always balanced with extraordinarily productive practicality, as in the case when an anonymous physicist attacked him under the banner title Science and Fiction for his unbound fanciness, claiming that it is "absurd" and that "unhappily, Mr. Tesla in his enthusiasm to progress neglects to state which direction is the proper one for the human mass to follow, north, south, east, west, toward the moon or Sirius or to Dante's Satan in the centre of the earth"<sup>706</sup>, quite clearly aiming at his systemic flashes of inspiring thought wherein all seemed to have been connected and ideas sparked each other like stars of the northern skies after dusk, Tesla rarely allowed such hostilities to divert him from his streaming along the tracks of his divine mission in life. For, when our faith in communication

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<sup>704</sup> Listen to Billy Bragg's Must I Paint You a Picture on Workers Playtime, Go! Discs (1988).

<sup>705</sup> This epithet was ascribed to Nikola Tesla by David Hatcher Childress in the book The Fantastic Inventions of Nikola Tesla, Adventures Unlimited Press, Kempton, IL (1993).

<sup>706</sup> See Marc J. Seifer's The Life and Times of Nikola Tesla: Biography of a Genius, Citadel Press, New York, NY (1998), pp. 242.

with Nature, which permeates with its spiritual energy and godly guidance each detail of our experience, flourishes in our heart, no praises or mockeries of the world matter at all anymore. All that remains to fill our heads then is the bliss of the Sun of the divine soul hidden in the hub of our heart like a prudently treasured teardrop from another world, a drop separated from the ocean of cosmic love that permeates all things, incessantly rising in beams and columns and taking us thereon to ever more sublime levels of bedazzlement by the infinite beauty of being.

Indeed, common to many stereotypical scientific genii from the Balkan Peninsula were creative personalities that blended spirituality and practicality and let the two accentuate and reinforce each other, rather than combat and suppress. One of them, as we see, was Nikola Tesla who had a habit of talking not only to pigeons and fairies of his fancy but to the omnipresent soul of the universe too, who proposed communications with extraterrestrials, considered Maxwell's equations as poetry<sup>707</sup> and let Goethe's verses guide him through the schemes of inventions he devised<sup>708</sup>, believed in the divinity of extrasensory experiences, claimed how he ceaselessly swum in the bubble of his magnetic field and acknowledged artistic sensibility as a precious guidance for his scientific creativity. His aversion of the approach nourished by his antipodal rival, Thomas Alva Edison, who owed his success to a selfish spiritedness, prosaic practicality and inhumanely capitalistic exploitation of coworkers, may have been a favorable circumstance in his life, after all, as I often wonder, since it may have even more spurred his reliance on goodness and generosity, powerful intuition, mysticism, self-sufficiency and poetic flights of inspiration, traits that typified the Serbian scientist for his entire life. The vision of a spinning electromotor producing alternating current was, in fact, enkindled in his mind at the moment in which he recalled a verse from Goethe's Faust wherein a reference to a dying day on one side of the globe and a day being born on the other side of it was drawn. Still, all these peculiarities in the eyes of his contemporaries spurred, not hindered, his genuine sense of practical inventiveness that resulted in 111 patents. The Slovenian scientist, Jožef Stefan, who set the law of radiation of a black body and was the first to correctly predict the temperature of the surface of the Sun<sup>709</sup>, was a poet and a rigorous physicist at the same time, calling for a new generation of scientists who would have "knowledge in their minds and love in their hearts"<sup>710</sup>. For "in order to know, we need to unravel all the aspects of our spiritual living"<sup>711</sup>, as he further claimed. In the spirit of his times, the Dalmatian thinker, Ruđer Bošković, who set the first principles of the theory of relativity, who set the foundations of a unified theory of everything and who discovered the absence of atmosphere on the Moon was also a theologian, a Jesuit priest, a poet, a philosopher and a natural scientist contributing to a wide array of disciplines, from geometry to astronomy to mechanics to atomic theory. His western successors paid no heed to his poetic inclinations, even though Ruđer was noted for his expression of progressive scientific ideas through the language of poetry, with the prominent example being his lengthiest work, *De Solis ac Lunae defectibus*, written for the quarter of a century, from 1735 to 1760, in which he offered advanced

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<sup>707</sup> This is according to the insights into Tesla's unpublished work stored in the Museum of Nikola Tesla in Belgrade by Velimir Abramović, a cofounder of the Center for the Cosmological Studies 'Nikola Tesla'. Personal correspondence (2013).

<sup>708</sup> See Margaret Cheney's *Tesla: Man Out of Time*, Simon and Schuster, London, UK (2001), pp. 43-44.

<sup>709</sup> This law is regularly used by astronomers of the modern day to predict the surface temperatures and radii of other stars as well.

<sup>710</sup> See Lavo Čermelj's *Josip Stefan: Life and Work of a Great Physicist*, Slovenski knjižni zavod, Ljubljana, Slovenia (1950).

<sup>711</sup> *Ibid.*

astronomical ideas, not merely popular ones, in elegiac verse<sup>712</sup>. Another Dalmatian, Marco Antonio de Dominis was a theological dissenter posthumously burned at stakes together with his works; yet, he contributed to scientific understanding of the world by providing the first correct theory of the rainbow, as Isaac Newton pointed out, as well as the first explanation of tidal effects based on lunar and solar gravitational pulls. Milutin Milanković, the Serbian astronomer who, most famously, correlated the cyclic arrival of ice ages on Earth<sup>713</sup> with the periodic variations in its eccentricity, tilt and precession and used a web of rigorous math to bind Heaven and Earth, that is, celestial mechanics and Earth sciences into a single new field of planetary climatology was also a prolific writer of fiction that aimed to inspire the juvenile spirits and spark their interest for science in general. Mihailo Petrović, the inventor of one of the first prototypes of analog computer and one of the greatest world's experts in phenomenology of calculus of his times, played violin and in 1896 founded a renowned musical society, Suz, aside from being a passionate fisherman, which earned him the nickname by which he is nowadays known: Alas. Mihajlo Pupin, another famous Serbian-American inventor and yet another one who, like Tesla, owed his success to a balanced mindset in which rigorous analyticity never eclipsed poetic intuitiveness nor *vice versa*, claimed in his popular writings that scientific discoveries need not lessen our religious senses, but could in fact strengthen them: "God's spiritual realities are invisible, but they are illustrated and made intelligible by the physical realities revealed in the physical things which are made. According to this interpretation of the Apostle's words the physical and the spiritual realities supplement each other. They are the two terminals of the same realities, one terminal residing in the human soul, and the other in the things of the external world. Here is one of the fundamental reasons why Science and Religion supplement each other. They are the two pillars of the portal through which the human soul enters the world where the divinity resides"<sup>714</sup>. Indeed, realizing that the beautiful outlines of *what* in the world around us are mostly the products of human creativity and effort naturally brings us over to see the spiritual ingrained in the material and *vice versa*. Or, as put into the words of Winnie-the-Pooh, "I sometimes wonder if it's true, that who is what and what is who"<sup>715</sup>. In such a way, all things around us become seen as embodiments of human dreams; as inscribed on the epitaph for Christopher Wren in St. Paul's Cathedral in London, "Reader, if you seek memorial, look around you!" Human spirit permeates everything, whereas Nature too, in a subtle and inconspicuous manner, pervades every single thought and vision that the mind brings forth. Giordano Bruno, for one, realized that the universe of human thought is a faithful replica of the natural world, though on a far smaller, microcosmic scale, and went on to conclude that "every thought, like every speck in Nature, was connected to all other things"<sup>716</sup>. In turn, however, alongside this reflectance of the natural onto the mental, there is a direct correspondence occurring in the opposite direction too, as according to the tenets of the co-

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<sup>712</sup> See Darko Donevski's Poezija po matrici prirode, *Elementarium* (September 2016), retrieved from <http://elementarium.cpn.rs/teme/poezija-po-matrici-prirode/>.

<sup>713</sup> Today, it is known that countless other climactic changes are caused by the periodic variations in the parameters of Earth's rotation around its axis and the Sun discovered by Milanković, including, for example, the process of turning Sahara Desert into a luscious grassland every 20,000 years or so, before it becomes a desert once again after about the same period of time. See *How the Earth Was Made* documentary series: Sahara, Pioneer Productions, History Channel (2009).

<sup>714</sup> See Michael Idvorsky Pupin's *The New Reformation: From Physical to Spiritual Realities*, p.272, Cosimo, New York, NY (1927).

<sup>715</sup> See Frederick Crews' *Postmodern Pooh*, North Point Press, New York, NY (2001), pp. 4.

<sup>716</sup> See Joyce Dyer's *What's On Your Mind*, *International Herald Tribune* (Aug 19, 2013), pp. 7.

creational thesis, the human mind is involved in the creation of its own world of experience to about the same extent as Nature is. To put it simply, mind draws Nature, Nature draws mind, as in Escher's famous painting where one hand draws another. Focusing on *what*, on seemingly objective and distant from the human soul, thus brings us right to the center of it, to the reigns of human aspirations and emotions, feeding the powerfulness of *how*, of the imaginative ways in which we act to improve and beautify the state of the world, which presented the beginning of our circular journey.

Despite this intrinsic connectedness of *what* and *how*, we seem to have been raised in a world in which most people are blind to these inextricable links. This is most clearly witnessed by observing the pervasive modern trend to deride religious thought in any possible way. Instead, typically, signs of belief in either the nihilistic nature of our worlds where everything happens in a completely random manner or the endless force of progress based on the empirical methods of modern science, where the powers of logic and reason insensately dominate over intuition and emotion, are being shown. However, in doing so, one may immediately observe that an inherent smartness and divine responsiveness is taken away from the heart of Nature and placed solely in the core of man's mind. The balance, of which the co-creational thesis has taught, thus becomes disrupted and the stability of metaphysical foundations of the philosophical worldviews of the modern scientists shaken. In fact, it takes only a subtle question that touches these foundations of one's worldviews to have its visible towers start to tremble and be threatened to fall apart. One of the reasons for such a situation is that the modern scientific education minimally insists on elaborating the philosophical bases of the scientific method. As yet another instance of extolling maps while neglecting the territories, so pervasive in our intellectual milieu, science has become an edifice alienated from the very metaphysical foundations that bestow stability to it and without which its caving in under the pressure from the pragmatic contextual skies folding over it could be naturally expected. Or, as pointed out by Friedrich Nietzsche, "Science... proposes in its wantonness and indiscretion to lay down laws for philosophy, and in its turn to play the 'master'... to play the Philosopher on its own account. My memory teems with the naivetés of insolence which I have heard about philosophy and philosophers... On one occasion it was the specialist... who instinctively stood on the defensive against all synthetic tasks and capabilities; at another time it was the industrious worker who had got a scent of Otium and refined luxuriousness in the internal economy of the philosopher... On another occasion it was the color-blindness of the utilitarian, who sees nothing in philosophy but a series of refuted systems, and an extravagant expenditure which 'does nobody any good'"<sup>717</sup>. For, unless natural, empirical sciences successfully pose themselves as bridges between philosophers and workers, the gap between which dates back to ancient Greece, they will remain inherently imbalanced and destabilized. Just like paddling boats weave between the port and the starboard, so does a ship of intellect that harmoniously sails across the sea of knowledge fluctuate between pragmatic and fundamental poles, creating things of palpable and practical importance when facing the port, the side of the ship on which the cargo is unloaded, and stargazing in wonder at the celestial beauties that overflow the world from its other, romantic and dreamy side. Interspersing my daily lab bench work with writing a word or two that would come to comprise this and other books of mine certainly contributes to my attempts to grow into a living epitome of a marriage between the artist, the philosopher and the worker, a *bhakti*, *jnana* and *karma* yogi, respectively, letting the birds of pragmatic creativity of my being feed on the artistic and philosophic ones and *vice*

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<sup>717</sup> See Friedrich Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*; Aphorism 204, translated by Helen Zimmern, available at <http://www.authorama.com/beyond-good-and-evil-7.html> (1886).

*versa*. For, unless this lack of knowledge in the domain of philosophy becomes tackled at the university level as one of the central problems that promotes narrow-mindedness among scientists and ruins the happiness that is to arise from their vocation, only the bravest researchers, those who would be willing to spend their professional working hours plunged in the ocean of philosophy of science, while risking to be caught and punished for their infidelity, and the most curious ones, those who are driven by some invisible forces to dig deeper and deeper into the foundations of our knowledge, will reach profoundness in terms of philosophical knowledge and yet retain high levels of scientific productivity. They will be the ones who would teach us that a rigorous research eye is vital for gaining clarity in understanding complex links that one faces in probing the epistemological forest of the scientific method, while philosophical literacy is essential for guiding our research endeavors towards beautiful oases where treasures of great discoveries lie hidden. They will be the ones who would heartily embrace Socrates' belief that "until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy... cities will have never rest from their evils"<sup>718</sup>, even though they would be surrounded by the Manichean souls mocking them, souls who have discarded Plato's Republic as equally utopian as Eldorado long ago and who hold now that the lowliest of the human nature must be spurred and released to the surface if the wheels of the human progress are to be continuously spun. They will be those who would have in the middle of the Dark Ages and the Inquisitional torture taught us of empiricism and doubtfulness spinning the wheel of progressive religious thought, as faith could only grow from the soil of incessant questioning, which dogmatism of any kind makes infertile. In the midst of the modern times of dominance of empirical and positivistic thought, however, they would whisper in our ears how discarding the relevance of religions of the world equals dumping the treasures of the great ethical and aesthetical heritage of humanity, in which many guiding stars rest, deep into the ocean of human mind, where it will remain only a mysterious dream, a forgotten Atlantis of a kind.

For, if we look close enough, we would realize that these creatures are nothing but sacred rebels of a kind, always acting so as to break the tendency of ours to inertly float with the stream, dancing to everyone's surprise while touching the clouds rather than walking while following others sadly and spiritlessly, thereby waking us from leisured slumbers into a world of awareness in which beauty and love, sublime and spiritual, are recognized as dwelling everywhere, in every piece of the material world that we inhabit. In fact, as a person who has always cultivated a profound metaphysical inquiry, a scientist who matured on the grounds of a strong theological tradition, the intellectually hostile divide between the coasts of science and theology I learned to see as nothing but blatantly irrational and unnecessary. Had we seen both science and religion as sets of organized metaphors of a kind, as pointers to the precious links that spread like strings of a divine musical instrument between us, and which our emotions pluck producing harmonious or disharmonious vibrations, golden bridges could be envisaged as spontaneously built between these divided lands of human inquiry about the nature of our beings. After all, if we define science as a set of pragmatic, humanly derived metaphors, interwoven via the rules of logic and math though, it would become obvious that scientific images are not universal reflections of the objective nature of the world, but one out of an endless number of ways to describe our experiential realities for the sake of coordinating each other's experiences and navigating each other towards some beautiful horizons at which brilliant spiritual insights await us. For, the more we realize the metaphoric nature of both scientific and religious messages and imagery, the less

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<sup>718</sup> See Plato's Republic, In: The Works of Plato, Translated by Benjamin Jowett, Edited by Irwin Edman, Modern Library, New York, NY (380 BC), pp. 431.

we are bound to the earthly reigns and in need of carrying the burden and shackles of universal truthfulness and objectivity, and the more we are free to fly towards skies of endless possibilities and infinite, boundless thought. The metaphors and stories that are built around relationships conceived to scientifically describe the physical reality therefore speak about the nature of the world as much as they tell us about the essence of ourselves in this co-creative process of scientific research and discovery. Since what we perceive, infer and describe are always partly reflections of the observer and partly reflections of the true nature of the reality, the beauty of scientific metaphors that we propose is akin to the beauty of our own storytelling, exploratory attitudes.

Having brought the concept of narration to the point in question, it is time to recall that one of the most amusing elements of traditional storytelling, spanning backwardly from Agatha Christie's crime novels to the ancient seeker of wisdom who had left his Oriental home in search for the diamonds and pearls of sacred knowledge, though only to realize that the treasures he sought after for so long had lain hidden right underneath his home, has been the idea of unusual suspect. Therefore, it should not surprise us that the perspective invoked here invites spiritualists of the modern times to look for the divine spirit in matter, the aspect of reality that they have traditionally felt most repelled by, and revert the central ontological question of theology from that of how God created the universe and then virtually left it to evolve all by itself to that of how the propensity to evolve into this amazing thing called life has been woven into matter. Such a reversal of theses opens the door to realization that divinity is not transcendental and infinitely distant in essence; rather, it is immanent in it all and pulsates with every passing moment from all things surrounding us, strewing our spirits with signs of precious significance for our ascents to stars. What this coalescence of matter and spirit yields is a push for spiritualists to get closer to physical sciences and for traditionally atheistic physical scientists to grasp the omnipresent divine spirit that pervades every corner of reality. Therefore, should we not consider God as an objectively existing entity, the one and only transcendent ruler of the world, but as a metaphor of the divine intelligence that holds the world on the gentle hands of its invisible foundations, we would open the doors that lead not to objective and therefore mutually exclusive theological depictions of the experiential reality but to innumerable coexisting representations thereof. Hence, proper understanding of the roots of both science and religion, in accord with the subjective/objective synchrony proposed in the co-creational thesis, resembles our journeying downward along the stem of the human tree of knowledge, all until we reach a single source of origins of all human intellectual and communicable endeavors. Both natural sciences and religions represent human attempts to depict causal relationships interwoven in the substrate of reality, and while the former focus on local, direct and empirically testable physical interactions, the latter portray the responses of Nature to actions and intentions of the subjects from holistic and ethical perspectives, while substituting the concept of provability with that of faith. Moreover, since scientific reasoning too rests on fundamental assumptions that could not be derived or validated via experimental insights but rather inevitably remain subjects of human hypothesizing, we could conclude that even scientific reasoning, although often wrapped up in clouds of pretentious certainty, has a heart of faith beating in its core. Although many objectivist scientists would readily agree with the words proclaimed by Isaac Newton centuries ago, "Anything which is not deduced from phenomena ought to be called a hypothesis, and hypotheses of this kind, whether metaphysical or physical, whether of occult qualities or

mechanical, have no place in experimental philosophy”<sup>719</sup>, it is only their philosophical superficiality that prevents them from glimpsing foundations of their sciences in their queries and realizing that every inference of theirs rests on assumptions that cannot be deduced from experiential phenomena. For this reason, scientific models in the hands of humanity today can be said to present only one out of an infinitude of possible ways of representing reality and navigating our way through it. When Ludwig Boltzmann formulated the equation so meaningful to him that he made it the only thread of symbols engraved on his tombstone,  $S = k \ln W$ , he might have been aware that its groundbreaking nature was partly due to its defining entropy in a completely different way from the way it had been defined until then, as an irreversibly transferrable portion of the heat content of a thermodynamic system. Within the statistical thermodynamic framework he helped setting, entropy,  $S$ , became defined as proportional to the degeneracy of the system,  $W$ , that is, the number of ways in which a particular state could be attained. To this very day, these parallel definitions, having no significant similarities among them, serve as an evidence that all scientific theories we may conceive of are, in fact, only pragmatic models that work and by no means universally valid and the only possible ways of representing reality. Truth is, in truth, that there are no exclusive truths in life, as each one of them could be proven limited and false from a specific angle of viewing reality, which is a thought that, if expanded, could bring us over to Niels Bohr’s famous remark that opposites of great truths are usually equally great truths. At times, as exemplified by the merging of the particulate and the wave nature of light into one, the diametrically opposite hypotheses could end up being combined within a single worldview, regardless of how illogical, paradoxical and purely Zen-like this may seem. How liberating this is for the human mind, which no longer needs to be shackled in fetters of specific tenets, laws and ideals, is beyond even a forest of invisible exclamation marks that may end this sentence. Take the Big Bang theory, too: high-energy physics experiments are under way that might debunk it and show that Cosmos extends into time infinitely, with no singular point of origin, branching out into an infinite number of parallel universes at countless of its miniature black hole points<sup>720</sup>. This is to say that even the most convincing theories may fall flat given enough time to test, retest and refute them, so that nothing, really nothing should be taken as certain, including our deepest uncertainties. Being aware of this volatility of our convictions naturally sows the seeds of humbleness all across the fertile soil of our mind, as we then become aware that ours need not be the most perfect and utterly impeccable schemes of representing experience. The ancient Greeks believed in a plethora of palpable gods and heroes as those who governed the procession of historic events and were responsible for the evolution of human experience, certainly, to some extent, looking down on their tribal predecessors and their less intricate theological systems. Similarly, the modern man nowadays believes in scientific models of the Universe, neglecting that atoms and molecules present only ingredients of these models and not necessarily actually existing entities. Committing the same mistake as the mediocre ancients did, he likewise looks down on the worldviews of those whose existence preceded his and superiorly sees them as obsolete. Yet, it is only veils of sheer philosophical ignorance that prevent him from realizing that the same fate surely awaits the present beliefs and microcosmic models that his mind holds on to, as eons of

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<sup>719</sup> The quote was found in Frank Wilczek’s and Betsy Devine’s *Longing for the Harmonies: Themes and Variations from Modern Physics*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, NY (1989), pp. 25.

<sup>720</sup> See Sarah Knapton’s *Big Bang Theory Could Be Debunked by Large Hadron Collider*, *The Telegraph* (March 23, 2015), retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/large-hadron-collider/11489442/Big-Bang-theory-could-be-debunked-by-Large-Hadron-Collider.html>.

the future human development that is about to happen will undoubtedly change human worldviews from their core and sooner or later reveal obsolescence of the ontological views of the contemporary age.

The premise of the existence of reality divisible to discrete units presents a starting point for nucleation of scientific worldviews around it that cannot be proven from experience and can be challenged by different fundamental assumptions which contrast the classical atomistic depiction of reality, including the space-time continuum<sup>721</sup> of Einstein's theory of relativity and the existence of infinitely stretched vibrating strands of the string theory. Because, hypothetically, an infinite number of models could describe experience with comparable levels of correctness, each one of these models *per se* is predestined to be imperfect and, eventually, tumble down into its opposite when pushed out far enough, as Bohr's principle of complementarity could insinuate. Such is the case, for example, with the aforementioned atomistic descriptions of reality whose search for the most elementary ingredients thereof results in realizations of their indivisibility and intrinsic connectedness, as demonstrated by quarks able to exist only when paired with each other, wave functions relatable to even the darkest corners of the Universe which Prometheus attempted to illuminate in his dreams, quantum entanglement and other effects of action at distance, certainly appearing "spooky" to the objectivistic eyes of the world. It is for this reason that searching for a single grand theory that would flawlessly unify the quantum theory and the theory of relativity, both of which start from different fundamental grounds as to what physical reality is made of, without any *ad hoc* interventions, presents a futile effort on part of the fundamental physicists of the modern day. Pragmatic as they are, meant to be valid within their own limited scopes of experience and thus ultimately imperfect in the eyes of the whole, a plethora of existing scientific models in use today could neatly complement each other, but when tried to be reduced to a single basis, they will begin to crash and crumble over each other. Semi-subjective and semi-objective as they are, both sciences and theologies can only be ultimately represented as partly humanly created and therefore metaphoric reflections of the experiential reality the way we see it and partly objective reflections of the natural reality as it is. Also, since the need to show the way to another and the genuine thirst to know, to reveal the answer to the deepest questions that are innately inscribed in us and that make us ascend along the ladder of evolution of consciousness, is what stands deep underneath them as the ultimate drive thereof, we can equally say that nothing other but Love and Wonder is what is at these roots of the tree of human knowledge, which only in the range of its visible stem branches into science, religion and other types of human knowledge. Traveling from the surface to the roots and back is, by the way, what every profound thinker does on a momentary basis, and to make this circular voyaging complete I will go back and reconnect with the opening thought in this paragraph by adding that unrecognized this intrinsic connectedness on the level of their foundations is what keeps science and theology separate in the heads of many. The purpose of

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<sup>721</sup> An endless source of fascination implicit in this four-dimensional worldview has been the thought that just like space is, so to say, always present around us in its fullest extent, so may time be, implying that this fourth dimension of the physical reality has already happened and that life may be a movie played before our souls transforming to stars along its course. The feeling that, already, "this life has passed before my eyes", as Michael Stipe put it at the very end of R.E.M.'s majestic record, Automatic for the People, must have been shared by many prophetic individuals in their moments of clairvoyance, when Ajna chakra on their foreheads opened its petals and absorbed the blissful inflow of the energy of the Cosmos where the present, the past and the future are all mixed into one, as in accordance with the following excerpt from one of Albert Einstein's discourses: "My old friend left this strange world before me. This means nothing. People like us, who believe in physics, know that the distinction between past, present and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion".

training in philosophy of science is exactly that – to teach us to incessantly feed our thirst to know and meet the invisible metaphysical grounds upon which our propositions, ideas and inferences rest, and neglecting the importance of this training has left a terrible trace on the academic tradition of the day. It is most apparently present in today’s universities’ churning out armies of followers disinterested and untrained to question the foundations of their thinking and being, even though these critical thinking skills could be considered the main product of higher education. Instead of fostering selfless curiosity that is courageous enough to honestly confront the mainstream thinking, they seem to be more moved by the selfish drive to preserve their own place in the academic world by being ready to blindly follow the authorities of the world with every step they make. In that sense, I see this confusion over the true meaning of scientific and theological imagery as none other than a sin of the followers of the original teachings, who have tended to water down the latter and present it in more concrete light than it had been initially conceived, turning all the lovely patches of ignorance into phony omniscient attitudes. Yet, I wonder if these followers have ever realized how their stance of mere submissive supporters is in fundamental opposition with these original teachings which were conceived by those who had actually craved not to follow but to move against the streams of the standardized and clichéd thinking of their times. That is where the illiteracy in philosophy and history of science comes as strikingly obvious, for instead of independent thinkers keeping awareness of the emotional, epistemological and cultural grounds on which scientific ideas rest and of the roots under them, where science is entwined with arts, humanities, religion and all other disciplines, today we have boring brains limited to the narrow frames of objectivistic premises and specialized knowledge populating academic offices and lecture halls. Instead of glorious minds putting their work and being in the context of the complete history of science and bouncing their ideas off the standards set by the long lineage of thinkers, spanning, say, from Lao-Tzu and Socrates to Blaise Pascal and Ruđer Bošković to Heinz von Foerster and Ranulph Glanville, we have bunches of conformists bowing their heads to local authorities, compromising infinitely creative potentials hiding inside them to reap the shallow rewards of tenures, medals, promotions and massive amounts of money, that powerful corruptor of everything that it touches, which keep on trickling into their pockets. Finally, instead of a generation of science teachers and researchers who would be involved with what they do not only in creation and transmission of knowledge, but also in humanization of science, of students, of peers and of the whole wide world, we have a bunch of linear, narrow-minded squares disconnected from any emotional, inspirational and humanitarian values of their science, producing knowledge that is cold, soulless and unable to touch not even the edges of human hearts, let alone enkindle their flames from deep inside.

Historically, of course, institutionalized and strongly hierarchical in nature as it is, academia, that “mauldy vault in which art”, that is, science, as Kazimir Malevich had it<sup>722</sup>, “flagellates itself”, has been perpetually inclined to drown in deadening conformities and one example comes from the rise of so-called academic styles in art of the Victorian world of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Namely, as the patrons of the art increasingly became those who objected to “the aristocratic prejudice against trade”<sup>723</sup> and “who understood how money was made, who knew how to manipulate stocks and acquire companies and pyramid investments”, the artist had to choose between three options, one being to “refuse to have anything to do with this new class of patrons” and “insist on painting as one believed painting should be done, and take the

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<sup>722</sup> Watch *Revolution: New Art for a New World* documentary film directed by Margy Kinmonth (2016).

<sup>723</sup> This and all other quoted lines in this sentence come from Alan Gowans’ *The Restless Art: A History of Painters and Painting, 1760 – 1960*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, PA (1966), pp. 112 - 116.

consequences – which would certainly be poverty, social neglect and contempt, but also great self-satisfaction”, the second being to “attempt a compromise... to paint something resembling what ‘the people’ want, but preserve one’s own integrity, infuse something of the older universal and expressive values into it”, and the third being to “give the bourgeois what he wanted... to acquiesce completely in the new patrons’ tastes and standards, lower oneself to their level, and accept their rewards, which were far from negligible – more munificent, in fact, than any earlier painters could ever have expected”. As the historic records tell us, while the first, intrinsically rebellious and nonacademic route became “the main line to modern art”, the second one “proved futile”, and the third one “was the line that produced what we call generally ‘Academic’ painting, the characteristic painting of the High Victorian age”<sup>724</sup>, which, like perhaps all art in times that demand the artist to be an entrepreneur too, made “the concept of painting as Beauty evaporate, and a new concept – painting as Reality – begin to replace it”<sup>725</sup>. This latter line, however, resulted in “the dull farce”<sup>726</sup> that “no one is likely to call great art today”<sup>727</sup>; rather, “the museums which once bought them or accepted them as gifts are ashamed to hang them, or even to admit that they still preserve them in their cellars... no painter we admire today belonged to an official academy. The living tradition of our painting is the tradition of revolt... It is on this account that ‘academic painter’ has come to mean ‘bad painter’”<sup>728</sup>. And if this trichotomy resonates with the state of the art in today’s natural sciences, it is not a coincidence at all; rather, it is a testimony to the relevance of this three-pronged fork in the road to this different, albeit equally money-centered academic domain, almost two centuries after the birth of the Victorian art to which it originally applied. From this angle, it is justifiable and rewarding to contemplate on the devastating effects that the insistence on conformity by the academic authorities has on the present and future of humanity as well as on the glorious effects that rebellion against all these stale traits of the academic order may produce in the world in and around us. To become disillusioned by the academic order and recognize in it the embodiment of the very opposite of the harbor of free thought that it has once stood for in the head of idealists like you and I, in about the same way as theosophical romanticists throughout the ages have been disenchanted by the religious order, can thus be the first step to distancing oneself from it and becoming the seed for something greater than one could ever achieve by being confined to its bastilles and musty manacles. Hope, along the way, remains that in the footsteps of impressionists painters, who came from nonacademic circles and swept the world with their punkish, free-spirited attitude toward art, marrying realism, albeit in a twisted, highly constructivist form, with the antediluvian quest for Beauty with a capital B, a new generation of scientists will enter the stage of science after hearing these laments of an academic expatriate, a renaissance man, a scientist with the heart of an artist, an aspiring Glass Bead Game *magister ludi* and an undying believer in Prince Myshkin’s “Beauty that will save the world”<sup>729</sup>, the one to whom science has been but a canvas to be painted with holy images, an instrument to compose divine melodies on and a tablet to be inscribed with messages that uplift and rejuvenate the human soul. There, like the impressionists who revived the romantic ideals in a dispirited age of rationality and realism, they would provide a similar impetus that would drive science toward more blissful horizons than the abysmal ones

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<sup>724</sup> See Alan Gowans’ *The Restless Art: A History of Painters and Painting, 1760 – 1960*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, PA (1966), pp. 114 - 116.

<sup>725</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 97.

<sup>726</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 116.

<sup>727</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>728</sup> See Maurice Grosser’s *The Painter’s Eye*, Chapter called Second Revolution, Rinehart, New York (1951).

<sup>729</sup> See Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky’s *The Idiot*, Prosveta, Belgrade (1869).

to which it currently streams in its today's money-driven, materialistic, pettily political, myopically pragmatic, prosaic, conformist and entrepreneurial form. Of course, even if this were truly to happen, a day would come when this new, romantic worldview, as intrinsically beautiful as it is, would take over the world of science and itself become a dogma, drawing colonies of automatous followers into its inertly carved grooves. Impressionism became one such mainstream movement only a decade or so after it had shocked the artistic world with its innovative painting technique and, ironically, its proponents became just as exclusive and unwelcoming to anything fundamentally differing from its standards as those standing in its way had been. At one such point, the role for the artist *par excellence* is to counter the convention, the way, for example, Paul Cezanne challenged the impressionists with his "savage" style based on deliberately clumsy, heavy-handed, brute brushwork, along with the wrecking of the linear perspective by flattening the background and the foreground and making distant objects not so distant anymore and near objects not as protruding anymore either, just as children and primitives, including Paul Gauguin, a man of an allegedly mediocre talent for painting<sup>730</sup> but an unrelenting drive to create something fantastic in and out of itself, would paint. Faced with the realization that imposing the principles of tonal gradation to give the illusion of depth would degrade the beauty of colors perceived by the viewer, he decided to give up on the impression of depth and focus on the palette of colors comprising the painted scene in the artist's eyes and do so using more solid outlines than the impressionistic, making his works appear rather crude and primitive, even though they ended up being revolutionary and timeless in their historical significance, making way for the landslide in visual arts that followed. Cezanne's style clashed both with the technical premises of Impressionism<sup>731</sup> and the standards of realism, notwithstanding that the artist perceived himself as "a man on the mission to restore the medieval sense of Reality to art"<sup>732</sup>, yet his nonconformist approach, seeking a new language for expression from the depths of one's heart, childishly unpretentious in nature, stands to this day as an exemplary one for the noble souls wishing to provide groundbreaking incentives to their disciplines, including the scientific ones, and revolutionize them in their entirety, from their deepest foundations to their most empyrean peaks. All in all, in spite of the plethora of formal novelties that Impressionism introduced, it stands to this day as one of the shortest-lived movements in visual arts, let alone music, as its fugitive color and dotted line were relatively quick to be replaced by the steadier chromatics and the extended, albeit still broken brushstrokes of the post-impressionists and then by the long and more primitive, almost childlike line of painters such as Cezanne, Matisse, Gauguin and Modigliani. It can be assumed that this quick succession of dominant styles largely had to do with the resistance with which proponents of Impressionism were unreceptive to styles fundamentally different from it, carrying instructive lessons for any martyrs wishing to progress academic science into an equally lively stream of evolution of the form as that evident around the time Impressionism stepped on and off the stage and in and out of the limelight of the arts scene.

Paradoxically, here, the very same commanders of the academic order who insist on intellectual, if not civil, obedience, are rarely aware of the necessity for their teachings to live

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<sup>730</sup> See Alan Gowans' *The Restless Art: A History of Painters and Painting, 1760 – 1960*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, PA (1966), pp, 277.

<sup>731</sup> Cezanne can be said to have reconstructed the concept of the line, which the Impressionists had deconstructed earlier, and made "every stroke alive", as pointed out by Mark Tobey. See William C. Seitz's *Abstract Expressionist Painting in America*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA (1983), pp. 74.

<sup>732</sup> *Ibid.*

with the constantly changeable zeitgeist of the culture in which they are rooted and with which they are to resonate. Although it is a fact that all teachings, including religious and scientific ones, have to be adjusted to the culture of the actual times, which is subject to an incessant change, lest they be misunderstood and seen as obsolete by the oncoming generations, the guardians of the gate of all times and their blind followers have rarely ever recognized its historical relevance. Typically, thence, they remain ignorant in view of the necessity of their teachings to live and constantly transform themselves in order to keep abreast with the process of cultural change. Yet, just like one cannot expect to enlighten the planet by sitting in a Gothic cathedral and playing baroque arabesques, with not even a slightest motivation to embrace the musical language of modernity, so cannot we hope to profoundly change the world by relying on the same languages and approaches utilized centuries ago. However, as it often happens, even though newcomers to a certain field with long tradition might have no doubts about its staleness and even though they may have clear visions of how it could be changed for better, concerns about personal wellbeing and comfort tend to eventually creep into them and impel them to conform to conventions applied throughout the generations. Moreover, on the other side, there are lofty authorities who love to inflate the aloof balloons of their egos by seeing armies of followers conforming to approaches that they have advocated and that happen to be the same ones that they, themselves, had been taught to follow. Their teaching methods are thus based on instigating thinking styles that unquestioningly comply with their own opinions and worldviews instead of progressively differing from them. Innovative thinkers have always been paradigm-breakers and intellectual refugees or dissidents; however, the evolution of average human consciousness has a long way to go before it supersedes the narrow limits of ego and selflessly rejoice in view of followers' clashing with the tradition and creatively surpassing their teachers. The contemporary world is still mainly inhabited by leaders whose egotistic instincts naturally drive them to step on the fingers of those who try to climb to the same hierarchical platforms that the leaders, themselves, occupy. All the while, the nonconformist in the academic realm, as ostensibly out of place as Jacques Tati in his homage to a futuristic Earth in the movie *Playtime*, being the only one moving circularly in synchrony with the inner wheel of wonder in the world of robotically linear movement and thought, as the French movie director saw it, spontaneously, with the subtlest signs of the body language, leaves an impression amongst the authorities that arranging for his demise is a perfectly natural and appropriate thing to do. Occasionally, to fulfill their destiny of valuing Barabbas over the Christ, that is, surface rioters over the rebels of the essence, these despotic heralds would give a green light to alterations in the fabric of their teaching that are comically superficial, such as those of gender structure recently implemented in some of the newest editions of Gospels<sup>733</sup>. With one such minor change, however, literal understanding of religious scriptures is furthermore implicitly promoted. As if it is not enough that believers already take it for granted that the Bible fell from a supernatural cloud from which God watches over the Earth, that the latter was created in seven days and that crypts encoding the end of the world are concealed in it, aside from thousands of other silly occasions of literal comprehension of a theosophical piece of art that the Bible is, which is a semantic flaw that the Christ, himself, passionately stood against. Yet, the self-imposed traps of literalness and objectivism, which, as we know, go hand-in-hand, can be said to be consequences of the innate human inclination to embrace dogmas in thinking, finding the sacred, anarchistic, blue skies of freedom fine to dream of, but a tremendous burden for their spirits in reality. If these scriptures

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<sup>733</sup> See In Focus: The Gospel of Gender Neutrality, The Portland Press Herald (March 18, 2011); available at [http://www.pressherald.com/news/nationworld/gospel-of-gender-neutrality\\_2011-03-18.html](http://www.pressherald.com/news/nationworld/gospel-of-gender-neutrality_2011-03-18.html).

were, however, openly acknowledged as metaphorical in their essence and only one out of an infinite number of ways to represent the divine substrate of reality, ripening of much greater fruits, in terms of their deeper and broader social understanding, would have been enabled. Hence, much more thorough revising and reviving expressions by which theological, metaphysical or any other messages are being delivered to the world is needed to keep them fresh and actual in the modern times. Then, it is worth noting that original deeds that may appear shocking, blasphemous and akin to cutting the branch that one sits on to the old generation of leaders of the world eventually become seen as progressive and rewarding as the world undergoes another one of the paradigmatic shifts in its evolution towards ever greater states of communication and being. For, such periods when mainstream values, aspirations and modes of being become turned upside down inevitably occur every now and again. Times during which the world undergoes thunderous tumbling and appears all topsy-turvy until it settles on its head in the end are those whereby “the last shall become first, and the first last” (Matthew 20:16); as such, they turn out to save the blissful but rejected ones and drown in the river of time the dull conformists, clones and evanescent icons and idols of this world. For this reason, I know that not out there where people celebrate certain creatures and unequivocally raise them on the pedestals of popularity is where minds that carry the most beautiful visionary seeds of progress could be found, but on desolate coasts of knowledge, wistfully staring at the sea and dreaming of mysterious songs of mermaids, sunken treasures, exotic islands and voyages to the stars that lie beyond its horizons. Hence, whenever I come across a weak and rejected party in life, I do not think twice before I firmly stand on its side. For, nodding our head, agreeing and unquestioningly conforming to it all leads to our journeying down the river of creative being, along with the mainstream, and is a sign of spiritual deadness and unavoidable slipping into outdated and clichéd modes of being. Kierkegaard noticed that humans can love only other humans, but never crowds and masses<sup>734</sup>, meaning that, if we were to invert this argument up on its head, echoing Karen O’s “They don’t love you like I love you”<sup>735</sup> mantra, masses are by definition loveless and, deprived of the divine essence as such, should never be let guide the individual spirits in their evolution on any plane – personal, professional, spiritual, you name it. Rather, it is always a You whose eyes we ought to look at and whose heart our communications ought to disgorge their contents into, remembering all the while Roger Ebert’s toying with the title of Roy Andersson’s film, *You, the Living* in his review of it<sup>736</sup>: *You, the Living, Them, the Dead*. Another indication of the dangers of the tribalist “us vs. them” dichotomy may come from a psychological study where ten-month old infants who watched a puppet being helped by another puppet to reach the top of a hill, but also repeatedly pushed downwards by the hinderer puppet showed a clear preference for the helper puppet as their playmate<sup>737</sup>. However, if the puppet and the infant shared different values in terms of, say, liking different snacks, then the babies were not only uneager to help it climb the hill, but they would forthrightly want the puppet to be punished, that is, pushed down the hill, hinting at how easily the ideological thought projected onto the masses, even at such early of an age, can eclipse the sun of empathy shining innately inside each and every one of us. To preserve this shine, our universe ought to revolve around I

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<sup>734</sup> See Søren Kierkegaard’s *The Crowd is Untruth*, retrieved from [https://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl201/modules/Philosophers/Kierkegaard/kierkegaard\\_the\\_crowd\\_is\\_untruth.html](https://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl201/modules/Philosophers/Kierkegaard/kierkegaard_the_crowd_is_untruth.html) (1847).

<sup>735</sup> Listen to Yeah Yeah Yeahs’ *Maps on Fever to Tell*, Interscope (2003).

<sup>736</sup> See Roger Ebert’s *Nobody Understands Me, nor Can They Endure My Tuba*, retrieved from <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/you-the-living-2009> (August 19, 2009).

<sup>737</sup> J. K. Hamlin, K. Wynn, P. Bloom – “Social Evaluation by Preverbal Infants”, *Nature* 450, 557–559 (2007).

and Thou<sup>738</sup>, like two moons “side by side in orbit, around the fairest sun”<sup>739</sup>, in which case we would be spilling the paint of joy and happiness all over the world, boldly and unstoppably, with every gaze and gesture of ours. Hence, whenever we find ourselves immersed in the way of the crowd and inertly journeying down the streams of submissiveness to its norms, letting the stunningly beautiful shine of the essence of our being be irretrievably washed away, we ought to diligently uproot the seeds of conformism that have begun to sprout all through the stellar space of our head and heart and remember Cerys Matthews’ calls to hand her our uniform<sup>740</sup>, once and for all cease to be a compliant soldier in our spiritual core of annulled creative potentials, lest we become “dead from the waist down, like in California”<sup>741</sup>, and transform into a free spirit bouncing off the walls of the world in unbound eruptions of cosmic joy and divine energy that heals the ailing life around us. For, travelling upstream while struggling to overcome the mountainous resistance that it bears is what takes us to the peaks of life whereon sources of crystal clear waters of knowledge are found and standing on which makes it clear that we have indeed become a “stone which the builders rejected (and) is become the head of the corner” (Mark 12:10). From this beautiful vista of thought, we could clearly glimpse how what led us to it was nothing other but holding the ethical and aesthetical teachings of religions and arts in one hand and scientific rigor and analyticity in the other.

As it usually happens, travelling from one to another circle in the realm of our thoughts, we have found ourselves in yet another one wherein wonder and love, that is, the subjects of arts and religions hold the merits of pragmatism and science, whereas the latter support the former. One of my favorite stories that I used to illustrate the immense potentiality of journeying along the circle whereon sciences, religions and arts and all interconnected relates to the Arts and Technology Program conceived by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in the late 1960s, whereby pairing scientists and artists around common projects resulted in numerous productive mutual fertilizations of ideas. The latter was probably most striking in the case of collaboration between Robert Irwin and the NASA physicist, Ed Wortz, of which Irwin said the following: “The biggest product of the Art and Technology thing is the effect we had on each other. I radically changed Ed’s life, and he radically changed mine”<sup>742</sup>. Namely, experimentation in sensory deprivation in which they engaged through this common project propelled Irwin in the direction of more profound understanding and explication of the philosophy of perception, aside from mere artistic expression, while Wortz, who until that time had virtually no interest in art eventually left his research in physics to become a gestalt psychotherapist at Los Angeles Buddhist Meditation Center<sup>743</sup>. Hence, as we see, commonalities shared by sciences, religions and arts are so many that, conjoined, they let one crisscross between the farthest extremes of each, subtly proving that their essence, undoubtedly touching the core of the co-creational thesis, is one and the same. And as claimed in the finale of the recently released pamphlet of the National Academy of Sciences<sup>744</sup>, “Many scientists have written eloquently about how their scientific studies have increased their awe and understanding of a creator. The study of science

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<sup>738</sup> M. Buber – “I and Thou”, Touchstone, New York, NY (1923).

<sup>739</sup> R.E.M. – “Nightswimming”, In: Automatic for the People, Warner Bros, Los Angeles, CA (1993).

<sup>740</sup> Listen to Catatonia’s Dazed, Beautiful and Bruised on Equally Cursed and Blessed, Blanco y Negro (1999).

<sup>741</sup> Listen to Catatonia’s Dead from the Waist Down on Equally Cursed and Blessed, Blanco y Negro (1999).

<sup>742</sup> See Lawrence Weschler’s Seeing Is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees: Expanded Edition, Over Thirty Years of Conversations with Robert Irwin, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA (2009), pp. 135.

<sup>743</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 129.

<sup>744</sup> See Science, Evolution, and Creationism, Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences, National Academies Press, Washington, DC (2008).

need not lessen or compromise faith”. Needless to add, both science and religion thrive upon our faith, in validity of the assumptions that stand behind the scientific laws and principles in the former case and in the divine purposefulness of our being and evolution of the world in the latter case. And these initial assumptions that resemble foundations of inquiry from which we perceive, question and explore the physical reality cannot be inferred from sole experiments. Experiments are interpreted in their light, and their outcomes can, more or less, indicate how convenient these assumptions are in terms of our ability to predict future events and manipulate with the material substrate of the Universe, but they can never point at their intrinsic favorableness or weakness with perfect confidence. Or, as Albert Einstein pointed out, “Useful mathematical concepts may well be suggested by experience, but in no way can they be derived from it. Experience naturally remains the sole criterion of the usefulness of a mathematical construction for physics... Whether you can observe a thing or not depends on the theory which you use. It is the theory which decides what can be observed... A theory can be proved by experiment; but no path leads from experiment to the birth of a theory... Yet, no amount of experimentation can ever prove me right; a single experiment can prove me wrong”. What basic metaphysical scrutiny of scientific reasoning leads to is a clear sight of the towers of science and all of its achievements, from its depictions of the reality to the technological products that surround us, resting on the foundations of faith. Scientific reasoning *per se* implies faith in the validity of the fundamental assumptions that scientists implicitly employ with every scientific thought that they craft. “In order to see you must first believe”<sup>745</sup>, sages have held since the earliest days of theological thought and, as we see, scientific thought is by no means an exception to this fundamental philosophical principle. In other words, there could be no perfectly neutral, unbiased observation, even on the basis of a most rigorous and objective empirical methodology, as every element of our epistemologies, be it constituting the simplest perceptions or the most complex ideas, is formed within narrow windows of possibilities defined by the basic assumptions and biological predispositions of the observer. Overall, what one such philosophical investigation of the epistemological foundations of our worldviews reveals is that experience gives rise to faith, whereas faith gives rise to experience, with the two being tied within a closed loop wherein one is both the beginning and the end of the other<sup>746</sup>. Finally, according to the constructivist theories of cognition, faith in terms of our expectations and presumptions is implicit in the assimilation of primary experiential impressions into lasting perceptive and abstract wholes too, which brings to mind the words of Jiddu Krishnamurti: “It is not experience that proves faith, but it is faith that gives birth to experience”. These words may also remind us of the starring role of anticipations, beliefs and the overall shine of values that they give rise to in framing our worldviews and drawing the subtle *sfumato* of beauty and meaning around the features of the objects and beings of the world seen through our eyes. Hence, the lack of final evidences and ultimate laws and guiding principles is what stirs the wheel of human faith forward and with it propels the progressive streaming of novel scientific and religious thought.

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<sup>745</sup> See Viktor Lazić’s *Zlatna stena na rubu provalije*, *Politika – Magazin* (August 10, 2014), pp. 9 – 11.

<sup>746</sup> To illustrate how powerful of the effect our subconscious proclivities have on our brains, I may resort to the memory of friend from my youth, whom I will simply name S. and who had a habit of seeing everyone everywhere, from prime TV channel announcers to random people in the street, as druggies. In his worldview, everyone was a junkie and people only differed in terms of drugs that they were on. What, in fact, was the case is that his addicted brain played a game on him and convinced him that everyone uses drugs and that, therefore, it is not only perfectly normal, but also necessary for him to do the same, thus justifying and reinforcing his drug usage habit. Such are the powers of the addictive brain and such are, similarly, the powers of any cognitive bias or subconscious craving nested within our brains.

Over and over again, this proves that the lack of proof, doubtfulness, adventurousness and horizons at which knowledge and mystery converge are the grounds from which human thought is launched to ever more sublime reigns. “Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve the Faith they owe; when earnestly they seek such proof, conclude, they then begin to fail”<sup>747</sup>, John Milton observed in *Paradise Lost*, seemingly paradoxically, although quite truthfully equalizing the search for the proof and corroboration of faith with the beginnings of the loss of faith and, conversely, freeness from any inner sense of obligation or pressure to engage in this search with the ignition of the fire of faith from which the sheer magic of otherworldly creativeness can be sparked. Although many atheists have claimed that they would readily regain their faith if there was only a living proof of the existence of God, that is, of supernatural powers that underline our physical existence and endow living forms with missionary purposefulness, I have always seen these demands as comparable to cravings for the desert in order to satisfy one’s yearnings for the sea. For, faith thrives only insofar as it is liberated from any proofs of the authenticity of its objects and other verifications of its validity. Therefore, had all our inner questions be given final answers, compelling for good, we should be sure that our intellectual and spiritual potentials would wind down and steadily wither, like a lively butterfly regressively withdrawing into a cocoon and then into a stonyhearted egg and then into sheer nothingness. Accordingly, having asked myself innumerable times whether I would prefer living in a hypothetic world that was indisputably God’s creation or the one as it is now, in which all is shrouded in a sense of great mystery, if I was given a freedom of choice I would always pick the latter one, without thinking twice about it. Such is, I believe, the nature of every embodiment of genuine religiousness arisen from this world: aware of the benefits of uncertainties and questions that surround us and of the devastating threats for our sustainability that permanent conclusions, indoctrinations of any form and stagnant, non-fluctuating beliefs bring forth.

In the whole science-religion debate that often crowds internet forums or inflames people at round tables or parties, the most striking to me is the blindness with which people from one circle defend their own arguments and pose them solely for the sake of disgracing the other side. To illustrate this, I will copy here some of the arguments posted on a Yelp forum to a religious message referring to Jesus and claiming that if we were to pray together the world would become a better place: “Prove it!... I believe in Bigfoot, Dragons, elves, and Ness from Loch Ness. Just as much proof there as in Jesus.... Dude everyone should pray to our lord the Flying Spaghetti Monster... Jesus of the Divine egg white omelet has shown me more of God than any other prophet. I can taste the love that went into the crafting of my morning devotional. His love sustains me....for several hours. His love lets me be at peace...and my stomach growls no more... If He came back, I’d nail him right back up again”<sup>748</sup>. This is, of course, only a sample out of an endless number of similar messages that circle around communication channels of the modern day, undoubtedly posted by the same ones who would have mocked and spat on those who sacrificed themselves on crosses, stakes and guillotines for their open-mindedness and fosterage of freedom of thought during the times of Inquisition. “Please, that is not the topic of this debate”, I was being more politely interrupted by the frowning moderator of a round table discussion at UCSF aimed at clarifying the genuine purpose and authenticity of science in leading academic institutions of the day at the very mention of commonality of science and theology, the two of the amplest and the deepest bodies of knowledge descriptive of the nature of

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<sup>747</sup> See John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*: Book IX, Signet Classic, New York, NY (1671), pp. 266.

<sup>748</sup> See Yelp Talk thread entitled “Jesus is soooo awesome”, available at <http://www.yelp.com/topic/san-francisco-jesus-is-soooo-awesome> (2010).

reality in which we abide. Even though empirical science, regardless of how materialistic its models are, inevitably touches theosophy at its metaphysical roots and even though happiness and creativity of scientists crucially depends on how well they preserve the touch with that mysterious Great Beyond that underlies the subjects of their research and teaching, collective sighs of vexation, followed by the subsequent neglect, repulsion and gate-giving at all communicational levels followed my input in this debate and will be stuck in my head for a long, long time, not because I was being terrifically hurt thereby, but because of the similarity of the attitude typifying these hateful and intolerant wall-raisers with the way I imagine the attitude held by the Inquisitors from the Dark Ages, for whom, puzzlingly, just like today, inquiry equaled an open animosity towards the infinitely inquiring and intrinsically skeptical schools of thought. Mere followers and spongers are, therefore, all these characters that readily spit on any invocation of theological matters in scientific conversations, occupying lowlands in the realm of human thought rather than their sublime clouds and fresh-air mountain peaks, as they would love to believe. However, these cerebral leeches have populated the majority of the world since its most ancient beginnings, whereas those who have been brave enough to propose ideas original and unique for their times, ideas that would be inevitably misunderstood and refused at first, have been as rare as diamonds in the dust. Henceforth, albeit the fact that from all creatures in life, including even rotting guardians of the gates of hell drowning in quicksand, we could hear a lifesaving advice, whatever the opinion and modes of being held by the masses are, we should know that they are inescapably toxic for the spiritual growth of one who strives to make a step forward along the ladder of evolution of our beings, from rocks to amoebas to amphibians to monkeys to man to superman to angels on earth and far, far beyond. As ever, finding a balance between loving each and every one with all our hearts and still going against the grain of their beliefs and finding the cores of their spirits from which their actions in the world originate stale and lame to certain extent is a great task upon which the success of our mission to open the evolutionary paths that will push the planet into ever more beautiful passageways of its development and may even save life on earth depends. Speaking of evolution, in spite of the shocking effect that this has on these superficial anti-religious scientific followers of the modern day, if there is one thing that has a special room for devoted beliefs in my heart, it is the neo-Darwinian evolution on earth, which is, however, nowhere near the one governed by the concept of “survival of the fittest”, but the one crucially depending on the shininess of our spirits in the times to come, on deploying our ability to become loving, selfless, altruistic and aesthetically and ethically superior to the animalistic nature from which we have arisen and which we must uproot like all other mediocre traits of the foundations on which we stand, in the rebelliously loving spirit of the core of Christianity.

Every time I think of the stunning opening scenes of Fellini’s *La Dolce Vita* where the statue of the Christ is being flown above the Roman ruins by a helicopter, I am reminded of how the language of religions, not changed since the times of the Roman Empire, has not kept abreast with the explosively changing face of the planet and trends in social lifestyles, and is, as verbally obsolete as it is, despite its timeless relevance, nowadays unscrupulously pushed left and right by the profane atheistic proponents of science and technologies like a kid bullied at school. Known for its peaceful policy of turning the other cheek to those that smite one (Luke 6:29), religious stances provide perfect grounds for the merciless attacks of prickly intellectuals in need of venting out their frustrations arising from aimlessly roaming through the labyrinths of their thoughts, searching for an escape to cosmic heights of blissful enlightenment, while ignoring the angelic wings of an awesome spirit that could lift them up from these shady mental sites in the

blink of an eye. And since I have always stood up in defense of underdogs in life, somewhat like the Christ, himself, did, whenever I could, I try to defend none other but the religious side in these contemporary confrontations between the proponents of scientific thought and religious reasoning, especially since the aforementioned discussions normally take place in westernized social settings, in which science has throughout the past centuries emerged as a perceived winner in the battle between the two and in whose academic milieus the atheistic aversion of anything religious, which has never been greater throughout its history than today<sup>749</sup>, has now been openly legitimized. For, in a world wherein scientists have the freedom to spitefully object to any mention of theology in their autochthonous, academic realm - as it happened to me when I, always relying on metaphors as vital precursors for carving the concepts lectured on deep into the grooves of human memory, during a talk at University of Southern Florida in Tampa correlated the description of a particular biological process with the allegory of a seed that has to die in order to give rise to a tree, the parable that does originate from the Bible (John 12:24) but could have come from any tradition of common wisdom - while religious adherents can be only ridiculed if they dare to say anything disparaging about the scientific thought from a church's pew, there is no doubt as to who holds a snaring smile underneath one's breath and loftily boasts as a winner in this encounter between scientific and theological knowledge, the encounter that should not be a battle for the extirpation of one another, but a cross-fertilizing confrontation of mutually complementary opposites, like two lovers meeting at night and creating the seeds of new and more progressive forms of life. Still, on one hand, owing to the aforementioned vital role of faith in determining the outlooks of ours with respect to anything in life, I normally do not participate in these debates, unless I am explicitly invited to. For, first of all, I have known that war against war is by no means a means to bring peace into our lives, the outcome that only peace itself can breed. Secondly, I try my best to carefully stick to the guideline that Lao-Tzu selected as the very exit line of his Tao-Te-Xing: "A good man does not argue; the one who argues is not a good man" (Tao-Te-Xing LXXXI). Thirdly, history has been occasionally interspersed by examples of movements that instilled significantly more powerful moral ideologies in people's heads by refraining from their blunt explication compared to attempts to loudly and vulgarly spell them out for the masses. My favorite example in this sense is that of Britpop, which "made its political points by never referring to politics"<sup>750</sup>, and exactly owing to its apolitical puerility succeeded in making the public more politically conscious and, as you may guess, inclined to neo-liberalism. Finally, empirically speaking, all of these conversations where one side blatantly tries to impose the thesis of divine origins of our beings onto the other side that revolts against it in essence fall down to the often retold anecdote wherein a theist and an atheist discuss the existence of God<sup>751</sup>. At one point, the atheist utters the following: "You know, believe it or not, but one time even I prayed. It was on a day when I got lost in Newfoundland wilderness. Not only was I thoroughly lost and disoriented, but the snow decided to fall so hard that it eventually blinded my sight. I felt so cold and desperate that I began to pray, asking for

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<sup>749</sup> Studies show that the so-called millennials in the United States are, for example, the least religious generation in the history of this nation. See J. M. Twenge, J. J. Exline, J. B. Grubbs, R. Sastry, W. K. Campbell – "Generational and Time Period Differences in American Adolescents' Religious Orientation, 1966 – 2014", *PLOS One* 10(5): e0121454 (2015).

<sup>750</sup> See Michael Bracewell's *When Surface was Depth: Death by Cappuccino and Other Reflections on Music and Culture in the 1990's*, Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA (2002), pp. 18.

<sup>751</sup> A version of this story could be found in David Foster Wallace's *This Is Water: Some Thoughts, Delivered on a Significant Occasion about Living a Compassionate Life*, Little, Brown and Company, New York, NY (2009), pp. 16 - 32.

help from the depth of my soul”. In a more philosophical version of the story, the atheist may have continued by adding the following: “It was as if my state on that day was the manifestation of the prediction offered by Plato when he said that no one has ever died an atheist. Suddenly, a scene from the Song For Bernadette flashed before my startled self, in which the prosecutor Vital Dutour, a hardcore atheist, having learned that he suffers from an incurable illness, kneels and prays for the first time, with thousands of candles flickering in the background. And I, I saw myself in his shoes. For a brief moment of a second, a thought flew through my head that our sense for theism might be crippled for living in this ordered, peaceful and civilized world. I felt as if my religiousness, kept buried inside of myself for a long time, became strangely revitalized and suddenly spread its wings through the rooms of my mind amidst the blizzard and fear”. “See, your prayers must have been answered”, commented the theist with a warm smile, knowing that a savior in one form or another had to have arrived since the atheist clearly lived to tell his story. “No, dude, two Eskimos just happened to walk by, literally showing up out of nowhere, and they took me back to civilization”, said the atheist while rolling his eyes at the apparent theist’s stupidity. Having found myself caught between the two fires innumerable times, unable to argue my complex stances that effectively bridge theism and atheism to some extent, all owing to rigid prejudices and preconceptions existing on both sides of this debate, I learned that my engagement therein, no matter how enthusiastic and sensible, is most of the time predestined to be plainly futile. The reason is clear: altering human faith is the hardest task of them all when it comes to influencing other people’s opinions. It requires changing them from their deepest foundations, which oftentimes hardly leaves the house which stands on them intact. Also, since Nature herself is quite secretive in terms of elucidating her spiritual order, any human attempts to bluntly explicate these implicit divine threads that link us all together I have seen as unnatural and unaesthetic. That even God depicted in the Hebrew theological tradition objected when a name, the first step to its explication as a whole, was to be ascribed to it, is demonstrated by his legendary response to Moses’ asking for God’s name: “I am who I am” (Exodus 3:14). The second commandment of the Hebrew scriptures goes a step further by objecting against the association of the divine roots of reality, be they seen as transcendent or omnipresent, with any form or figure of thought: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth” (Exodus 20:4). Since these basic teachings of Judaism comprised a stem from which both Christianity and Islam emerged, the usage of God as a word is virtually prohibited in many religious schools, particularly the mystic ones, from Kabala to Sufism to the Orthodox Hesychasm, all in the spirit of the first steps Lao-Tzu made on his journey of Tao-Te-Xing: “A Way that can be marked is not the Eternal Way - Tao; A name that can be uttered is not the Eternal Name” (Tao-Te-Xing I). As the result, any invitation to explicate my religious views during casual discussions would be met with a cryptic comment that merely enlarges the question at hand, quite like that offered by Dr. Borg on a terrace facing the Northern Seas when he was asked by a cynical youngster whether he was religious or not: “I see His traces wherever flowers bloom”<sup>752</sup>. Yet, in spite of believing in uselessness of engaging in explications of one’s religious feelings for the sake of spiritualizing the neighbor, even I cannot resist offering a few orphic arguments here and there, mostly for the sake of developing and strengthening my own stances through inspiring dialectical conversation, and then putting them on paper altogether. In doing so, my comments typically tend to rebalance a conversation in which the majority of people involved in it support a single confronted side; be it religious or scientific, it matters not.

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<sup>752</sup> Watch *Wild Strawberries*, a movie directed by Ingmar Bergman (1957).

This approach whereby weights of arguments offered from different sides tend to be rebalanced naturally springs from the ideals drafted by Protagoras in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC; namely, since he found greatest merit in a sense of uncertainty that emanates from confrontation of two theses of equal strength and validity, he went on to propose the need to always “strengthen the weaker argument”. So do I always look after sensing the balance of forces first and then standing on the side which needs it more to keep the given confrontation of arguments well equilibrated, knowing all the while that from a versatility of opinions rather than from a totalitarian fosterage of unilateral beliefs do the directions for the evolution of our minds and spirits branch out. Still, my cautiousness is immense since I am aware that in these days of hypermodern communication when the staccato attention span of most of the people involved in these usually heated interchanges of opinions is no longer than the length of a full-size Twitter message, time to comprehensively describe my stance, which is always such that it acknowledges pros and cons of both of the sides engaged in this crossfire of differing ideas, is inevitably missing, which explains why I regularly become intercepted in my broad explanations, leaving the judgmental listeners with an impression of my unilateral support of only one of the sides, which is, however, virtually never the case. For, sanity in my head has always been defined as the ability to penetrate through the darkest and most malicious clouds of worldly appearances and glimpse the sun of eternal goodness shining in the background as well as *vice versa*, to dig the grains of imperfection from even the most luscious and seemingly faultless landscapes of reality. In other words, a sane mind lives in a world described to oneself as a constant clash of opposites whereby everything ingrains a blend of good and bad, of brilliance and outrageousness, so that all that one picks from the endless catalogue of things reality comprises is either never really perfect or, as a matter of fact, is always as perfect as it can be, depending, respectively, on the angle from which one views life: rebellious or devotional. The opposite of this personal definition of sanity, insanity, can be therefore seen as being closely tied to one-sided supports of specific stances on the account of total negligence of positive traits of their complements. Of course, to expound complex worldviews from which things in life arise as never either solely black or spotlessly white, time is essential, and yet it is exactly the quality that is so critically sparse in modern communication platforms. This enforced packing of the infinite content of one’s mind to 140 or so characters has also led to the epidemic of the inability to conceive of a literary structure to express one’s thoughts with more complex than “10 ways to...”, “5 things to know...”, “12 reasons for...” or their structurally unimaginative likes that overcrowd the popular press these days, having sent the long and elaborate discourses whose composition used to be meticulously crafted to a distant past. At times these literary listless lists seem to me as but short-lived stations in the course of a runaway spinning of the human mind in vortices of a positive feedback loop whereon lessened attention spans create material for its even greater lessening, thus contributing to further lessening of the attention spans and the materials they produce and so forth, all until a complete inattentive singularity is reached, a spot of utmost ignorance in every head. This reduction of our attention spans, which could have been made akin to suns, to illuminate everything, and their confinement into narrow epistemic holes is not the only unfavorable outcome of such succinct forms of expression. For, when one transmutes a collection of ideas into a short list in an attempt to have others read one’s piece and avoid prompting them to click on the Back button literally milliseconds after glimpsing real paragraphs, god forbid, one naturally leaves no space for counteracting one’s central propositions in one’s writing, contributing to dogmatism rather than elaborate dialectical analyses of subjects at hand. At the same time, one downright kills the artistic sense and sensibility in the readers, for without any

emphasis on the literary structure, on either the continuous or smartly intercepted flow of thoughts, on the links between ideas and insights and the harmony and the rhythm of treading through the piece, as well as on the sense of the whole reverberating mountainously in our heads when the reading is over, little artistic is left in a written piece, to be honest. That is, when brevity is a norm, little or no attention is paid to conceiving of ends that would reconnect with the beginnings and to creating the structure of the whole that would continue to resonate for ages in the readers' heads, leaving them instead in a state as unstructured as a song from Can's Tago-Mago or a Cassavetes' movie, even at its being composed of the most captivating melodic lines or scenes, that is, individual thoughts. What is being left in the wake of this trend is the reinforcement of the fear of tremendously long passages like this one and of the craving for writings that bring instant satisfaction: literary porn, so to speak, barren of all those things that make a communication beautiful in the real sense of the word. Yet, hope remains that just as Bob Dylan's *Like a Rolling Stone* revolutionized the pop song structure and inaugurated itself as the best tune ever made by not only being more lyrically profound than its predecessors<sup>753</sup> and opening with an obscure "once upon a time...", but by being twice longer than typical love songs that crowded the charts of its times too, and just as Sonic Youth broke into the mainstream with *Daydream Nation*, thereby making the genre of "alternative" music an etymological misnomer, not by making this record any better than its superior predecessors, *Evol* and *Sister*, but by making it a rare double album in the postpunk scene at the time and refusing to edit the songs that clocked in at 6 minutes on average, containing segments that sounded like experimental jamming, purposelessly extending into the sonic space, and just as Beethoven's *Symphony No.3, Eroica*, not only served as a precursor for the musical phase transition from Classicism to Romanticism, but it also transfigured symphony as a musical form by making it twice longer than the symphonies of Beethoven's classical predecessors, Haydn and Mozart, with only the first out of four movements being as long as the typical classical symphony, and just as Richard Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung* revolutionized opera not only by introducing leitmotifs and unassailably smooth shifts in tonal centers and perfecting the concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* by turning opera into a form of art as the synthesis of all other arts, but also by making it the longest opera with a longest aria<sup>754</sup> ever written, clocking in at around 18 hours and 20 minutes, respectively, depending on the pace, thus acting as a culmination of the tie between the romantic and the exhaustingly expansive, the same fate awaits the use of written word in the near future. In fact, I have been routinely attaching the epithet "Wagnerian", "a synonym for grandiose, bombastic, overbearing, or, simply, very long"<sup>755</sup>, to my works of the kind that this book represents, believing firmly that, as such, they would serve as a spur that paves way to a new age, the age of romanticism reawakened in science and all other affairs, the age of "an aesthetic state" envisioned by the German polymath, Friedrich Schiller in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>756</sup>, where artistic senses would be heightened all around and people would no longer abide in purely materialistic and survivalistic loci. Meanwhile, like Laurent Garnier, an electronic music hero of my youth, who has been known for his marathon DJ sets and who would say that stories cannot be told in a

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<sup>753</sup> "I mean nobody's ever really written *songs* before, really", Dylan said in a comment about *Like a Rolling Stone* in Montreal, on February 20, 1966. See Greil Marcus' *Like a Rolling Stone: Bob Dylan at the Crossroads*, Public Affairs, New York, NY (2005), pp. 70.

<sup>754</sup> The aria in question is Brünnhilde's *Immolation* from *Götterdämmerung*, the fourth and the last part of the *Ring* cycle.

<sup>755</sup> See Alex Ross' *Wagnerism: Art and Politics in the Shadow of Music*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, NY (2020), pp. 12.

<sup>756</sup> See Friedrich Schiller's *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, Dover, New York, NY (1795).

two-hour set nor could the dance floor be taken on a journey in such a short time<sup>757</sup>, the reason for which he would often open the club in the early evening hours and play his set till the dawn, so have I, myself, vowed to refuse to pack my thoughts into verbal expressions with the size of a haiku poem<sup>758</sup> and will continue to lay down my heart and soul into half-a-million-word long treatises like this one. When I look at the contemporary state of daily communications, composed of quick interchanges of succinct phrases, virtually disallowing anyone to extend one's lines up and down and 'round and 'round toward a dramatic, truly inspirational effect, lest he become seen as leaden and obsolete, neither can I help ascribing the archaic meaning to the adjective "succinct" here, meaning being girdled, like when foresters remove a band of bark and cambium from a tree in order to kill it, nor can I help seeing this sad state as a facilitator of our sinking deeper and deeper into an Orwellian nightmare, a life lived by habit only, on an autopilot, mechanically, in "an insane, sickly dream world", yielding "robots walking around, feeling nothing, thinking nothing... floating through this fog of symbols and unconscious feelings... and no one says what they're really thinking about"<sup>759</sup>. Just like blitz, sensationalistic news wherein words are being routinely pulled out of context, quite insensibly and vulgarly at times, having their meanings redrawn in any way the journalists want to, tend to mainly startle their recipients and induce mental fight-or-flight responses, producing either panicky escapism or blind and intolerant arrogance and making passive observers of us all, frozen with fear and subject to easy manipulation by the powers that be, while lengthy, in-depth analyses of current trends and events, be it books, articles or far-reaching thoughts transfused into colossal sentences such as this one, promote much greater understanding of topics in question<sup>760</sup>, so do our expectations from everyone to articulate stances in less than 140 characters lead to massive misunderstandings and deprivations of the pearls of wisdom and other intellectual treasures of our cosmic minds, which only patience and a whole lot of time and space for our expressions and explorations can heal. One of these treasures is being lost anytime expectations that all things important about a human being can be experienced in the blink of an eye grows strong inside one, causing the fellow humans to stay strangers and sources of infinite frustration and abhorrence rather than the beginnings and ends of one's spiritual enrichment and growth. After all, when two newlyweds decide to substitute the world with gazing infinitely into each other's eyes, it is a secure sign that time, more than anything else, is needed to crash the barricades of ego, uncover the veils of self-protective phoniness and discover a whole universe in the fellow soul, more fascinating than all the inanimate things under the Sun piled together. And just like time is needed for impressions of a single being to begin to unlock the mysterious gates in one's mental universe and invite an inflow of sanctifying stimuli into its core, so are expositions of ideas lengthier than succinct magazine columns or internet posts - Zen koans aside - needed for one to befriend their originator and become truly enriched by their means. Therefore, having seen editors and other influential gate-keepers of the published thought reject lengthy and detailed analyses merely as

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<sup>757</sup> See Lauren Martin's interview with Laurent Garnier, Red Bull Music Academy Paris Lecture (2015), retrieved from <http://youtu.be/rC7vqj8XXO4>.

<sup>758</sup> Albeit irrelevant for the point I am making here, the haiku format has always seemed to me similar to that of pentatonic music, with some emotional tension of the classical sonnets and diatonic music simply missing from them. This, of course, allows the poet to transmit a more calming and meditative effect to the reader, quite like that pervading Oriental art in general, as compared to its more emotionally packed western counterparts.

<sup>759</sup> Watch *My Dinner with Andre* directed by Louis Malle (1981).

<sup>760</sup> Neither are they, nor any description of a real-life event, of course, ultimately immune to reframing of the contexts in which the described actions took place and which, systemically speaking, partially define the qualities of these actions.

the result of their size, claiming that “we are too busy nowadays to find time to indulge in overly drawn-out writings”, instigating writers to reshape their works into decadently simplified and dry pieces, I learned to sadly look at such state of affairs, firmly believing that an irremediable damage is done to the literary realm by means of such insistence on brevity and tediously linear expression of thought. For, any complex thought always conceals a delicate balance in its core and its explication in this intricate form devoid of the chance for being blatantly misunderstood and thrown into either a pro or a con category depending on the subject of the conversation requires time, the vital ingredient that all humans, unless they have become enlightening emanations of Michael Ende’s Momo<sup>761</sup>, the girl who has all the time in a world sickened by timesaving greed and who heals others by merely listening to them, seem to be deficient of in this ultrafast digital age. It is mainly for this reason that I write these very words while reducing my verbal communications to a minimum and rarely ever getting involved in philosophical, theological or any other profound existential discussion. Instead, I prefer flying around on the magic carpet of Lao-Tzu’s guiding principle: “Many words exhaust; therefore, rather stick to the core” (Tao-Te-Xing V). Mysterious Laura Hunt<sup>762</sup>, the muse of *film noir* devotees, causing havoc all around her by the mere innocence of her presence and revealing hypocrisies of scribes and whitened sepulchers as lightly as the sea washes the shore, always on the run to protect everyone and lay the carpet of self-guilt over which others, including even those on the run to wipe out her soul, could cross to safety, is said to have been more eloquent in her silent listening than in speech, and so do I, always carrying a philosophical seed in me whereon Robert Grenier’s I HATE SPEECH<sup>763</sup> stands inscribed, a self-referential message that attempts to turn the word against itself, make it disappear and drop us off in the midst of an enlightening space of pure being, uncontaminated by any symbols or words, opt for resembling a mute mule with nothing much to say during formal or informal discussions alike, despite a cosmos of visual and emotional energy streaming invisibly through my insides and connecting me with the most distant of spaces. After all, if we were to listen with our whole bodies, we would quickly realize that listening is a far greater gift than speaking, which is why on any given day I would rather dance in silence to the rhythm and melody of the surrounding chatter than waste the creative energy by babbling hollowly, like a goose. And every time I feel an impulse arising in me to say this or that in defense of religiousness in the face of blathering atheistic academicians, I bring back to mind the guiding thought of Plotinus the Platonist, according to which all we can say is what God is *not*<sup>764</sup>, and, thereupon, continue to watch the world from the lonely tent of my dreamy mind, in whose eyes all things palpitate with the divine vibe that carries forth the crushing waves of celestial happiness. For, God, verily, resides not in words, but in human hearts. Hence, immersed in a lively social surrounding, there is a greater chance that you will

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<sup>761</sup> See Michael Ende’s Momo, Mono & Manjana, Belgrade, Serbia (1973). Coincidentally, Ende’s first novel, Jim Button and Like the Engine Driver, was a 500-page long story for children, which no publisher wanted to release because it “too long for children” except Thienemann Verlag, which requested that the book be split in two parts (See the Wikipedia article on Michael Ende, retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael\\_Ende](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Ende) (2022)). Despite that, Ende ended up becoming the most famous German writer of children’s fiction in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, reiterating the point that conceptually innovative works usually come in twice or more the size of the works of their contemporaries.

<sup>762</sup> Watch Laura directed by Otto Preminger (1944).

<sup>763</sup> See Robert Grenier’s On Speech, In: Five Essays, Robert Grenier & Barrett Watten (1971), retrieved from [eclipsearchive.org/projects/SPEECH/speech.html](http://eclipsearchive.org/projects/SPEECH/speech.html).

<sup>764</sup> See Anthony Frost’s and Ralph Yarrow’s Improvisation in Drama, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY (2007), pp. 219.

find me leaping around like a carefree and fizzy social butterfly, from one flower of lovely human eyes to another, freely plunging into them all, sucking the nectar of wonder from their essence and at the same time spontaneously, while flying on the wings of cosmic joy, fertilizing innumerable worldviews with the seeds of divine beauty of being, rather than foamingly verbalizing opinions that clash like armies in combat against each other. While embracing the final wish of the last survivor of World War I, Harry Patch, at a tender age of 111, “No weapons on display”<sup>765</sup>, which was to be granted at the funeral of this social hero widely renowned for his militantly exhibited pacifistic stances, and the abovementioned words with which Lao-Tzu ended his lifework, “A good man does not argue; the one who argues is not a good man” (Tao-Te-Xing LXXXI), I have looked after following the same philosophy in the more subtle domain of linguistic confrontations as well as those played like mental movies in my head, where the waves of contradictory opinions would be often seen clashing and converging with each other, with my ego, like a false hero of a kind, defending itself against the evil intruders of other people’s malevolent personalities and intentions. After all, as already noticed, human beliefs from which people’s opinions stem are always so deeply rooted within their minds that hoping for an immediately observable change in their stances and principles during discussion is a project predestined for failure; all that we can hope for is yielding an enlightening example by our very being<sup>766</sup>, which would imperceptibly sow a divine seed within their minds, the seed which may take many days or years to quietly sprout into a fabulous tree that will shift their worldviews upside down and make them see God for the first time.

To recapitulate, since science regularly shows its supremacy over religious thought in terms of its visible and pragmatic products, whenever I sense an arrogant scientific mind tending to humiliate the religious one, I stand up in defense of the latter. Strangely but verily, these discussions abound with people whose traits in conversation reveal the exact opposites from the qualities that have stood at the core of empirical and theological approaches. Hence, one can witness defenders of science intolerantly erasing any relevance of experiential perspectives other than the scientific ones and thereby shutting down the gates to an inflow of versatile other sources of knowledge, despite the fact that humbleness and openness to endless inquiry is what has stood inscribed at the deepest stony gates to the entrance of the world of science in the heart of man. Scientific thought showed us that Earth is not flat, but round, and so must its purpose be not to disseminate dogmatism, but quite the opposite: to unflatten things, if we were to use the phrase coined by Lewis Thomas, the former Dean of medical schools at Harvard and NYU<sup>767</sup>. To vehemently object against any alternative representations of reality, especially when they are in early, hypothetic stages of development, and to claim exclusive rights on the territory of truth is a common, but deeply erroneous stance taken on by the stereotypical scientist of the modern day. Sadly, however, the arrogance with which contemporary worshippers of science discard any alternative worldviews downrightly clashes with this fundamental objective of scientific thought. To arise from an open abhorrence of the dogmatic tradition of religious thought of the Dark Ages and then to become locked within the chains of the same dogmatism that it once repugnantly

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<sup>765</sup> See Heathcote Williams’ Harry Patch: War Hero; available at <http://www.radiohead.co.uk/deadairspace/offtopic/> (2010).

<sup>766</sup> Note here that our body language and the music of the voice carry more than 90 % of impressions that we give out in communication.

<sup>767</sup> See Lewis Thomas’ Late Night Thoughts on Listening to Mahler’s Ninth Symphony, Bantam Books, New York, NY (1983). This book, owing to its moving ending, which I will have cited later in the book, I secretively placed in the corner of a lab when a photo was taken of me in a white lab coat and with a bluish solution in my hands, for a UCSF magazine.

rejected by crowning itself as an unassailable and ultimate approach to describing the physical reality is nothing but a tragicomic, almost absurd state of affairs in which the modern science has found itself. For, although scientific thought is young in comparison with its outstandingly broad territories that are yet to be conquered and inhabited by pragmatic planters, and could be imagined to develop itself and the world around us for countless millennia and ages to follow, alternative models that describe the very same or different aspects of reality will undoubtedly arise, leading to emanations of equally great or even more magnificent creative potentials dormant in ourselves and the world. On the other side, dogmatism often pervades the world of officiated religiousness, going against the grain of faith, which, as we know, can thrive only insofar as mysteries and wonderful fields of unknown fill our worlds, just as much as science can remain prolific only for as long as omnisciently arrogant mindsets of the scientists do not prevail over those who are filled with infinite wonder before the mysteries of existence, who openly demonstrate ignorance about almost every little thing comprising reality, and who are subdued by the humble spirit of uncertainty. However, this strikes me not since long time ago I realized how followers of innumerable great teachings reverted the cores of these original teachings with their wrong and often literal interpretations, producing damaging consequences along the way, and Christianity, communism, Marxism, Darwinism, Pythagoreanism and reductionism are only some of the examples. Christianity, for one, has regularly undergone transformations to its diametrical opposites during its past and present, from the original teaching of repentance, of incessant questioning oneself and abstaining from judgments, never ceasing to forgive each and every one and, simply, love it all to the teaching that emphasized crusading, conquering and piercing with swords of judgment and disgrace all that appears peculiar and uncommon to the bigoted eyes that stand behind it. Crusade wars inaugurated under the papal jurisdiction as “holy” and waged in the name of the Christ, a peacemaker under whose hat of the heart no room for any discrimination existed, as well as the cruel mass killings of Serbs and Jews committed by Roman Catholic priests wearing the robes of the Franciscan and Dominican orders could easily make the Christ, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic of Caleruega roll over in their graves at the sight of this antipodal reversal of their teachings by the followers they, quite possibly, never intended to have. The fact that declaring oneself as a Christian implied acceptance of the cross of liberality like no other in the days of its origins while today to most people it sadly signifies just another way of announcing one’s conservatism and prejudiced intolerance clearly speaks in favor of the human propensity to let the foundations of any teaching conceivable easily and irrevocably slip off their minds during its application. Totalitarian communist regimes that fully distorted the anarchistic ideals of abstaining from governing anything or anyone can present yet another striking example of how easily and unnoticeably the human mind applying a specific teaching can slide onto a track that takes it in a direction fundamentally divergent from the destinations originally envisioned by the given teaching. Perhaps, somewhere deep inside, this undying trend of distortion of the most valuable teachings that have adorned the pantheon of humanity following their institutionalization serves as an implicit reminder that the profoundest ideas ought to be lived, in everlastingly novel ways, rather than deadened upon inscription into verbal forms and conveyed to another, inherently delusively, as such. A somewhat consoling observation at this point would be that some of the intrinsically malicious and spiritually corruptive ideologies have also had a partially opposite effect on the human spirit from the one we would expect from them to produce in theory and, as such, shared the same fate of *de facto* inversion when applied in practice. The utterly unjust political system of capitalism, having been transformed in practice into something far more humane than its ideological grounds may have

suggested, could be one example and it may make us wonder whether a Manichean juxtaposition of good and evil is what will come out of however good or evil *per se* the socially implemented ideologies are. In any case, history teaches us that soon after any given systems of belief had begun to be applied in reality, their divergence from their embodiment in real life started taking place, frequently leading to a 180 ° rotation, the state in which the two become diametrically opposite from one another. That is when the lip service paid to certain ideals becomes paradoxically used as a tool for suppressing these very ideals, as could be exemplified by innumerable historical occasions, from Spanish conquistadors and Inquisition, having applied the lifeless words of devotion of the religious ideals of limitless love and cosmopolitanism to tear apart their very sources from the hearts of free-thinking human creatures and turn them into insular dummies and loveless slaves to social standards imposed on them, to countless dictators' ostensible derogation of violence as an excuse to use ever more of it to keep their thrones secure, to the traditional Republicans' usage of the lingo of freedom to strip the average citizens off their very freedoms, including, most notably, the right to affordable health care<sup>768</sup>. In fact, such is the fate of all great ideologies, inescapably branching out in two antipodal directions upon their application, that sometimes I wonder whether their negative repercussions could be used as a sign of their greatness instead of their evidently benevolent ones. Quite a descriptive example comes from the doctrine of *Übermensch*, which was in its original form, born out of Nietzsche's writings, conceived as "the antidote to the moral and cultural pygmyhood spawned by centuries of European decadence and Church domination"<sup>769</sup>, but which, in spite of its association with extreme individualism and nonconformity, found a fertile ground in none other but the utterly reactionary, uniformity-breeding culture of Nazi Germany. Moreover, on one hand it caused an unexplainable devastation of the heritages and futures of humanity, while on another the very same narcissistic elevation of the self and carnally competitive suppression of others has stood behind many great inventions of the humankind, which was nowhere as evident as in the capitalist, ego-driven economies of the world. The same can be, undoubtedly, said for the teaching of the Christ, which brought enormous suffering to our planet through its warped understanding and application, while at the same time it kept in check these animalistic tendencies to destroy all that is, bringing many potentially carnal and destructive minds to the edge of peace and enlightenment. Institutionalized Christianity destroyed every last trace of pagan and unorthodox religious movements and viewpoints from history, thus impoverishing the world of its precious intellectual diversities and serving to this day as an epitome of hypocrisy with this exhibition of aggression and intolerance on the basis of a teaching of supposed peace and love, but through this theistic monopoly it exerted a greater influence at the state level, wherefrom it now stands in the way of countless wars and conquests popping up as vague ideas in the heads of state leaders, notwithstanding the fact that it sparked many of such invasions in the medieval days. Christianity, as it was neatly represented in Tommaso Laureti's 16<sup>th</sup> Century painting Triumph of Christianity, also did away with the antique men's and women's dreams of being akin to godlike creatures, Apollos and Venuses, respectively, thus putting out the fire of unforeseeable creativity spanning the globe, but it also helped tame the innately destructive beast living in the human soul and create a more peaceful civilization than it would have been without the piety it insisted on, forcefully at its worst and mystically at its best. Also, remember how the healthy refusal of the early Puritans to comply with "artificial, feigned, and strained art of

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<sup>768</sup> See Richard Eskow's Ten Ways Americans Have Lost Their Freedom, Salon (August 31, 2012), available at [http://www.salon.com/2012/08/31/ten\\_ways\\_americans\\_have\\_lost\\_their\\_freedom/](http://www.salon.com/2012/08/31/ten_ways_americans_have_lost_their_freedom/).

<sup>769</sup> See Sue Prideaux's I am Dynamite! A Life of Nietzsche, Tim Duggan Books, New York, NY (2018).

compliment consisting in bundles of fopperies, fond ceremonies, foolish windings<sup>770</sup> and other customary communicational forms behind which fakeness and insincerities lay transformed over time into an unprecedentedly prosaic cultural tradition that set the foundations for the rise of cold, self-oriented and horribly hypocritical mindsets that now pervade the mainstreams of the modern Western world. However, more than anything in this whole debate between proponents of science and religions, I am sensitive to voices of my scientific buddies and colleagues whose in-depth knowledge of religion equals the amount of knowledge that a scientifically skeptical savage from a village virtually disconnected from the rest of the world may have about the promises of the modern science. Just as he might accuse science for producing pollution, attaching people to unnecessary technological appliances, driving them to cities and poisoning their spirits, possibly calling for the abolishment of hi-tech gadgets and machines in the spirit of Luddites who were on the run to demolish textile machinery which they saw as a threat to the welfare of the working class, these religiously superficial scientists accuse religions of the world for manipulating with masses, selling false hopes and instilling religious intolerance and fundamentalism in them, similarly demanding their extermination from the face of the earth. Although they accuse religious leaders for instilling intolerance and hatred to human minds, they seem to forget that scientific authorities and educators may equally be responsible for fostering selfishness, egotism and prosaic panoramas of the world in human perception of it. Though they abolished omnipotent gods and other transcendental forces, they substituted them with another, more impersonal form of omnipotence, implicit in the scientific laws that apply to all things<sup>771</sup>, ignoring all the arrogance, bias and bigotry that obedience to a law is bound to generate. Needless to add, I am convinced that these very same pro-establishment, scientifically inclined people are those that would have defended the merits of not science, but religion had we somehow transformed ourselves into inhabitants of the Dark Ages. And I, I would be horrified by realizing how the Inquisition dogmatically tortures people who, quite paradoxically, truly live according to the Biblical guidance, which has, remember, called for fostering faith and therefore implicitly placed the endless oceans of unknown and mysterious on the pedestal of human knowledge. Hence, it is none other but the hype of the mainstream thought and modern trends in thinking that these superficial followers of science adhere to. If intellectually vigilant enough, however, they could be standing on top of a mountain of human knowledge and wisely looking back so as to grasp as many streams of thought as possible and unite them into powerful common rivers of knowledge, while at the same time gazing forward, towards wonderful new horizons of thinking and being, in the spirit of true visionaries of the world.

However, it has been the fate of countless towers of human worldviews to become alienated from the foundations from which they sprang to life and end up erected in forms that stand in diametrical opposition to their original essence. Although the archetypical scientific mindset in its Renaissance openness and a limitless breadth may still stand forth like an ocean eager to accept the flows of endless rivers of thought around it, the stereotypical mainstream scientist has locked himself in the mental cage of dogmatism and blind beliefs in the tenets of objective realism and the reigning scientific models that are, though, predestined to only hypothetically describe the Universe. On one hand, it has been an incessant inclination of human

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<sup>770</sup> See Richard Bauman's *Let Your Words Be Few: Symbolism of Speaking and Silence among Seventeenth-Century Quakers*, Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture 8, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK (1983), pp. 46.

<sup>771</sup> See Jim Holt's *Why Does the World Exist?: An Existential Detective Story*, Liveright Publishing Corporation, New York, NY (2012), pp. 100.

minds to find false comfort in rejecting alternative streams of thought and embracing single ones, which on most occasions, as the many theories of humans as herds have had it, turn out to be exactly those already widely worshipped by the masses. Hereafter, to those familiar with this inevitable trend of corruption that the essences of ideologies espoused by the mainstreams of humanity undergo it comes as no surprise to realize how science, once an epitome of the freedom of thought and limitless inquiry, has locked itself into shackles of prejudices and become an oppressive, tyrannical force imposed on the human reason, all through the academic and political seats of power, quite similar to those from which the Church exhibited its horrendous powers centuries ago, having transformed the celebration of lifesaving capacities intrinsic to the original Christ's message to despotic powers aimed at sucking out this force of life from human creatures instead of endowing them therewith, quite in the spirit of the figure of Death depicted on the legendary Gustav Klimt's painting, holding a bash and not a lantern of love or a dove that spells freedom and independence for all in its hands. And just as the Christ, parachuted to Earth once again, would surely oppose the organized religion and denounce the way it has corrupted his thought and probably be burned at the stake by the very Church founded to worship his legacy and credos, so must the role of an unblemished scientist of the day, irrespective of the cost, be to relentlessly criticize the Ivory Tower as the institutionalized proprietor of scientific thought and knowledge *per se*, recognizing in it myriads of distortions from an ideal state, from the commercialized, corporate machinery that spins the wheels of scientific research and discovery of the day to its dead and dilapidated foundations built from the bricks of romantic, poetic thoughts and aspirations to the pervasive neglect of philosophical clarities in the frames of positivistic expression to the neglect of basic research, so basic that its applications are nowhere in sight, to the literal expulsion of anything spiritual from within its limits to, finally, the embracement of robotic certainties and dogmatism at many different levels on the account of the systematic derogation of anything soft, gentle and uncertain in attitude. God knows I have done my share of criticizing the academic order for taking the noble and innocent spirits in and spitting the stale and selfish shadows thereof out, which cost me a career in it and is still often met with the advice of the supporters of this order<sup>772</sup> not to bang my head against the wall with this strident slating of the dreadful state that the academic science finds itself in today, the response to which will always be my stressing out that I would rather be banging my head against the wall than be a brick in it, for forever and ever my role and stance will be that of Jean-Luc Godard's Lemmy Caution, an inquisitive inhabitant of the Outlands, with the address way outside the borders of Alphaville, in the grisly gutters of the Kafkaesque Castle that academia, deep down, is. After all, to escape the sect is millions times harder than getting sucked into it, they say<sup>773</sup>, and once the energy well of academia has been escaped, not only can its viciousness be held in clear view, freed from any blind spots, but ripples in this well can be made by throwing pebbles and dropping paper boats like never before, meaning that these grim gutters could be more exhilarating than they look, evoking the stance taken on by Chuang-Tzu when he dismissed the king's courier who came to invite him to join the ministry by saying that he would rather be a turtle that splashes mud with its tail than a turtle dressed in honorary clothes and protected in a chest within a chest inside the king's castle and continuing to fish by the river. Another analogy worth drawing here is that between today's academic science and art under the Protestant rule in England, Germany and northern provinces of the Netherlands; namely, just as Reformation with its insistence on sparing decoration, the lack of grandeur and simplicity in

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<sup>772</sup> Marc Madou, University of California, Irvine, Private Correspondence (June 13, 2020).

<sup>773</sup> See Luna Lu's Blam, Nova (July 5, 2020), retrieved from <https://nova.rs/kolumne/pise-luna-lu-blam/>.

ambition turned the artistic talents away from the arts at the point at which the gothic art in these countries flourished and paralleled Renaissance in the south, creating catastrophic consequences for it, which are readily observable by browsing through any historical art book covering this period<sup>774</sup>, so has science with its insistence on prosaic expression, perceiving emotions as a thing to subdue to the power of reason and every last trace of lyricism as an outlier destined to be erased and shunned into gutters, repelled young people with artistic sensibilities for generations now, which has made it drier and drier, resembling a deader desert ever more with each new day, with less and less of the freshness of thought that only an eye keen to recognize beauty in things can bring about. From here on, it should not surprise that my aspiration to bring art and lyrical inspiration back to science and thus revitalize its dilapidating roots, a mission that could have unthinkably positive repercussions for the welfare of not only science and scientists, but humanity as a whole too, has been routinely rejected as sheer lunacy by the dead souls occupying the seats of power in the kingdom of science, the souls eyeing only what can be eaten, applied and profited from, focused only on the practical but blind to its spiritual purpose and roots, illiterate about and unresponsive to anything poetic and aesthetic in science, souls to whom the attribute of “beautiful” is as alien and distractive as fishhook to a guppy. “Economics and politics – that is what science is all about today and there is no room in it for your vision of purity of science”<sup>775</sup>, I, jobless, helpless and broke at the time of my expulsion from academia, was told by one of the successful players of this new, entrepreneurial game that science has become, a stereotypically cynical brat holding his nose up in the air because of having millions of dollars in his pockets and because of schmoozing with the powers that be, advising me to start playing this game of collective prostitution or else I would be long gone soon, to which my response, in the spirit of my Romanticist, Don Quixotean efforts in this realm, was that exactly because of such perspectives I must be resolute and continue to stand strong and I must transmit this message of purity louder than ever. Yet, to be one amongst many, like the hat amidst helms on the cover of the Jayhawks’ Smile, is to be pushed and shoved all until nothing that made one so alive, so different from the crowd and so glistening with intellectual joys is left in one, and all of that, ironically, in a social sphere that has fed on the difference and originality, but that has become a home to the world’s most dangerous bigotry and “provincial conformism”, that “national evil” and “the net” that all renaissance “scatterbrains” must be careful not to “run headlong into”<sup>776</sup>. Paradoxically, even though studies have shown that low IQ directly relates to cravings for stability and stagnancy in life and, thence, not to wondrous adventurousness and cosmopolitan open-mindedness, but to prejudiced thinking and exclusion of anything that opposes one’s rigid beliefs<sup>777</sup>, academic thinking, the epitome of the opposite, high IQ end on the Binet-Simon scale, a very flawed predictor of intelligence, *en passant*, could be more readily connected with bigotry and blind following the steps of authority rather than free thinking and dissent, as if scientists have forgotten that only by rebelling against the standard regimens of reasoning by means of eruptions of stunning originality can truly progressive steps forward for science and the whole world alike be made. Hence, upon learning that the government “will not accept any academy or free school proposal which plans to teach creationism in the science curriculum or as an

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<sup>774</sup> See, for example, E. H. Gombrich’s *The Story of Art*, Fifteenth Edition, Phaidon Press, London, UK (1989), pp. 413.

<sup>775</sup> Alon Gorodetsky, Personal Communication, University of California, Irvine (October 18, 2018).

<sup>776</sup> See Eugenio Montale’s *The Pilot Fish*, In: *Posthumous Diary*, Translated by Jonathan Galassi, Turtle Point Press, New York, NY (2001), pp. 83.

<sup>777</sup> See Stephanie Pappas’ *Low IQ & Conservative Beliefs Linked to Prejudice*, *Live Science* (January 26, 2012), available at <http://www.livescience.com/18132-intelligence-social-conservatism-racism.html>.

alternative to accepted scientific theories”<sup>778</sup>, the spin of the carousel of thoughts inside my head could reflect nothing but sadness over this state of affairs whereby alternative worldviews are tried to be eliminated at all costs by the scientific powers, as I kept on wondering how come science based on humble wonder and healthy skepticism has turned into its dogmatic opposite over the course of time, bearing more resemblance to dictatorship of a kind that demands unquestioning obedience than a cosmic swarm of inherently anarchistic and rebellious creative thought. It is as if scientific authorities - having begun to resemble the faceless executors on Goya’s May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1808, all of whom were drawn as complete copies of each other, signifying the deadening monotony of bigoted conventionalism, unlike their nonconformist victims, each one of whom is a story in itself<sup>779</sup> - have somehow slipped their minds that in diversity lies the sustainability of the world. Despite the fact that being different is a vital and inescapable trait of creativity, that no evolution into higher and more versatile emanations of being could be imagined without creatures’ making steps that differ from the accustomed and clichéd ways of perceiving and acting, and that difference with style has equaled appeal throughout hundreds of millions of years of evolution in the plant and animal kingdoms<sup>780</sup>, this particular painting of the Spanish master depicts what one may expect to be treated like in the spheres of science if one only differs too much from the mainstream: like a revolutionary condemningly shot at by the judgmental executioners whose “face is always well hidden”<sup>781</sup> and who stringently demand uniformity and unimaginative sameness, harshly punishing any attempts to be creatively different, having forgotten somewhere along the narrow tracks of their mental universes that farming monocultures is mercilessly punished by Nature<sup>782</sup>, that tireless reproduction of sameness is the trait of not healthy, but pathological, malignant or invasive biological entities, that focus is best preserved by the constant loss of focus, lest we fall into blind spots of perception and drown therein, and that, finally, teachings that impel the disciples to differ from beliefs and actions proposed by the teachers deserve the epithet of the most masterfully exposed and successful ones. To freely explicate pros and cons of all directives in life thus appears as the key to harmonious dissemination of knowledge, stemming naturally from the premise that neither perfectly perfect nor perfectly imperfect things exist, a point of view with regard to the nature of existence from which both the petals of the flower of the heart ready to embrace it all with infinite lovingness and the paths towards the endless evolution of life open in all their

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<sup>778</sup> See Jamie Doward’s Richard Dawkins Celebrates a Victory over Creationists, *The Observer* (January 14, 2012); available at [http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2012/jan/15/free-schools-creationism-intelligent-design?fb\\_action\\_ids=10150492200403267&fb\\_action\\_types=news.reads&fb\\_source=other\\_multiline](http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2012/jan/15/free-schools-creationism-intelligent-design?fb_action_ids=10150492200403267&fb_action_types=news.reads&fb_source=other_multiline).

<sup>779</sup> See Patrick de Rynck’s How to Read a Painting: Lessons from the Old Masters, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, New York, NY (2004), pp. 362.

<sup>780</sup> A single woman with the face of Cleopatra and the physique of Nefertiti in a hypothetical world wherein every woman was a busty blonde à la Pamela Anderson would be all rage, to put it plainly.

<sup>781</sup> Listen to Bob Dylan’s A Hard Rain’s A-Gonna Fall on The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan, Columbia Records, NY (1963).

<sup>782</sup> Watch the documentary movie Fresh directed by Ana Sofia Joanes (2009). Along this line of thought, I also bring to mind the lone orange tree in the Berryessa district of San Jose, situated away from the industrial fruit orchards, from which we picked oranges and ate them. Not only were they so juicy that one could neither peel nor bite into them without the sweet juices sliding down one’s cheeks and elbows, but eating each orange was a unique experience, from their size and texture to the way they peeled to the way they tasted; all in all, phenomenal when compared to the uniform and dry oranges buyable from a Safeway supermarket. Thus, to jump into a gutter or a footnote rather than to be a faithful follower and strive to be just like others for the sake of staying in the limelight of the mainstream is the way for the orangey ball of light through which the rivers of karma flow in and out of our being to become a carrier of not dry and dim rivulets, but of heavenly nectars, sweet and savory.

ethereal glory. Still, quite paradoxically, straight from the heart of the democratic world did this decision of abolishment of the freedom of teachers to teach intelligent design, whatever it may be, arrive, despite the fact that a single greatest thing that democracy has given to the world is a free expression of thought and the right of people to hear all sides, regardless of the topic, prior to making autonomous and conscious decisions as to whom they will trust. One tends to forget, of course, that this brave new world of a phony democratic façade, but corrupted and greedy interiors where profit is most of the time chosen over genuine efforts to save the world we live in and hand it in a beautiful form to future generations, is the one where students and pupils being taught in classrooms and labs are still seen as if they have fallen out of an obsolete behaviorist textbook that sees every creature as moldable via conditioning and akin to a pot that could be inculcated with instructions in any way the educational operator wants it. No one should get me wrong, of course; I, myself, believe in the evolution and find literate interpretations of not only the story of Genesis, but of the entire Bible and scientific models of reality too inherently toxic. Genesis, in my universe of thought as well as in those of innumerable theologians all over the world, has always been a metaphorical story that described “the creation of human beings in the image of God”<sup>783</sup> rather than a veracious and literal account of how the world was made. However, intelligent design and creationism are two quite separate worldviews and the co-creational thesis could be best seen as a worldview founded in beliefs in intelligent evolution, a middle ground with respect to hardcore religious and hardcore scientific views. Now, although it is fashionable nowadays to cultivate contempt for religious feelings, especially among females, the sex that has been traditionally depreciated and discriminated against by most religious institutions, hidden behind such irrational spurs of animosity is again confusion of a map for its territory. Namely, as in accordance with the essence of the Christ’s teaching that was all about simultaneously respecting the reigning religious scriptures of his times and rebelling against them while handing his heart to outlaws and rejects of the society, he made sure to erase the traditional consideration of women as impure and as piddling with respect to the presupposed greatness of men as a single rib is to the human creature as a whole, if we were to refer to Moses’ parable (Genesis 2:22), by letting Mary Magdalene, a converted sinner, be the first person to see him resurrected (John 20:14), by saving a prostitute from being stoned by an angry judgmental crowd (John 8:7), and by praising the inherently feminine dreaminess that watches the world with love without ever engaging in creating anything of practical importance (Luke 10:38-42). That is, even though the Christ could have never be heard offering any discriminatory words against women, the hatred of the contemporary feminists for anything religious springs from their seeing religion, a territory, so to say, as equal to Church, a map and a political institution of a kind, while ignoring almost any desire to open the original scripts and interpret them in a benevolent light. The fact that we, in academic circles, could be surrounded at times by a chorus of voices of up-and-coming intellectuals who avidly bash religious thought because they have confused the territory with a handful of corrupt mapmakers tells most about the systematic lack of touch with the elementary philosophical grounds of any thought, scientific included, so pervasive in the current times. Although genuine intellectualism is inextricably tied to being a creative dissenter and tirelessly swimming against the mainstream, blinded by hate and ignorant of countless great things religions have done to elevate humanity from the levels of sheer carnality, such quasi-intellectual voices come mostly from heads carried away by the streams of political fashion, the phenomenon that should be foreign to truly free-thinking minds typified by benevolent breadth and an infinite room for compassion and understanding. For, refusing to

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<sup>783</sup> See Robert Kiely’s *Blessed and Beautiful*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT (2010), pp. 5.

readily buy whatever the powers that be serve on our plates is a vital trait of intellectualism *bona fide*. And yet, without being incessantly focused on metaphysical and psychological grounds from which things palpable arise, our ability to constructively doubt the worldly appearances would tend to wither away and leave the stiff stick of lifeless conformism behind. In my views, therefore, the fact that builders of a house tend to lose the foundations out of sight as they spend too much time focusing on putting bricks on its walls and coloring the façade is the core of the problem, in whose alleviation lies the promotion of cleverer and more open-minded generations of scientists. To accomplish one such epistemologically healing task, we would need to start from clarifying the concepts of basic logics and other pivotal aspects of philosophy of scientific reasoning on which all scientific models rest. Otherwise, the same ills of literal interpretation of imagery that engulfed Christianity in the Western world in centuries of dogmatic intolerance and fanatical stupidity would take hold of the tree of scientific reasoning and make it mercilessly rot from the inside. Shallow references to “proof-based theories” and other phrases that may make Ludwig Wittgenstein, who had clearly shown that science never proves anything, spin in his grave, would thus be made less hearable if students were made to understand the basics of logical reasoning whereby elementary propositions, which can be neither derived nor proven as valid from experience, are used to “prove” each and every proposition descriptive of experiential observations. Pervasively confusing the absence of evidence with the evidence of absence and other elementary logical fallacies would also be committed to a much lesser extent, as the openness to innumerable unorthodox worldviews would be ignited like suns in human heads. Despite this utopian panorama of thought, however, it is still possible that human tendency to simply follow the main stream and be more compliant and less original is here to stay for as long as humanity exists. For, conformist uniformity rather than dialectical diversity has ever since been what the majority of souls that inhabited the Earth have been inclined to. Yet, when we find ourselves in an environment wherein changing the focus of our attention or stepping left or right from the stances we occupy does not turn out to produce practically any change in the outcomes of our observation, we should recall that atomic and molecular states that have their energetic duplicates in states corresponding to rearranged configurations of the given entities are defined by the quantum physicists as degenerate ones. A similar degeneracy can be attributed to social or cognitive systems composed of parts that all resemble each other and whose ceding place with one another does not substantially modify states of the system. This insight that highlights the undesirability of these essentially highly entropic systems that resist undergoing change upon perturbing their internal states should be carefully kept in mind whenever we find ourselves profoundly unchanged from one second to another in this grand cosmic fable called life. In essence, we have thence become a follower of one thing or the other, of idolatry inflicted on us by other people, of behavioral standards and norms that the timid and compliant social mainstreams teem with or of convictions to which we unconditionally subjugated our self. In contrast, to exhibit celestial Wonder, which along with Love supports the entire existence on its columns, we ought to adopt a mindset that tears apart any given doctrines, ideals or beliefs that call for their passive and inert obedience and that resists staying caged inside of the judgmental aviaries for the birds of our thoughts for too long, questioning it all like a child with eyes infinitely curious and wide, from appearances to the epistemological foundations on top of which these appearances are being questioned to the epistemological foundations on top of which these epistemological foundations on top of which the appearances were questioned are being questioned, the process whose mastering requires a lifetime of potent introspective insight and

whole mountains of thought to be moved by our willpower from one instant of our lives to another.

The following is one of the most striking examples that tells us how bashing of religious thought that one could hear during conversations with contemporary intellectuals is a sociopolitical fad that is all but rooted in deep philosophical insights. Namely, while most of these bashers would be the first to jump up and object at the very mention of the creationist nature of the physical reality, upon mentioning its evolutionary origins they would also be the first to point at the inescapably animalistic and primitive innate predispositions of humans rather than showing us how the continuation of the wondrous evolutionary path may appear like. It is as if their accentuation of the last sentence of Charles Darwin's *Descent of Man*, "Man still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin", has eclipsed in their eyes the one that opened the last paragraph of this manifesto on the evolutionary reality that we inhabit: "Man may be excused for feeling some pride at having risen, though not through his own exertions, to the very summit of the organic scale; and the fact of his having thus risen, instead of having been aboriginally placed there, may give him hope for a still higher destiny in the distant future"<sup>784</sup>. Yet, despite these limitlessly optimistic visions impressed in the finale of one of Darwin's lifeworks, views of these shallow propagators of evolutionary ideals, quite often invoked only to contrast the creationist hypotheses backed up by equally insular theologians, are, strangely, most of the time directed downwards rather than upwards, locked into animalistic and unbearably pessimistic perspectives on life. How science deprived itself of its teleological positivity by ceasing to believe in cosmic intelligence as a co-weaver of worldly causal threads along with semi-autonomous human minds – that is, synchronicity, if we were to use Jung's terms - and purposeful, law-abiding principles behind even the finest atomic and molecular events, let alone those in the biological, psychological and social domains, something that it has been seeking incessantly ever since, assigning purely random causes of phenomena whose explanation it is missing, is hard to understand. For, concluding that an absence of evidence is equal to evidence of absence is an elementary logical blunder, which science, a supposed epitome of clear and correct reasoning, has been committing over and over again. One thing we could do now to trace such an inversion of the genuine teleological nature of scientific endeavors is to connect it with the all-encompassing reversals of the founding purpose of practically any human ideologies applied on the grand scale; scientists, the epitomes of open-mindedness, falling into the traps of dogmatism, preachers, the symbols of empathic humbleness, becoming authoritarian inquisitors, and medical doctors, traditional embodiments of selfless benevolence, turning into greedy egotistical monsters can serve as only a couple of examples of this horrendous effect that challenges presumably every single mind that exists in this Universe. As for the search for an explanation of the origin of human species and, therefore, the projected path for their future development, the power of wonder, the fundamental source of scientific creativity, has somehow become a double-bladed sword in the hands of humanity, transforming first into its diametrical opposite of bigoted and biased thinking and then turning against itself and cutting its own roots, yielding arrogantly certain beliefs in purposelessness of the entire existence that presumably evolves inertly and insensibly according to a preset mechanism of a deterministic clockwork implanted into the very heart of physical reality. Randomness and sheer accident, usually coupled with various "selfish gene" hypotheses, are thus invoked to describe the drive behind the spin of the wheel of evolution and the reason is most often peer pressure or compliance with the

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<sup>784</sup> See Charles Darwin's *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, William Benton, Chicago, IL (1871), pp. 597.

opinion of the majority rather than independent thinking. The miracle of evolution could inspire millions of souls to envisage social landscapes that extend far beyond the visible horizons in the distant future, and many personal philosophies, such as the one inscribed in this book, could be conceived as revolving around such inspiring prophetic insights. How do artistic qualities contribute to equipping humans with qualities that increase their chances for survival? Wouldn't it be a wonderful story that shows how these and other ethical and aesthetical attributes of humanity are more important in ensuring our survival and sustainability in the long run compared to those traditionally associated with "survival of the fittest", that is, sheer physical strength and attractive physical features? On this planet conquered, out of all the living species working for and against one another, by humans, not lions or leopards, grounds are, after all, endless to challenge David Barash's oblivious claim that "the fit – not the meek – have inherited the Earth"<sup>785</sup>. Moreover, there is no doubt that in the contemporary world where wars for dominion are waged by economic means, where knowledge and written and spoken word are used as weapons and where the flow of information acts as a fortress or a bridge used to defend one establishment or conquer another, the concept of "survival of the fittest" craves to be redefined in the direction of embracing more of the intangible, spiritual qualities humans are endowed with. These and multiple other questions could be investigated as the world badly awaits inspiring popular philosophical works that explicate the wonders of biology and biochemistry in layman terms. To reiterate, it is an apparent paradox that the neo-Darwinian paradigm of the origins of life with its implicit pointing at an unending evolution of forms of life far and beyond those that we endow with intelligence as of this day has mostly led to mediocre propagators thereof, whose ideals of human animalism tend to push us backwards instead of propelling us forward on the wings of visionary inspiration, while the Christian paradigm of creationism postulated a static world and yet opened space for the conception and rise of a spiritual superman. Also, how in the world the evolutionary paradigm with its implicit accentuation of the quintessential role of nonhuman Nature in creating the world as we know it managed to yield views of the world so toxically anthropocentric amongst its supporters, deprived of any sense for divine guidance that permeates every single cell and inanimate piece of matter around us, is a puzzling phenomenon and elucidating its causes is bound to keep the future philosophers and psychologists busy for long periods of time. This and other similar paradoxes could be more often realized as such and found solutions to by training scientists and theologians alike for a philosophical journey down the branches and the stem of the tree of visible products of scientific and religious thought and into the invisible, metaphysical and epistemological roots thereof, where their unity should appear as evident. My works have ever since presented leisured walks along the Way of Love, strewn with many glass beads, while occasionally grazing, touching and tasting the fruits from the trees of knowledge on the side of the road, in which the unison, the common roots of religions and sciences could be tasted. Having chosen to walk along the middle way with arms spread to both religions and arts on one side of the road and science on another, thinking of all of those who passionately and ignorantly follow only one of these two sides while trying to extinguish the other, I merely recollect the ancient Chuang-Tzu's words: "People celebrate what is in the reign of their own knowledge, but fail to realize their dependence on what lies beyond... Hundreds of doctrines march forward instead of turning back, and are thus predestined never to conjoin... Yet, if there was no other, there would not be me either... Hence, Tao is not choosing between this and that; it is walking in

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<sup>785</sup> See David Barash's *The Whisperings Within: Evolution and the Origin of Human Nature*, Penguin, New York, NY (1979), pp. 22.

togetherness with everything”<sup>786</sup>. And if my growing up in the midst of one of the grandest confluences of not only rivers, but cultures and mores known to this planet has taught me something, it is that while standing on the crossroads where different cultural streams converge will always make the majority perplexed and unable to truly connect with any of them, a few of the most vigilant and, I am free to say, chosen ones will find those times to be a wonderful opportunity to collect all these streams into the magic hat of their hearts and use it to enkindle unprecedentedly beautiful and progressive forms of creative expression of their beings. Such times wherein fascinating phase transitions in the evolution of humanity towards more divine forms of being could be sensed in the air are thus truly describable by the Chinese ideogram for crisis<sup>787</sup>, in which the images depicting threats and opportunities appear to be inextricably wrapped around each other.

Yet, although the Middle Way approach has ever since been the one that typified peacemakers in life, one should be aware of the dangers of announcing certain things as identical when they should be kept strictly separate. After all, constructive creation is all about alternate application of two basic operations of human thinking - identifying and differing. For, if the only operation our mind ever performs is identifying with the qualities of the world, it would swiftly dissipate its unique essence, lose its integrity and blend with the impersonal uniformity of being. The opposite extreme would belong to constant execution of the operation of differing from everything that surrounds us, which would result in equally unfavorable implosion of our spirit and its transformation into an isolated mental cage in which a demonically egotistic monster of our self would reside. Even if we broaden our view to fit the social domain in it, we could conclude that the balance between the same two operations is what guarantees harmony at the given level of cosmic order. Namely, if all people were impeccably faithful followers, the world would not know of evolutionary impetuses that always appear shockingly strange and at odds with the mainstream in their strikingly differing from standards adopted by the sheepish masses and the wheel of the progress of life would cease to spin. Likewise, if everybody were different all of the time, it would be yet another devastating extreme, as a lack of compassionate drive to be the same as another, being an integral part of the essence of constructive stances in life, would be then thoroughly missing and, as a result, the creative force of life would be chaotically dissipated; unfocused, it would not be able to produce powerful enough fluxes of energy needed to exert a profound effect on the fabric of reality and modify it for better. As ever, the opposites of great truths are some other great truths, as Niels Bohr put it once, and it is the balance between faithfully following and rebelliously differing that can be considered the key to exhibitions of utmost creativeness in life. This is all to say that saying No every once in a while is vital in opening doors for gorgeous Yeses to ring throughout the cosmic spaces with an ever greater beauty. One such case of misleading identification is apparent every time one confuses map with its territory and considers them as equal. Henceforth, all those who believe that scientific models and religious narratives are perfectly faithful representations of the way the world is should be reminded that the imageries in question are humanly conceived as much as they present reflections of a real order of things; as such, however, they are intrinsically metaphoric and in no way equal to the experiential territories that they stand for. Rather, these two, experience and its representation, belong to different logical types, as Bertrand Russell and Gregory Bateson would have reminded us, and mistaking one for another, or “identifying abstract conceptions with

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<sup>786</sup> See Chuang-Tzu's Complete Works, Columbia University Press, New York, NY (circa 400 BC).

<sup>787</sup> See Fritjof Capra's *The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture*, Bantam Books, New York, NY (1982).

reality”<sup>788</sup>, as Alfred North Whitehead put it, comprises one of the most critical logical fallacies that humankind has been perpetually committing. For example, when Alfred J. Ayer used a form of Russell’s paradox and of Gödel’s incompleteness theorem to disprove the validity of the search for the prime cause for the existence of the Universe and for the ultimate ontological explanation of experiential phenomena, saying that “asking where all things come from is asking for a description of some event prior to all events, but because this event is a member of the class of all events, it must be included in it and therefore cannot be prior to it”<sup>789</sup>, he commits a fundamental logical error, the very same one that he raised his voice against with this argument; namely, logical truths apply to the maps of our thinking and are separable from empirical truths, which apply to the territory of our experience. Although they are tied into a feedback loop and can influence each other, details on the map, irrespective of the level of confidence with which they were drawn, need not be reflective of the traits of the territories that they attempt to describe. In other words, experience and logical models of it belong to two different logical types and are fundamentally logically incongruent with each other, as Russell and Ayer, themselves, would have pointed out, crumbling their own positivistic edifices with the arguments emerging naturally from their rigid and inert positivistic frameworks of thought. Therefore, as René Magritte indicated with an inscription on his painting *The Treason of Images*, which shows nothing but a pipe, “*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*”, that is, “This is not a pipe”, shaking us out of an illusion of identity of map and its territory into which our spirits tend to routinely fall from the clouds of genuinely graceful knowledge in this life. Jean-Luc Godard was an even more severe denouncer of every form of representationism, including perhaps the one that mainstream parents routinely engage in when they question their children what the purely abstract scribbles on paper represent, thus slowly killing the idealist in them and giving birth to a bland objectivist instead, as when he noted that “the act of representation always involves violence against the subject of representation”<sup>790</sup>, before ending his thought on a more sublime note by calling attention to “a contrast between the violence of the representation and the calm residing within the subject of the representation”<sup>791</sup>. For the very same reason, we should not be surprised if the answer received one day from some heavenly vistas of being to the question if God exists will be, “No, God (a word) does not exist, but everywhere exists something much greater”, mystical and incomprehensible, slipping gracefully through the holes of the fishing net of language casted onto it. For, brilliant intelligence is always such that it refrains from mistakenly grasping the image of an object as the object itself, the metaphoric representation of reality as reality *per se*; as such, it continues to live in the blissful daylight of knowledge, undisturbed by faint mirages and shadows of these false identities falling onto one’s cognitive vistas like dead birds. According to John Milton’s interpretation of the exile from the Garden of Eden in his *Paradise Lost*, the task of Adam, the epitome of the earliest human, was to invent language and the first words emanating from his mouth while he was still living in divine harmony with Nature “revealed the essences of things; a thing and its name were interchangeable”<sup>792</sup>. The expulsion from Paradise, however, coincided with the words becoming separate from the objects of

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<sup>788</sup> See J. Ron Stanfield’s *Institutional Analysis: Toward Progress in Economic Science*, In: *Why Economics is Not Yet a Science*, edited by Alfred S. Eichner, M. E. Sharpe, Inc., Armonk, NY (1983), pp. 189.

<sup>789</sup> See Jim Holt’s *Why Does the World Exist?: An Existential Detective Story*, Liveright Publishing Corporation, New York, NY (2012), pp. 24.

<sup>790</sup> Watch *The Image Book* directed by Jean-Luc Godard (2018).

<sup>791</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>792</sup> The quote found in Paul Auster’s *City of Glass*, Adapted by Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli, Picador, New York, NY (2004), pp. 39.

description, and the more humans have fallen from heavenly grace, the greater this divide is said to have become, opening space for various monsters of hypocrisy, dishonesty and pretense to emerge their ugly heads through this giant gap, the closing of which undoubtedly corresponds to restoration of divine grace in us. However, since the world we inhabit is blueprinted in such a way that this gap seems not to be effaceable at all, a simple awareness of its existence and dangers that it hides whenever we switch our creative attention onto words and images rather than experiences represented by their means is just about enough to grant us the ticket to Paradise and let its enticing visions and feelings sprout like flowers and trees from a magic garden inside our head and heart. In view of all of this, for the convenience of both churchgoers and overly empirically inclined scientists who, fooled by the tenets of objectivism and a lack of knowledge of philosophy and history, confuse map with the territory, I often pick an imaginary piece of chalk and silently draw a triangle, that strongest of all physical shapes, in space. In one of its angles I place Life, Personality and Message of Jesus Christ, in the second one Religion, in the third one Church, and in the center I place Self, the cognitive core of the subject inescapably involved in semantically constructing each one of the notions positioned in these angles. In such a way, I try to clarify that these three are not one and the same, as many scientific newcomers would routinely assume, and that connections between them are frequently overly naively drawn. Hence, even though our arms are spread to both science and religion, embracing them equally as we progressively stream forward, we should know that each of these two domains of human knowledge are potentially subject to millions of meaningful intrinsic diversifications whereby we must bravely and sanely draw lines that separate things. For, with no separation that counteracts the force of syntheses and unifications, life founded on the grounds of the Philosophy of the Way, the symbolism of which embodies synchronous dividing and uniting, disjoining and conjoining, pushing away and heartily embracing, taking apart and bonding again, would not have been made possible.

Psychologists have known for ages that resourceful empathy consists not only in coalescing with the worldviews and feelings of another person and congenially awakening them inside one, but also of the rootedness within one's own cognitive frameworks of thought, from which one delivers meaningful acts and provides constructive stimuli to the person empathized with. The bear-mouse equation, which I have oh so often swirled in my head, states that the happiness of a bear unequivocally leads to the happiness of an empathic mouse; however, no equation decently reflecting a real-life situation could be linear and unilateral. Therefore, the passive side always has the task to cleverly exert an influence on the active side, the determinant of the equation, lest the bear's happiness dwindle in the long run and the mouse remain a mouse, not a man, so to speak. In order for this to happen, the passive, mousey side in this case has to be partly withdrawn inside its own sane little world to let the enlightening rays of joy and creativity dawn on the bear, the source of its empathic happiness, as is quite in accordance with the tenets of the Way of Love. This insight leads us by the hand to realize that what is common to both science and religion is the shepherd-and-sheep culture. When Emanuel Lasker says that "for governments of an autocratic type the foolishness of the multitude has always been an asset; possibly, also the mediocre who happen to be in authority follow the same policy"<sup>793</sup>, these words could be put in the context of both science and religion without losing an iota of their meaning, for both of these social spheres have been subjugated to vicious circle where the disempowered are ever more mediocritized and the empowered ever more domineering with the passage of time, breeding generations of little tyrants and even littler minions rather than the

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<sup>793</sup> See Emanuel Lasker's *Lasker's Manual of Chess*, Dover, London, New York, NY (1947), pp. 265.

manumitted and free-spirited. What placing both science and religion into a single perspective shows us as immanent is the way in which insistence on the cult of followers and unquestioning deference to authority, undoubtedly present in both, threatens the creative involvement of individuals acting as members of their orders. On one side, thus, we have the cult of priesthood and humanly, not divinely, ordered sanctifications, while on the other side we have the cult of professorship and again humanly, not heavenly, awarded tenures. For, just as the church has insisted that people must pass through its order and earn the institutional approvals to be able to communicate the divine messages to others, so has academia held that people must get the academic degrees and earn tenures to practice the scientific thought and teach it to others, in both cases leading to death by institutionalization. And while the idea that people cannot get in touch with godliness that is all around us has been refuted far and wide by humanity, there is a long way to go before the idea that that one must go through academic ranks in order to legitimately disseminate wisdom and have the liberty to engage in the process of scientific inquiry will be considered nonsensical. It will take the expulsion of many Christ-like creatures from the academic sphere before it gets accepted that tenure is not necessarily an exclusive ticket to the exercise of splendid scientific craftsmanship. In the long run, of course, the resistance to this obsolete and rigid model will prove itself equivalent to the rebellion against the strivings toward conformity that the concepts of priesthood and tenure provoke in the followers of religious and academic orders, respectively. “He who joyfully marches to music in rank and file has earned my contempt. He has been given a large brain by mistake, since for him the spinal cord would fully suffice. This disgrace to civilization should be done away with at once”, Albert Einstein scribbled once in the moments of an eruption of his pacifistic passions; here, we can quite concordantly extend this insight of his to any social domain where people march in synchrony to the rhythm and melody preset by their authorities, without ever yearning to break the walls of prejudices, habits and clichés that sprout everywhere around them with their bare heads. The tragedy of our times is that universities, the traditional epitomes of freedom of thought since the times of Renaissance, “a safeguard against dictatorships, be they of the proletariat, of the scientific establishment, or of the corporate elite thanks to their teaching radical novelties”<sup>794</sup>, have become pervaded by those who march all at once to the beat of a same drummer of dogma, little tyrants who would readily oppress any traces of intellectual difference, originality and exceptionality in order to earn their “rank and file”. The biggest purpose of academic institutions, in fact, especially in today’s world brimming with knowledge from its every corner, can be said to be that of breeding people with predictable behavior and a high degree of conformity to the authority, which are prerequisites for success domesticated at each level of the academic order, from the lowest, populated by students, to the highest, populated by deans, provosts, chancellors and boards of regents. Hence, when Noam Chomsky, with whom I competed one day in 2019 for lecture space in the biggest auditorium in a building on the UCLA campus and, expectedly, lost, points out that “the whole educational and professional training system is a very elaborate filter, which just weeds out people who are too independent, and who think for themselves, and who don’t know how to be submissive, and so on - because they’re dysfunctional to the institutions”<sup>795</sup>, it is a veritable depiction of what would surely be classified as a saddest state of affairs by anyone who dreams of giving birth to independent and visionary thought that clashes with the stale and the old in university lecture halls and classrooms. The cost of this collective

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<sup>794</sup> Paraphrased is a thought by the Dutch computer scientist, Edsger W. Dijkstra, from one out of 1300 or more of his handwritten and freely shared, unpublished EWD manuscripts.

<sup>795</sup> See Noam Chomsky’s *Understanding Power*, The New Press, New York, NY (2002).

academicians' nodding to every whim of their authorities is dear: just as innovation gets suffocated in an overregulated system, so do the creative forces get drained from people when they give away their independence in order to think, feel and do with another's head, heart and hand, respectively. Gradually, nonetheless, over time, as it usually happens to social systems that have become overly oriented to the surface and neglected the need to constantly renew their epistemological cores, the realm of science has transformed itself into something it abhorred most in the religious order of which it revoltingly bounced off centuries ago: a totalitarian edifice that stands on the shoulders of rigid and indoctrinated pursuance of orders and beliefs set by the scientific authorities, leaving the outlook of its ancestral beginnings portrayed by the image of endlessly beautiful gazing at starry mysteries of Nature in Wonder and Love far behind this caravan of followers blinded by the authoritative sunlight, buried in the distant sands of the intellectual desert through which they trail, like sunken treasures waiting to be rediscovered by the infinitely gentle and brilliant minds of the Universe. Yet, as it happens in any other social sphere in which lineages of followers could be spotted traveling one behind the other in caravans, disobeying their own inner voices of reason and self-responsibility and instead blindly tending to satisfy orders of those in front of them, the reigning establishments of both of these orders, the scientific and the religious ones, are inescapably predestined to sooner or later crumble down in their obsolescence. Like little lemmings who never wander off the main trail in brave search of novel, uncharted territories of human knowledge and being, but passively follow their leaders whichever way they go and eventually end up dumped in ditches to be drowned therein, the same fate awaits all those who unquestioningly obey authorities and systematically suffocate the divine inner melodies that emerge onto the audible surface of our senses here and there and offer their infinitely gentle hands to us, to guide us towards stellar horizons of the most delightful lifestyles imaginable. Alas, anyone who dares to put the academic or the ecclesiastical ladders up on their heads by – as I, myself, did - starting to lift up and hearten those who lie hierarchically below him and dissent against those who reign over him instead of following the good old recipe for success, which is to oppress the inferiors and obey the superiors, is bound to end up having as good of a time as “the barefooted on the briars”, as the Serbian saying goes, but such is the fate of all anarchists with the heart of gold in this purgatorial social reality of ours. Yet, this is not meant to be a call for the loss of any hope that heavenlier orders are possible here, on Earth. For, like old stars, these obsolete edifices that have abandoned the need to incessantly revitalize their foundations, letting the freedoms supported on their pillars to be ever stiffer and crumblier, will explode one day and disperse their essence into the surrounding space and give rise to seeds of novel social trees of knowledge which will preach religious devotion and scientific inquiry from far more creative angles. Ernst Fritz Schumacher predicted a few decades ago that the time of massive and gigantic businesses and organizations was soon to disappear and that we would be left in an era in which the slogan Small is Beautiful would indeed be written in each and every human heart<sup>796</sup>. For, if natural systems receive something as a response from Nature to their inclination to act as followers and disobey the voice of individualistic sanity within them, it is signs that push them in the opposite direction. Or, as St. Paul the Apostle asserted in his first epistle to the Corinthians, “All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” (Corinthians I 6:13). From the Christ who overturned the tables of those who sold white doves in synagogues (Matthew 21:12), the churches of his times, enraged by their open fosterage of spiritually corrupting hypocrisies, and offered the parable

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<sup>796</sup> See Ernst Friedrich Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*, 25 Years Later...with Commentaries edition, Hartley & Marks, Vancouver, BC (1998), pp.221-222.

about those who follow others blindly and fall into an abyss altogether (Luke 6:39), to the modern times when rarely brave revolutionaries in the realm of science could be found openly standing up against the academic establishment which favors obedience rather than the open-mindedness that inevitably clashes with the thinking of the authorities, the more, the better, singing the songs of change in their virtuous words, refusing to publish works in traditionally revered journals, bravely burning bridges behind them for the sake of enkindling flames of love and beautiful ethics in their wake or breaking ties with universities and turning their garages into indie, punkish research spaces in which some new voyages to stars will be projected, such balancing voices of reason could be found in many places after a little bit of seeking. As for myself, once I realized that both conformist sheep at lower hierarchical levels of the academic pyramid and the tyrannical shepherds at its higher levels are both to be blamed for creating a system corrupt to such an extent that even a hypothetically spotless soul entering it would be spewed as yet another wicked product of the system after some time, I chose to vex the system by being too anarchically sheepish for the shepherd and too revolutionary for the sheep, poking many hearts festering with malice along the way and prompting their ruthless revenge, which resulted in my expulsion from it in just about the same way the Christ, a creature with sublime, out-of-this world religiousness, had been expelled from the reigning religious order of his times. Of course, a thinker aspiring for truer academic freedoms than those that the current academic chieftains pay mere lip service to, if reasonable enough, would quickly transform into an advocate of order and congruence in a completely anarchic world like that depicted in a Stan Hunt's cartoon where a painter's girlfriend or a muse asks him, "Why do you have to be nonconformist like everybody else"?<sup>797</sup> Therefore, should we turn out to inhabit a world in which an anarchistic plethora of incompatible, clashing opinions and worldviews would exist, the signs from the voices of reason would convey a thoroughly different message – the one of respect and veneration of each and every one, of following the gorgeous footsteps of humanity and creative imprints left everywhere around us by those who had inhabited this world before we arrived on the planetary scene and all those whom we could still glimpse in front of us as gracefully heading towards the horizons of human being at sunset.

In that sense, we could conclude beyond a shadow of a doubt that there are undesirable side effects associated with the application of both scientific and religious knowledge. Publish-or-perish<sup>798</sup> pressure favoring scientific studies of dubious significance, causing wasted resources and promoting biased, uncritical stances in regard to one's work and one's findings creates a similar havoc for the intellect as that left in the wake of the closeness to new experiences championed by the superstitious and fundamentalist religious thought. Ultimately, both of these streams of uncritical thinking that ceaselessly aim towards proving the correctness, righteousness and perfection of one's own approaches, beliefs and statements arise from accepting uncertainty, doubt and eternal wonder as something to be avoided rather than readily grasped with our entire beings as the fuel for the progress of our sciences, technologies and faith, that is, our spiritual astonishment with the natural order. In contrast, the most inspiring and genuine scientists do not evade the freedom to express their ignorance; as such, they live up to the beautiful ideal of diminishing one's greatness and importance before other people rather than vulgarly raising them

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<sup>797</sup> See Stan Hunt's *Why Do You Have to Be Nonconformist Like Everybody Else?*, *The New Yorker* (1958), reprinted in E. H. Gombrich's *The Story of Art*, Fifteenth Edition, Phaidon Press, London, UK (1989), pp. 622.

<sup>798</sup> The publish-or-perish credo in academia has its analogue in the profit-or-perish credo driving the high-tech industry, in both cases leading to prioritization of the shallow benefits for the self at the cost of deteriorating quality of science.

in the eyes of another. Sages have, likewise, unreservedly claimed that the divine order in life is too great to fit the tiny bottle of ordinary human minds, as well as that there are greater things on Heaven and Earth than we could ever dream of, equally sustaining the galactic spin of wonder within human minds. Deep inside of themselves, these inspiring scientists who have never been hesitant to express their ignorance have known that it is an indispensable food for the sense of Wonder, the centerpiece of the wheel of creative scientific thinking. Yet, although it is apparent that science exists because there are uncertainties and unanswered questions in the domain of our knowledge, scientists in the modern world have been erroneously nurtured by thinking that only if they are 100 % correct in their observations and derivation of insights can they present their results correctly. However, such an obsession with an unattainable perfection is taking its toll, as many inspiring works that rest on meaningful hypotheses are nowadays systematically prevented from being published. Apparently, scientific peers involved in the review of most material submitted for publishing have not bothered to realize that, for example, Einstein's general theory of relativity was published when it contained only vague empirical evidence in terms of the explained anomalous perihelion shift of Mercury observed in 1859, that is, before a solid body of its empirical foundations could be supplied. The quantum physicist, Daniel Greenberger thus pointed out the following: "If Einstein were to send his paper to Physical Review today it would have almost no chance at all of being published. 'Highly speculative!' would be the referee report, a death shell to any paper. He would have to append it to an article on string theory, or some other fad, and hope it wasn't noticed"<sup>799</sup>. Many scientists and science historians likewise agree that the famous Watson and Crick's 1953 paper that explicated the structure of DNA<sup>800</sup> would have hardly been published had the manuscript been peer-reviewed today, mainly owing to an excessive amount of hypothesizing present in it. As a result, those who wish to embellish their papers today with inventive ideas that are purely hypothetic in nature, but that are often the most precious lines one could come across in a scientific article, lines whose tracing may drive the field to unforeseeably advanced vistas, must resort to the same tactics as that used by many Renaissance painters to demonstrate their highest art. Namely, just as they displayed the finest of their art by painting landscapes behind the portraits they were commissioned to paint<sup>801</sup>, thus faintly disobeying the decree enacted by the Roman Catholic Church at the Council of Trent that declared painting landscapes a heresy, so must today's scientists squeeze their boldest and, as Albert Einstein would say, craziest hypotheses shyly, secretively, in-between the lines of the discussion section and pray that the peer-reviewers would not recognize and reprimand them for that. Obsessed with perfection and bearing the burden of self-centered timidity everywhere they go, most of these latter scientists of the new generation also act as subservient paradigm-builders. As such, they are mainly driven by the fear of authority rather than by a passionate devotion to the tradition of fabulous human creativeness and the spirit of selfless dedication to beautifying the life of another and at the same time reaching out to "the truth (that) shall make you free" (John 8:32) that this tradition engrains. The great majority of such scientists is surely not aware that the reason why we perceive each detail of the world of our experience the way we do is because our perceptual expectations deviate from what our actual perceptions indicate. Anything

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<sup>799</sup> See A. C. Elitzur's What is the Measurement Problem Anyway? Introductory Reflections on Quantum Puzzles, In: Quo Vadis Quantum Mechanics?, edited by A. Elitzur, S. Dolev and N. Kolenda, Springer, Berlin Heidelberg, Germany (2006).

<sup>800</sup> See J. D. Watson, F. H. C. Crick – "A Structure of Deoxyribose Nucleic Acid", *Nature* 171, 737 – 738 (1953).

<sup>801</sup> See Alan Gowans' The Restless Art: A History of Painters and Painting, 1760 – 1960, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, PA (1966), pp. 42.

we perceive, therefore, is thanks to the breaking of the smooth line of our subconscious anticipations. For, left uninterrupted by a constant stream of surprises, which, needless to notice, present instances of petite rebellion in their essence, our senses would be submerged into a state of blind monotony and turned dead at heart. Consequently, the livelier the world of our perception and the more we are receptive to an infinite array of stimuli that enrich our soul, wide-eyed and fresco-faced, spinning in pirouettes under the motherly skies of unutterable cosmic beauty, the more of a rebel we are at the depths of our mind wherein all the streams of habit flowing through it are harshly confronted and modulated to the best of our means by the weapon of wonder, from one instance of our existence to the next. For, such is the nature of the fabric of this universe that the most wonderful emanations of divine Love in it are rooted in groundbreaking Wonder and *vice versa*, the reason for which the biography attached to my name contained the following sentence from the very first day of my professorship: “Dr. Uskoković declares himself as an anarchist and in the classroom teaches a combination of empathy and subversiveness as the key to creative thinking”. Thus, just like we perceive only experiential details that diverge from our innermost anticipations, so does going against the grains seeded by the academic authorities and learning instead to think with one’s head, not theirs, present a path to success. Similarly and even more importantly, a deviation of experimental results from our observational assumptions marks the starting point on the road that leads to the greatest discoveries. Should all science only confirmed what was anticipated and should we all confirm the understanding of anything we read in scientific textbooks around us, without ever coming across a puzzling observation and a perplexing nod in the thread of our thinking, neither science nor our knowledge could ever evolve. In that sense, we should be reminded that some of the most important experiments from the history of science resulted in delineation of conditions under which experimental observations deviate from the actual explanation models. One of the most famous of such experiments was conducted by Albert Michelson and Edward Morley in 1887 in attempt to detect the “aether wind”, a hypothetical consequence of the Earth’s motion relative to aether, and thus prove the existence of this elusive medium that was then thought to thoroughly fill the physical space and enable the propagation of light waves. The experiment was supported by the idea that if the Earth indeed travels through aether, the speed of light would differ depending on whether the light wave propagates parallel to the flow of aether or perpendicular to it. It took tedious efforts on behalf of the two Clevelanders at the time and Michelson’s nervous breakdown in 1885 before an interferometer with the path length of eleven meters was built, but no difference between the speed of light sent back and forth in the vertical direction and that sent in the horizontal direction would be detected and the experiment ended up being considered a monumental failure for the next fifty years. Then, however, it was turned into a key evidence in favor of the theory of relativity, which, remember, derives the relativism of physical properties such as mass, length and time directly from the constancy of the speed of light in all physical systems and under all conditions. As a result, to this very day the Michelson-Morley experiment represents a paradigmatic illustration of how experimental failure can be a great step forward for the evolution of science in a bigger frame. Other notable scientific experiments that failed and by doing so open the path for the progress of scientific thought include Otto Lummer’s and Ernst Pringsheim’s measurement of the spectral distribution of the blackbody radiation and demonstration of the deviations from Stefan-Boltzmann’s and Willy Wien’s radiation laws particularly at longer wavelengths, which inspired Max Planck to derive an equation valid for all wavelengths and temperatures, the probing of the theoretical foundations

of which led him a year later to the discovery of the concept of the quantum of action<sup>802</sup>; James Chadwick's demonstration of the continuous spectrum of electrons formed in  $\beta^-$  radioactive decays in 1914, contravening the basic tenets of the quantum theory in terms of the discreteness of energy levels of electrons emitted by atoms that the theory postulates, but inspiring Wolfgang Pauli sixteen years later to propose the existence of neutrino, a massless elementary particle indeed detected in 1956 by Fred Reines, Clyde Cowan and their coworkers; Johannes Kepler's measurement of the orbit of Mars that differed by only one thirtieth of a degree of arc from Tycho Brahe's measurements, the inaccuracy so small that it fell in the range of the average measurement error at the time but kept the German astronomer awake at night and eventually prompted him to modify the presumed planetary orbit from ovoid to elliptical in search for a perfect fit and, having succeeded, postulate his first law of planetary motion; and much more. Hence, although I am not sure if anyone noticed this parable in one of Alfred Hitchcock's most famous movies, *Dial M for Murder*, the sagacious inspector got the hint that helped him solve the murder mystery when *could not* open the front door of the apartment with a latchkey, whereas the murderer fell into the trap and revealed himself as the murderer when he *did* open the front door of the apartment with a latchkey. This I naturally connected with a general nature of experimentation: namely, experiments that work usually merely prove petty little hypotheses and, while giving the experimenter an equally petty satisfaction, block the way to groundbreaking discoveries. In contrast, as illustrated by this plethora of historical examples, some of the most notable experiments from the history of science were a failure. Yet, exactly owing to such an inherent erroneousness of theirs with respect to the reigning paradigms did they initiate either the correction of the existing models or the development of thoroughly new theories. To step onto the grounds from which we would see our treading as deviant from the perspective of the traditional knowledge and expectations that it produces is thus a moment to celebrate if we happen to believe in the beauty and profoundness of the paths which we have taken to arrive at the given panorama of thought. For, it will appear that we were either ignorant of an important sign on our ways and have thus gone astray or we have come across a genuine road that leads to unforeseen findings. After all, the roads of geniuses and fools often look alike and, as I may add, it takes to be a fool sometime somewhere to find oneself on the road of a genius and *vice versa*.

"Your idea is not bad, but it's just not crazy enough", Albert Einstein is known to have said to a student once, equalizing rebellious and nonconformist craziness with the utmost outbursts of creativity and reminding us that free exhibitions of abnormality, certainly common to both productive thinkers and lunatics, those that place established standards and paradigms on their heads, lie at the heart of a true scientific mastermind and provide a key as to what differs a genius from a mediocre intellectual. In accordance with this viewpoint, a classical textbook on physical chemistry in life sciences begins its explication of basic scientific laws with the following passage: "A scientific law is an attempt to describe, in a few words, one aspect of nature. Therefore, in a sense all scientific laws will usually be 'wrong': they are incomplete, approximate, or in error. In fact, the only useful scientific laws are those that in principle can be proven to be wrong. Many scientists spend their time testing theories in an attempt to disprove them or to discover their limitations. Other scientists spend their time trying to formulate more and more general laws - laws that always apply to all things. The cooperation and competition

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<sup>802</sup> See Jagdish Mehra's and Helmut Reichenberg's *The Historical Development of Quantum Theory*, Volume I, Part I, Springer, New York, NY (1982).

between scientists with these different approaches leads to progress in science”<sup>803</sup>. Hence, as we see, the norms of intelligibility dictate that all inferences of ours, scientific and ordinary alike, are predestined to be essentially flawed, which is, however, not the reason to despair, but to rejoice, for it is through accepting all our models of experience as inherently incorrect that science and human spirit march forward hand-in-hand along the line of mutual progress. Thus we see that human knowledge of the world is a closed circle which begins from perceptions arising strictly where our expectations fail to match the outlines of experiential reality and ends with intrinsically imperfect laws that through the actions they initiate take us back to more complex perceptions that still appear as cracks of imperfections in the substrate of reality, and *ad infinitum*. If we look at this circle from a slightly different angle, we could glimpse human standing on insecure foundations of knowledge as driving their pining to search for more stable answers which, whenever found, reveal ever subtler imperfections and gaps on their grounds that are then strived to be filled. Without paying much attention, like a caged animal running on a hamster wheel after a carrot, we, caged inside of the mental sphere of ours and creeping through its spider web of causal threads and intersections, thus spin the wheel of progress of the planet and human thought and build ever greater edifices of knowledge and being in us and around us.

Especially because science runs on uncertainties, uncertainties in final presentations of our research, without any openness to self-criticism and alternative explanations of the studied phenomena are unnatural and should be avoided at all costs if we desire to make our science an open door for an ever more wonderful and enlightening studies of physical reality to be linked to it. Instead, the tendency to find a key, irrespective of how improper and imperfectly crafted it may be, and toss it into the sea with our offering final and forever fixed conclusions can be seen as walking hand-in-hand with the territorial and self-defensive attitude that contemporary academic institutions nest within their dark offices and hallways. In that sense, it is not the pressure to publish *per se* that is to be blamed for the sad, uninspiring and profoundly philosophically flawed manner and style in which scientists present their results today, but the pressure to publish with a sense of perfect certainty. This pressure gives rise to a lineage of scientists pathologically insecure about their findings, standing self-consciously frozen at scientific conferences while being grounded in their tiny selves and the thirst for fame and recognition that quietly eats them from the inside. Having been mistakenly convinced that proposing a flawed hypothesis is the worst thing one could do in the realm of science, they either opt for pushing for the support of their theories, even when they stand on shaky legs and when a minimal amount of critical examination would topple them, or choose to conceal their results from the face of the public, in both cases hindering the progress of scientific thought. After all, the current state of affairs is the consequence of seeing publishing is merely the means to satisfy one’s ego in the scientific domain and raise one’s academic prestige rather than to selflessly communicate findings that are of general interest. From the latter perspective wherein one has broadened one’s perception of self all until it encompassed entire humanity, publishing could be seen as a form of sharing, which implies that even when we are not perfectly right, it may still be of common interest to report our thoughts since someone else may find them inspiring and benefit from them. Who becomes the first one to arrive at an insight of an immense importance matters less if we were to see our scientific endeavors as a branch that feeds on the efforts invested by billions of creatures that lived before us and billions who live on other side of the planet and whom we may never get to meet directly. Striving to cut away the little scientific

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<sup>803</sup> See Ignacio Tinoco, Jr., Kenneth Sauer, James C. Wang – “Physical Chemistry: Principles and Applications in Biological Sciences”, Third Edition, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ (1995), pp. 11.

branch on which we sit is not only selfish and unethical, but unsustainable and self-destructive in the long run too. Science is a common endeavor of entire humanity wherein all deeds and thoughts are connected into one web; hence, reporting our ideas and hypotheses timely and getting a precious feedback from the scientific community is vital not only for us as researchers but as science and humanity as a whole as well. For, just moments earlier we touched the marble surface of a stony foundation upon which all sciences stand, which was the insight that since all scientific models are partly human inventions, their nature is also partially pragmatic rather than fully realistic. This implies that their purpose is not only to truthfully reflect the nature of physical reality, but also to help us coordinate and navigate our experiences towards horizons of some beautiful worldviews that bring spiritual satisfaction and happiness more than anything. Both the foundations and the skies from which the rockets of science are launched and towards which they are streaming are thus made of sheer spirit. This insight also brings arts, poetry and religion into play as human endeavors whose hearts are intertwined with those of science, feeding each other, within the hidden roots of them all.

In the previous passage, we arrived at the glimpse of Wonder as the divine quality, the erasure of which has brought dreadful consequences for both sciences and religions of the world. At this point, we are catching a sight of how pushing Love off the cliffs of gorgeous scientific worldviews and embracing merely its cold-bloodedly truthful and objective side equals erasure of another one of the qualities that belong to this celestial couple of Wonder and Love, which has ever since conditioned our evolution into more divine creatures than we are. Neglecting Love and Wonder is symptomatic in the world of modern science, and the task for hypermodern philosophers of the modern day could be exactly to restore the awareness of the treasures of these two qualities lying within the heart of scientific enterprise. The failure to succeed in this ultimate epistemological adventure of humanity would surely have devastating ontological consequences, as symbolized in the death of the Father, the divine substrate and sky of human mind and the physical reality which we inhabit, in the famous book by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. In it, remember, neither did the passion, lust and love of life epitomized by the oldest of the brothers Karamazov, Dmitri, nor philosophical skepticism, doubtfulness and perplexity epitomized by Ivan, nor faith, religiousness and unquestioned love for which Alexei stood kill the Father and expelled the godliness from human mind. It was the misunderstanding between Ivan and the Father's servant, that is, between the philosopher and the layman, at the core of which lay the superficial and literal understanding of the philosophical ideas and concepts. Hence, unless we succeed in promoting a new academic generation that would have no doubts that the religious and scientific imagery and explanatory models are partly metaphors and human inventions and partly reflections of the world as-it-is, and that science and religion occupy the same roots wherein Love and Wonder dwell, the sources for the emanation of divine powers that could enlighten the world at any given moment would appear as vanished from human minds.

Indeed, it does not take much effort to realize that Wonder and Love, the two main ingredients needed for our ascent to stars, have systematically lacked among the majority of practitioners of both sciences and religions in this world. On one side, institutionalization of both can be said to have given rise to an army of devotees who have over time confused map with the territory, submitting their faith and intellect to the former, i.e., to the humanly established substitutes of the latter, i.e., of Nature, i.e., God *per se*. Yet, as the Christ noticed, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). For, indeed, it appears that the starting point of our spiritual evolution belongs to the moment when we realize

that no human authorities can grant us the utmost spiritual insight regarding how well we have trodden on the path of our divine mission in life. This enlightening realization sparks a sense of genuine religiousness, of an involvement in an incessantly ongoing internal meditative dialogue with the silhouetted contours of a deeper, spiritual reality compared to its perceptive outlines, instilling in us a personal sense of responsibility, from the sunny core of which the rays of love can fully and inspiringly radiate towards the world. In contrast, whenever this inner sense of the divine voice dwelling within our heart is lost and the referential centers for evaluating the true quality of our being become transferred to external authorities, our descents from heavenly heights of spirit may be expected to result, which is, I am free to say, making a strong anarchistic point. What such submission to humanly imposed authorities in life bears are inescapably devastating consequences for our spiritedness, which may explain why resistance to any external system of governance is inherent to any creative religious or scientific approach. Or, as St. Paul the Apostle pointed out, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Ephesians 6:12-13). After all, our evolution directly depends on the ability of the oncoming generations to supersede the existing ones; in that sense, the only valuable government is the one that stands against itself with the aim to elevate those that are below it and place them on higher stances compared to those that the governing system itself occupies. In such a way, Lao-Tzu’s advice, “By placing oneself at the last place, the sage finds himself at the first place” (Tao-Te-Xing VII), as well as the prophecy of the Christ, “If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all... so the last shall be first, and the first last” (Mark 9:35... Matthew 20:16), become embodied in an ultimate training in sacred knowledge, which one could call spiritually systemic too. In his approach to spiritually healing and beautifying the world, the Christ therefore accepted the role of an outlaw and a servant rather than that of a master, a leader or an autocratic governor, which are all titles and tributes that most people in the world badly crave for. He would have surely agreed with the metaphorical meaning of nurse Betsy’s instructing the aboriginal woman, Alma that a horse can be lead only insofar as one has one’s back turned to it in Jacques Tourneur’s *I Walked With a Zombie*, a film whose ultimate message is that to urge people to follow one, one needs to be “dead in the selfishness of the spirit”, a zombie, whose is a world cold and insensate in every respect, rather than a goddess, whose is “a world so live”<sup>804</sup>. Amidst fiery chariots, horse cavalry and all else that entailed the display of power of the Romans during the week of Passover, the Christ entered Jerusalem riding a donkey, “a parody against all the powers that be”, as an online voice noticed<sup>805</sup>, showing us how the world is conquered not by coercive control and authoritative governance, but by humbleness and lowliness, that is, by “riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass” (Zechariah 9:9), as the prophet described the victorious showoff of a true savior. Yet, the anarchistic sign handed to us by the Christ clearly shows that the divine seed implanted in each and every one of our hearts can germinate into an immaculate source of inspiration for innumerable generations of humanity only if we resist finding petty satisfactions in domineering elevations of our ego over others and adopt the humble attitude of an ocean that

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<sup>804</sup> Listen to Television’s *Venus on Marquee Moon*, Elektra (1977).

<sup>805</sup> “The kingdom of God will be ushered in and no army will stop it. All the power in the world can’t overcome Love - even love on a donkey”, the commentator inspiringly continued in his response to Taylor Marshall’s *Why Did Jesus Christ Ride a Donkey on Palm Sunday?*; available at <http://cantuar.blogspot.com/2009/04/why-did-jesus-christ-ride-donkey-on.html> (2009).

stands below everyone else, in the shadow of it all, like a composer of an orchestrated piece, a director of a movie or a writer of a book, letting the music float, scenes shift and letters dance without the immediate presence of their creators. After all, the anarchistic method applied by the Christ can be seen as a mere imitation of the approach to creation adopted by very Nature, the divine co-Creator of the entire physical reality known to us. Just as Nature gave humans an impression that the planetary progress is the product of their own sole effort and creativity, despite the fact that it has always been the result of co-creational involvement of human minds and Nature, so do sacred creative beings in this life readily give away the power, credit and humanly established merits of prestige and prominence, taking on the role of servants rather than masters, knowing all the while that humbly and generously pushing oneself down so as to launch others ever higher into stellar spaces above, as dictated by Newton's law of action and reaction, is the way of the Gods.

The sense of Wonder by means of which one was to communicate one's devotional feelings and exploratory spirit to Nature and feed them in return thus becomes extinguished as the awards and praises from the artificially established institutions eclipse in importance those enlightening our very spirit through intimate introspective insights. Indeed, if we were to look closely enough, we would come to realize a lack of genuine amazement over the fascinating and awe-inspiring material world; on one hand, it has given rise to lackluster scientific mindsets obsessed with boosting their ego and prestige rather than with selflessly discovering the secret language of Nature, while on another hand, it has given rise to dogmatic theological mindsets, which rigidly hold on to literal representations of the scriptures, being too scared to empirically examine them from various angles. Despite the fact that scientific inquiry is possible only based on acceptance of uncertainties in the substrata of our knowledge and reality we inhabit, questioning the limitedness with which scientific models depict this reality is most of the time met with sheer revulsion and hostility, suggesting dogmatism and not open-mindedness. For example, my personal experience has taught me that proclaiming one's religiousness in an academic milieu most of the time prompts an immediate change of the heart in the way others see one; if one initially appeared smart to these erudite judges, one would spontaneously start to be seen as somewhat mentally retarded from then on. To one familiar with this impression, Robert Bresson's well-known metaphoric representation of the Christ seen by the world as Balthazar<sup>806</sup>, a little bit less than averagely obtuse donkey, an essentially retarded and regressive form of life rather than an unfathomably advanced one, incessantly tormented and humiliated as such during its lifetime, as it, in turn, watched life around it in an utterly judgeless manner and with gleaming peacefulness, then comes as perfectly natural and comprehensible. Strangely, the given people undergo quite a similar impression when they realize how a person whom they have considered to be merely cunningly clever is essentially unconditionally devoted to others in her sacrificial goodness; the given person, in other words, thus typically becomes seen as inherently unintelligent and unattractive, as if saintliness and intellectualism cannot go together by any means, subtly indicating that something is profoundly wrong and ethically disturbing with these mainstream scholastic stances. What these mediocre minds fail to understand is, however, that living in a state of agape and embracing spirituality with our whole being elevates us to a much higher epistemic level in comparison with pursuing cold and emotionally detached brainpowers, regardless of how superfast and precise they may be. Just as greatest masters have deliberately broken norms of well conducted performance in their fields (think of clowns producing an art of gracious movement by accentuating its failures and myself

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<sup>806</sup> Watch *Au hasard Balthazar* directed by Robert Bresson, Cinema Ventures (1966).

placing these words inside of brackets I rarely ever use, as well as the writer's implicit bombastic reference to one's own mastery that you have just had exploded in your face!) and thus demonstrated not the deficiency of their knowledge, but an inconceivably supreme level of mastery, so does knowledge of spiritual thinkers seem a bit tardy, blank and obtuse to those to whom the meditative, emotional and prayerful elements on which the emanations of this knowledge are being partly built appear completely foreign. And just like a being on a lower branch of the evolutionary tree cannot grasp the greatness and complexity of those nested above it, so is this spiritual knowledge incomprehensibly progressive to those who rely on pure intellect to capture it within the butterfly nets of their minds. Of course, once the gates of Wonder turn out to be locked inside of our mind, bigotry, intolerance and rejection of anything foreign take over the sacred pedestal from where our spirit could rejoice while grazing these unusual objects of thought with sunrays of graceful attention, and let these firmly closed gates rather than arms infinitely open to embrace the entire universe begin to form a sad and disappointing metaphor of our being. "Eyes are the windows of the soul", Socrates said during his classic dialogue with Phaedrus on the banks of Ilissos, while the Christ mentioned that "the light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matthew 6:22), and if we look into the eyes of an average renowned inhabitant of the scientific realm, the kingdom of Wonder, chances are not high that we would glimpse childlike flickers of starry wonder combined with sunny grace that illuminates everything that the rays of attention from these eyes fall on. Moreover, it is a statement of the fact that all scientific endeavors take place under pragmatic contextual skies that breathe benevolent, lifesaving purposes into each and every research project. Even the most fundamental explorations inevitably possess unforeseen pragmatic potentials, as the case of the theoretical framework of quantum theory, whose discoveries began to be utilized in semiconductor and computer industries decades after its rise, could exemplify. Funded by the public money on most occasions, the largest body of scientific research is a social question, which should make scientists aware that an attention of the whole humanity is focused onto their research subjects through their scientific eye; for, their findings are meant to, sooner or later, enrich the entire humankind. Neglecting this, however, is more of a rule than an exception in the modern day, as scientists turn out to be obsessed with securing their own academic recognition, tenure and, increasingly, exorbitant salaries and social benefits more than with altruistically subduing the spell of Nature to their scientific spirits. But Love is findable not only in the contexts of scientific research, but also in its foundations. For, digging through the philosophical bases of the scientific edifice, one could realize that they are pragmatically built too, as the entire scientific imagery stands for partial human inventions, metaphors created ultimately for the purpose of beautifying each other's experience. Social values, trends and habits are all carved deep into these foundations of scientific thought, affecting it from the deepest level and thereby typically being invisible to the practitioners of this thought. Yet, Love, be it that which enfolds the outcomes of scientific engagements or that which serves as a secret pedestal, the foundation for the flowery findings that scientists are so proud of, is being as rare to find as diamonds in the dust. Switching our views to the religious domain now, we could conclude that secluding oneself because, quite often, an illusion of loving humanity and all of its creatures in one's head can be preserved only insofar as one stays away from the worldly clique is no way of watering the arid garden of love within our hearts. For, as noticed by the Russian anarchist, Michael Bakunin, "man is truly free only among equally free men"<sup>807</sup>, and even though the ocean of empathy in which the streams of our thought end is sustained in one's heart,

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<sup>807</sup> See Peter Marshall's *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, Oakland, CA (2010).

its waves would wash us with coldness whenever we do not fully give our heart out in the presence of other people, whenever we reservedly stand aside and are incompletely driven to liberate them from the shackles of ignorance and open the space for the free flights of their spirit into divine and delightful realms of being. Yet, to succeed in this aim, lame and cold preaching is not enough; acting and giving a stunning example of how great godly energies in each one of us could be is to be given forth by our very lives. Of course, to succeed in this aim, letting all our actions originate from the spiritual core of our being, in which we remain in a ceaseless touch with the divine energy of One, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, has to be complemented with incessantly moving away from this inner core and empathically plunging into hearts of the surrounding creatures. It is in such moving to and fro between the essence of our being and the essence of life around us that the most beautiful music to illuminate the face of this planet is being formed. To be sufficiently attracted to the sun of the divine soul that rests in us meditative insightfulness is needed and to succeed in sensually coming close to others and sparking each other's glow of this inner sun the ability to see the reflection of the Divine in them and the drive to merge hearts in love and empathy is required. In that sense, when Joan Osborne asks "what if God was one of us"<sup>808</sup> in a manner which tears the sky of one's soul with its cries, I see it as none other but a call to consider what we would do seeing little gods seeded in each and every creature of the Universe: surely not sitting aside, bleakly staring at others and mechanically nodding our heads, but rather exploding with genuinely wondrous and loving expressions all over the place. The classical Hindu theology indeed describes Brahman, the utmost divinity holding a piece of itself, Atman, in each living creature, whose mission is to recognize this unity through Yoga and in a Hegelian spirit reach the ultimate synthesis, a state of enlightenment in which everything is seen as One. If we were to become a living incarnation of the Dalmatian missionary, Saint Titus' view that "unto the pure all things are pure" (Titus 1:15) and somehow learn to see others as unassailably divine in their essence, the doors to perfect empathy would open in our heart and its blissful rays of creativity would start to radiate everywhere. Also, when the music of God is heard in every heartbeat that pervades the Universe, it matters not anymore whether we call our theological perspective theistic or atheistic; for, Love unites them both into one. Like Shug Avery beginning to sing a divine melody in the final moments of the Color Purple, leading villagers to the shrine where she will eclipse the singing of the church chorus and the preaching of the bishop with the otherworldly powers radiating from her heart, showing us how the paths of saints and sinners converge into one, as the Christ had known, so does cosmic Love present the center of the Christian cross wherein all roads converge and wherefrom angelic arms reaching out in devotion to all things spread. If we accept that God is present in all of the earthlings' hearts, sympathizing with them all and seeing their moves and messages as signs that fall on us directly from the Heavens, as opposed to turning their hearts down by means of selfish and arrogant ignorance, would present a simple way for parachuting our mind into celestial states. Holding on to the sense of self-responsibility and resisting to hand the keys to our happiness to any authorities of the world and keeping them inside of ourselves instead, we would stretch the arms of our spirit in two directions, to meditative insides and empathic outsides, corresponding to the pair of basic Christian commandments (Mark 12:29–34), reaching thereby the balance which I have named the Way of Love.

Having said all of this, we could conclude that common to both sciences and religions today are significantly weakened and crumbly supports of Wonder and Love, the two fundamental pillars upon which both are sustained. What truly fascinates in this context is that

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<sup>808</sup> Listen to Joan Osborne's One of Us on Relish, Blue Gorilla Records (1995).

rediscovery of these buried treasures within minds dedicated to both would erase the awareness of their illusory separation and inherent incompatibility, if any. Rather, the ways in which they both could hold up and strengthen each other, providing profound humane bases for the rising of the pyramids of knowledge in the scientific realm and scientifically supporting the religious sense of communion with the sea of transcendental intellect which we are all immersed in and which is represented by the metaphors of God, Nature, Creator, etc., would open in front of us in all their charms. As we place the first brick of theological support within the fundamentals of scientific outlooks or *vice versa*, we would set ourselves on an endless positive feedback ride towards truly stellar regions of the human mind, as the potential for providing inspiration to each other would turn out to be endless, multiplying itself with each spin of this Tao-Chi-Tu wheel of a kind wherein the eye of science is placed at the center of the vortex of a religious sense of communication with the voice divine that is present in each detail of the Universe, and *vice versa*. For example, from this perspective one could envisage the knowledge of the quantum nature of reality wherein physical events are guided by unknown forces which we, therefore, describe by probability terms to open space for the scientific evidence of the divine grounds that provide substrate for the evolution of reality, which would on the other hand instill an awareness that *how* we approach the scientific inquiry, with what extent of the glow of passion, faith and love in our hearts, matters as much as *what* we carry out in the frame of the empirical scientific design, initiating an avalanche of chain effects wherein the scientific and the theological would become ever more inextricably entwined. The scientific discovery of the evolution of life could provide a similar upgrade to the theological understanding of the origins of our beings on this planet, yielding an awareness of our streaming to become ever more gorgeous, angelic and superman-like creatures, which could in turn instill in scientists a thrilling enthusiasm about the waters on which the ships of science journey. The ethical norms that pervade religions of the world, such as “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7) and those promoting sharing, elevating others and averting their slipups into the quicksand of crestfallen spirit, as opposed to focusing on our own needs only and ignoring the wellbeing of others thereby, could also be seen as vital for preventing the already fierce and inhumane competition in science from growing into even more spiritually corruptive and politicized battles for survival on its podiums. A more humane academic realm would, in turn, beneficially affect the conduction of the process of scientific inquiry and presentation of scientific findings by correcting the warped current state of affairs dominated by subtle frauds, hypothesis-biased explorations, creative slavery to paradigmatic and predetermined research proposals, tactically incomplete revelations of data, corrupted peer-review system, increased politicization of the road to tenure and many other consequences of the scientific tradition institutionalized in a self-centered form, as if nothing has been learned from the Galilean shift from the Earth self-importantly placed in the middle of the Universe to its orbiting the Sun, meekly devoted to another. Yet, of course, to avoid seeing the sole Sun in the scientific authorities that guard the gate and stand in the way of the aspiring ascenders to the eye of the academic pyramid, we should be reminded that the real divine suns lie in our own and other people’s hearts, as well as, secretly, in each detail of the world as we perceive it. For that purpose, balancing our fluency in theological and scientific knowledge alike is required for our thriving dwelling on the branches of the trees of either of the two, the roots of which are, as we know, one and the same.

Despite this intrinsic connectedness and entwinement of science and religion, people who blindly favor science in the aforementioned debates neglectfully close their eyes to numerous great things that religions have done for humanity. The fact that religious teachings morally

preserved humanity for centuries and prevented its self-destruction, thus providing grounds for the very sciences and technologies to flourish, seems to be far beyond the grasp of a conventional scientific scholar of the modern day. It is as if at the very first mention of anything religious, the stereotypical western scientific mindset would lift a barbed wire fence around itself by means of powerful prejudgments, without showing any signs of openness to alternative interpretations of the religious thought that might be compatible with the common scientific representations of reality. In part, years of confusing map with the territory, that is, hypocrisies arising from the semi-corrupted institutionalization of religious teachings with the latter in their original forms, could be blamed for this sad and disconcerting repulsion of almost any spiritual views by the ordinary scientific minds. Equally, the reason for this irrational rejection of religiousness in any of its infinite forms could be found in the slow process of conformation to academic standards, whereby stereotypical scientific mindsets have wandered off the inherently rebellious path that tends to bring everything into question, to turn the edifices of knowledge upside down and examine their foundations with genuine curiosity, and emerged on the other extreme, where the stance of unquestioning obedience and passive adherence to the standards shackled their healthy doubtfulness and open-mindedness and confined them into chains of dogmatic, prejudiced thinking. In that sense, finding itself a slave of the same dogmatism that it had fervently fought against in the Dark Ages, it appears that the typical anti-religious scientific frame of mind has come to incarnate the curse mentioned by Friedrich Nietzsche: “He who fights with monsters should be careful lest he thereby become a monster”<sup>809</sup>. The flourishing era of Renaissance from which scientific empiricism was born can be thus said to have put an end to the Dark Ages, though the inert progress of scientific thought, paired not by the synchronous nourishment of humanistic values in us, but by catastrophic insistence on greed and ego as the fuel for the continued skyrocketing of science, technologies and the standard of living, is about to push us into what some opponents of soulless capitalism call the New Dark Ages, proving the sinusoidal and inherently dialectical pattern of planetary progress, whereby disgust over the reign of low, animalistic modes of being is, sadly, required to prompt human spirits to face sunshine of the divine spirit and passionately strive to spread it all over the face of the planet, while too much of exhilarated and buoyant gazing at this blissful sunshine leads to dazzling blindness and sinking into dark modes of being once again. Although the scientific thought did fairly deserve the attribute of “enlightened” when it clashed against the dogmatic views of the Church in the past, nowadays it stands forth as yet another example of how bigoted certainty and dogmatism can easily creep into even the systems of thought that are as profoundly based on uncertainty, intellectual adventurism and unprejudiced open-mindedness as the genuinely exhibited scientific thought is. The result is the same intolerance and ridicule exerted towards differing worldviews as that manifested by the Church centuries ago. Yet, what these hypercritically narrowed scientific perspectives overlook is that, first of all, for many millennia religions have provided the most profound and accessible ethical teaching that helped in taming the animalistic nature in humans and brought us closer to the civilized world that we now inhabit. No farther than their most beloved magazine, *Nature*, need these parched scientific minds look in search of the sign that religiousness has expanded human sociality throughout the millennia, for one of the anthropological studies recently published in it concluded exactly that using elaborate behavioral tests and game theory: religious beliefs increase the levels of cooperation, trust and fairness

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<sup>809</sup> See Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*; Aphorism 146, translated by Helen Zimmern, available at <http://www.authorama.com/beyond-good-and-evil-5.html> (1886).

among strangers<sup>810</sup>. And even if one legitimately disbelieves the metaphysical propositions intrinsic to theological worldviews, no excuse ought to be given for the heartless and shortsighted dismissal of the fact that billions of kind and loving individuals that have shared the life on Earth with us have been steered away from the path of greed and meanness by holding the compass of religiousness in their hands and hearts, let alone for substituting the respect of religions of the world for their ethical accomplishments with rage over their presumed irrationality, so pervasive among those who called themselves liberals and progressives, but are, in the real sense of the word, all but that. In the end, human consciousness does not evolve in parallel with the cultural and technological evolution of the planet, as each one of us is still born as an animal, and should he/she be raised among wolves, it would come to resemble wolves more than contemporary humans. Hence, an ethical teaching of one type or another must be ingrained like a shining star within the core of one's mind and spirit, and religions of the world have provided one such ethical teaching of unassailable importance for humanity for ages now. Most religions based their teachings on simple stories rather than on intricate philosophical discourses, which explains the great extent to which they have been accessible to the intellectuals and the laymen alike. Finally, comparing tangible outcomes of the application of these two frameworks of creative thought, scientific and religious, cannot be a good parameter for inferring the supremacy of one or the other. Namely, whereas science itself can be defined as a pragmatic tool for the creative organization of our experiential worlds at the perceptual scales, religions can be said to deal with invisible qualities, that is, with the roots of our experience and their reflections in the visible order, looking merely at the perceptible and the palpable cannot be a fair approach. The truth, after all, is that whereas science is a pragmatic art whose aim is to build the visible towers and beautify the world at its perceptive levels, religion is often a narrative way of describing the imperceptible metaphysical foundations upon which these visible houses and cities rest. Whereas knowledge that pertains to the realm of science is useful insofar as it guides us in connecting bricks during our building these towers smartly and sustainably, religions of the world refer to the metaphysical foundations where pillars of graceful values and divine ethics and aesthetics dwell, the grounds that truly support the towers as they rise to the clear skies, concealing an equally important key to their sustainability as the bricks and mortars and architectural blueprints of which they are made.

The following is the example I often give to illustrate the inextricability of the links between knowledge and love, the traditional subjects of science and religion/arts, respectively, and make them stupendously apparent to the listeners. Namely, think of a person in your life whom you love. If you rewind the history of your relationship with that particular person, you may notice that it is built on many, many grains of insights and observations that you have found touching and lovable. To gain those insights, patience and devotion to that person are required. In other words, by dedicating our time to know more and more about the given person, most of the time without even being aware that our brain runs billions of cognitive operations in a second while feeding itself with new insights about her, the chances that the feelings of love will be enkindled in us soar. What is more, to callous, grownup selves, hate comes more natural than love, requiring less intricate thought processes and less elaborate and insightful viewings of a person from different angles than learning to love one does. To love it takes a more delicate and mentally strenuous effort, especially when it comes to our relationship with people who are new

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<sup>810</sup> See B. J. Purzycki, C. Apicella, Q. D. Atkinson, E. Cohen R. A. McNamara, A. K. Willard, D. Xygalatas, A. Norenzayan, J. Henrich – “Moralistic Gods, Supernatural Punishment and the Expansion of Human Sociality”, *Nature*, doi:10.1038/nature16980 (2016).

to our lives and whom we have not known since our earliest days. In agreement with this viewpoint that highlights the inextricability of love and understanding, John Steinbeck wrote the following words in his diary: “Try to understand men; if you understand each other you will be kind to each other. Knowing a man well never leads to hate and nearly always leads to love”<sup>811</sup>. Seers have said that wars on Earth would have never been fought had we only known how to look deep enough into the heart of man and the very same point, highlighting the existence of acute intellect in the center of sustained feelings of love for earthly objects and beings, was even more elegantly hinted at by the age-old Serbian adage, “Unknown... unsought for; comes knowledge... comes love”<sup>812</sup>. After all, if we defend ourselves against the need to ceaselessly analyze the behavior of people whom we share space with on this planet of ours, insightfully trying to understand the causes behind their actions, there is a chance that feelings of disappointment in them and neglect thereof will prevail over love and respect. But by incessantly engaging our intellectual powers to penetrate through their words, moves and acts and into the heart of their intentions, and enrich our knowledge of them with warmhearted feelings and images, we activate the spin of the cosmically joyous carousel of love within our hearts. Hence, we are free to conclude that knowledge feeds love. The intensive expressions of feelings that have love at their roots in humans compared to their mild and dilute forms in animals serve as simple examples of how knowledge, in terms of which humans are apparently superior over animals, fuels the power of love in us. Moreover, it has been known that dementia tends to diminish the loving potential of human creatures, in the worst cases turning the most beloved sons and daughters into complete strangers, proving that memory and tireless acquirement of knowledge of this world and the beings dwelling in it are the grounds on which love thrives just about as much as love is a stem on which flowers of knowledge blossom and flourish. This insight could be topped by realizing that autistic children with significantly impeded learning skills are also empathy-deprived children, unable to spontaneously mimic the behavior of nearby creatures and emotionally bond with them. Since empathy-driven imitation presents the central learning route in children, any obstruction thereof will have adverse developmental consequences, pointing once again in the direction of the illuminative fact that knowledge and love are none other but the foundations of one another.

At this place, one could easily demonstrate that all scientific models and relationships are partly human inventions, as they arise in the co-creational dialogue between scientific mind and Nature. All products of scientific measurements arise from the interaction between the measured systems and the measurement devices, whereby the latter include the observer’s mind and all the presuppositions with which one approaches the measurements. All of these assumptions about the object of one’s study become inconspicuously reflected in the final measurement outcomes. All the properties and qualities that we, as scientists and experimenters, ascribe to the worldly objects should thus be considered as attributes since they are partly objective, but partly defined by our subjective nature as observers. The world as we know it is thus the world of our experience first and foremost, albeit the fact that our experience still possesses solid objective traits which enable us to share our experiences, including objects and insights, among each other.

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<sup>811</sup> See Tracy Barr’s and Greg Tubach’s *Cliff Notes: On Steinbeck’s Of Mice and Men*, Wiley, New York, NY (2001). The quoted journal entry dates back to 1938.

<sup>812</sup> “Neznano... nepitano; znano... voljeno” in the original version and more veritably translatable as “unknown... unsought for; known... loved”. The translation used in the text is attributed to James W. Wiles, Belgrade, July 14, 1930. In: Preface to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of Petar Petrovich Nyegosh’s *The Mountain Wreath*, rendered into English by James W. Wiles, George Allen & Unwin, London, UK (1846/1930).

Owing to this particular reason, one could consider scientific imagery not as truthful, realistic and universal reflections of an objective world that would be the same for all observers, but as partly subjective and metaphorical in nature, a product of individual and social imagination as much as an objective reflection of physical reality *per se*, as the co-creational thesis neatly suggests. In view of that, we can say that products of scientific creativity partly serve the pragmatic purpose of enlightening human experiences instead of discovering the one and only truthful nature of the physical reality. As the co-creational thesis further implies, the element of discovering and the one of inventing are, in fact, inextricably entwined, as much as the roles of the subject and the object are equally involved in defining the features of the object in the subject's eyes. Beauty lies in the object itself, but it is also partly in the eyes of beholder, as some might say. An immediate consequence of this phenomenal insight is that all our efforts in the scientific arena have the ultimate purpose of enlightening the world of other people's experiences, and the greater the shine of love in us, the more open the road to extraordinary scientific discoveries will be in front of us. The more we love and respect humanity and fellow earthlings, the greater the drive will be in us to diligently explore the mysterious seas of scientific knowledge and eventually come up with lustrous pearls of wonderful insights. Besides, the feeling is that common sense wisdom too blossoms most efficiently from the stems of selfless care for weak and fragile creatures of the world, which all humans ultimately are and which could be therefore seen as an incessant fuel for the flights of human imagination and creativity towards stars. This all explains why I, an authentic Romanticist in the realm of science, an incessant believer in Love as a power that is to occupy a much more prominent place in the hierarchy of human values than even the most supreme knowledge of logical and analytical nature, have claimed that the summits of ethicality are attained strictly by those who erase the relevance of themselves so as to uplift that of another and that, therefore, the highest knowledge is the one that elevates Love higher than knowledge *per se* on the ladder of the latter and have tirelessly expounded this philosophy, in spite of the warnings that I have thus been cutting the branch on which I am nested, so to speak, by the fellow members of the academic community. Yet, if the failure of all the ideologies of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>813</sup>, political and nonpolitical alike, can suggest something, it is that Wonder and Love, that is, genuinely curious subjugation of it all to scrutiny and empathic confluence of human hearts, rather than blind faith, pure reason or the power of argumentation, need to occupy the most fundamental positions in the edifices of human knowledge. On the other hand, of course, with no ability of the brain to constantly break up the sensory impressions and memories into chunks and reassemble them into wholes and all over again, no flame of love could be enkindled and sustained in our heads. We could thus be sure that a lively web created by a commixture of antithetic and synthetic mental operations is being spun in the head of a lover watching the object of her love in wonder and awe. From here it follows that from the forest to the trees and back and all over again until the end of the Universe we must be ready to go if we are to retain the flame of wonder and love in our heads and hearts. Concordantly, lest we become akin to a flinty spirit that sees no trees but the forest, petrified by an emotionally enforced, affected love, bearing resemblance to a devotee who, frightened by one's own mortality, hangs onto the straw of salvation of blind religiousness, "full of god"<sup>814</sup>, but god which is, as in John Lennon's song, nothing more than "a concept by which we measure our

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<sup>813</sup> See Dobrica Ćosić's letter to the Serbian students abroad, available at [http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2012&mm=12&dd=27&nav\\_category=12&nav\\_id=672946](http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2012&mm=12&dd=27&nav_category=12&nav_id=672946) (December 24, 2012).

<sup>814</sup> Listen to Vixtro's Raised by Wolves on Raised by Wolves, Cult Hero Records (2005).

pain”<sup>815</sup>, harboring zero drive to disseminate this godliness to people around one, we ought to obey the call of the wisdom of the youth<sup>816</sup>, instructing us that liking, which requires a wondrously imaginative interaction with the object of our fondness to take place whereby our knowledge of it is enriched, is as important as loving, which stands on the pedestal of a willpower made of stone. Likewise, lest we, in spiritual terms, transform into a Brownian particle of pollen randomly traversing the medium of the experiential reality, doing nothing constructive, nothing to lower the entropy of the system of a whole, we must provide a sense of wholeness to our mental apparatuses, which would act as a source of stability and an anchor point for the unrestrained flights of our fancy. This is all to say that, as insinuated by the iconic Tai-Chi-Tu emblem, knowledge, which feeds on curiosity and on an incessant subjugation of our faith to test and exploration, can be found in the center of the spinning of the vortex of love, whereas love, which feeds on the faith in fellow souls as a pathway to the stars, can be seen standing at the foundation of the unstoppably rising towers of human knowledge.

The co-creational thesis that I have developed over the years, built on the idea of physical reality as an incessantly ongoing dialogue between the human mind and divine Nature and possessing both the scientifically supportive roots and branches that reach out to the most sublime realms of theological thought, can be seen as fine metaphysical grounds upon which science and religion can coexist in peace and harmony. Not only would they tolerate each other while standing on these metaphysical grounds laid by the co-creational thesis and intimately tied to each other, but they would also be able to strengthen and potentiate one another under these epistemological conditions. An immediate evidence that both sciences and religions could be depicted as ultimately standing on the metaphysical foundations of the co-creational thesis comes from the fact that the explanatory models of both are partly human inventions and partly realistic reflections of the physical processes explained. In other words, both scientific and theological models could be considered as more or less intricate narratives metaphorically representing the order and regularity that govern the route of the catamaran on which our beings float as they traverse the oceanic spiritual substance of the Cosmos, which permeates this material world in each and every one of its segments. While natural laws represented by means of scientific models deal with physically detectable causal interactions among varyingly complex systems of interest, theological models depict empirically improvable ethical laws, such as the golden rule, principles behind the spiritual communication between humans and Nature, and those that stand behind supernatural phenomena, such as reincarnation, divinations and divine visitations. What atheistic scientists often skip is not only that these theological principles are firmly ingrained in the nature of our physical realities, but also that they are equally important as scientific principles to ensure that the material edifices we, as humanity, conceive of and build are sustained and that this world that we inhabit continues to evolve into an ever more organized and wonderful one. Or, as pointed out earlier, the spiritual and the material always move forward hand-in-hand, as the enchanting features of the material world around us ultimately serve the purpose of uplifting human spirits to heavenly loci, while both the purpose and the origins of human creativity employed in designing and building this world that exalts and inspires rest in the domain of benevolent aspirations to benefit another, which have been sparked and sustained by religious narratives and messages for millennia now, transcending the everlasting tendency of people to fall back on their animalistic natures governed by greed, selfishness and sheer destructiveness.

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<sup>815</sup> Listen to John Lennon’s God on John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band, Apple (1970).

<sup>816</sup> Watch The Feels directed by Jenée LaMarque (2017).

Now, both the concepts of atoms and molecules and the images of divine creatures behind the curtains of the perceptible reality are manmade and were formulated over time so as to adapt to ordinary human abilities to visually and schematically represent the experiential reality. Despite that, the last hundred years of development in physics have shown us that atomic ingredients of the material substratum of the Universe cannot be represented as sheer particles analogous to billiard balls. Instead, more abstract and counterintuitive forms, such as those arising from the quantum field theory, or those representing atoms as complementary blends of particles and waves, routinely subject to entanglement and teleportation, are shown to be more correct. After all, if the semi-humorous depiction of quarks as subatomic particles that come in various “flavors” and “colors” and in different combinations give rise to different baryons secretly tells us something, it is how preposterous it is to directly and literally project the properties of the macroscopic reality onto the atomic world. Hence, even the more readily graspable properties of subatomic and atomic particles, such as charge, spin, mass and orbital moments, could be seen as partial products of human imagination rather than as veritable reflections of the literal states of reality at the atomic scale. In theological fields too, representations of the divine substratum of the Universe are being shifted from the directly relatable, humanized depictions of the past to more abstract, formless and indescribable ones of the modern times. Consequently, by observing any creative process in action we could glimpse how the mind engaged in it breathes something of its own design into the crafted. At the same time, though, Nature gives something of its own essence thereto too; hence the idea that every creative process is co-creative at its heart. Although scientific models have been widely accepted as objective in the contemporary culture, they inevitably hide human preconceptions in them. Religions of the world, likewise, often depict gods as possessing highly humanized forms (think of old sages with white beards or glossy fairies and angels); yet, these could be taken only as metaphors of the real, more abstract and indescribable nature of the divine intelligence that underlies our experiential realities. Human perceptions have evolved so that we see the macroscopic world in terms of objects with definable geometries interacting according to the Newtonian laws of mechanics; however, even the more abstract realms of physical reality, including primarily processes that take place on the atomic scale, are depicted by means of similar representations, which, as it becomes clear now, have been highly humanized as such. Yet, our inability to escape from the usage of spatial cues in our descriptions of reality can be derived from the fact that even temporal dimensions are represented as asynchronous ranges of movement, that is, as yet another spatial construct. After all, the human mental microcosm has evolved in such a way that out of five possible senses, visualizations became the dominant force in drawing our thoughts on the screens of our minds. Sounds are therefore described by referring to their color, volume, wavelength and moving intensity, which are all visual attributes, rather than *vice versa*. Hence, whatever the conceptual visualizations that take place in our heads, we can always be sure that they have partly originated from reflecting the archetypal forms of objects in our perceptive field. One could then argue that as the objects in our surrounding and spaces that we inhabit have become more precisely shaped and symmetrical, the imaginary elements in our mental spheres have become more ordered and organized, too. On the other hand, humans have created not only the architectural abodes, but also most objects within our grasp, and if those partly define the directions of the human dreams, then it is human aspirations, ideas and dreams that have been shaping themselves ever since, subtly and imperceptibly. For, whereas humans build the communication tools and channels, Marshall McLuhan would have reminded us that “the medium is the message” too, as it always bounces back like a boomerang

to redefine human thoughts and emotions as sources of our creativity, urging us to glimpse the way in which science, technologies, psychology and arts form but a single closed feedback loop. For example, devices and gadgets that we use to play enthralling sounds to our ears and enrich our spirits thereby are products of scientific inventiveness, while on the other hand artistic messages engrained in the waves of music crashing over our minds softly and indiscernibly reshuffle and retune our *modus operandi*, instill new values in the pots of our psyches and systemically change the world as a whole for better or worse; or, as Plato put it a few millennia ago, “When the mode of the music changes, the walls of the city shake”<sup>817</sup>. For, as soon as we penetrate through the immediate appearances of sciences and arts into their roots, we realize that they are inextricably entwined, with human values, emotions, instincts and drives refined by artistic means guiding the ship of science in its voyaging towards unexplored territories on the map of knowledge and scientific creativeness setting the channels through which artistic messages are let sublimate into the airs of the world, inciting many human spirits to ascend into heavenly realms of being on their magic wings. In any way, the closer we are in accepting the objective nature of these primary experiences, the less manmade and the more crafted by Nature our thoughts would seem to us, while the more we see the world as constructed by means of our innate ability to organize the initially chaotic and incoherent perceptual cues into something repeatable and stable, the more anthropomorphic and the less ontologically predetermined our mental images, including scientific models, would appear. Of course, to what extent do these basic forms of human perception come from cognitive predispositions and the biological makeup of human organisms and to what degree are they influenced by natural processes around us is an unanswerable question since we will never be able to untangle these two sides; as the co-creational thesis tells us, all the products of our perception and, consequently, reflections, reasoning and hands-on creations arise from the dialogue between mind and Nature. Should any of these two sides be deprived of its creative potentialities, nothing would be able to arise from then on, just as there could be no sound of one hand clapping, as the old Zen puzzle reminds us.

To meet one of these two sides, we always need to hold on to the other one, which prevents us from falling into its greatest depths. This dual nature of human knowing, whereby Nature poses pedestals for embracing secrets of the mind and *vice versa* in the course of their simultaneously drawing each other, as in the famous Escher’s painting, implies that one without the other could never be known. Standing in-between them, we resemble a Samson holding two pillars with his hands, unable to palpate one without grasping the other and thus always leaving the remote, dark sides of them unexplored with his touch, or a passenger journeying on a train moving along parallel rails, whose insights are limited only to what is graspable from its path. In the social era dominated by the premises of objectivity in explaining why we perceive the world the way we do, I thus naturally step on the opposite side of the co-creational balance where the tenets of idealistic constructivism are found, demonstrating how each and every perception is partly drawn by the observer. Walking along any path in life, familiar or not, is interspersed with millions of segments of the surrounding landscape drawn by our mind without being perceived in their tiniest detail. Even objects that we may end up carefully looking at from all angles, be they new to us and unseen before, are never perceived “pixel by pixel”; instead, they are always partly drawn in our head based on our knowledge on how to effectively construct the appearance of our environment so as to coordinate our movements in it efficiently, the art we learned in its prime forms when we were an infant. We thus subconsciously ascribe certain properties to objects that

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<sup>817</sup> See Tim Footman’s *Radiohead - Welcome to the Machine: OK Computer and the Death of the Classic Album*, Chrome Dreams, Surrey, UK (2007), pp. 96.

we come to perceive, co-creating them along the way of our lives in the real sense of the word. In fact, the compression of sensory data, as along the optical nerve in the case of vision, begins way before the neural impulses reach the brain, only to be further made redundant there and combined with the sketched presupposed form of the perceived objects. Had we indeed perceived every single detail of our momentary surrounding, it would have induced a freezing confusion in the brain akin to that of a little baby whose mind is plunged inside the sea of bewildering and hardly discernable flows of sensual impressions. Today, as grownups, we use a plethora of hints and assumptions in our co-creating the perceptual and abstract experience, that is, partly constructing and partly discovering the outlines of our physical surrounding and of the mental models reflecting it. And not only features of inanimate objects, but traits of human creatures around us too are being partly predefined based on our deepest assumptions as to what they are like in reality, reality which is always seen through the subjective veil of the senses, values and the spiritual glow of the beholder. In that sense, the seafloor of our mind, dark and impalpable, wherein mysterious mermaids and muses swim, pearls of wisdom glisten and shaky foundations of Atlantis, of angelically pure being in the world, reside, predetermine the beauty that we will glimpse in Nature and her creatures as much as the divine foundations of Nature, the ultimate co-creator of the experiential realities of ours are involved in defining the outlines of the products of our perception.

Hence, when we think of the reasons why mythological and theological narratives from Pacific islands invoke bananas and coconut trees, while the Nordic ones invoked icy cows and creatures made of fire, we should be reminded that our natural environment incessantly strews us with signs that help us come up with creative ideas, even when we are not aware of that, as much as we too imperceptibly infuse some of the essence of our preconceptions, inclinations and other cognitive predispositions to any descriptions of the outer world that we may come up with. Hence, as we see, neither are the most rigorous sciences immune to this inflow of ordinary perceptive impressions and the basic epistemological assumption of ours to their models. Or, as Karl Popper pointed out, “All our knowledge is interpretation in the light of our expectations, our theories, and is therefore hypothetical in some way or the other”<sup>818</sup>. Albert Einstein was even more radical in this explication of the essentiality of the role of our premises in defining both the content and the boundaries of our knowledge when he noticed that “whether you can observe a thing or not depends on the theory which you use; it is the theory which decides what can be observed”<sup>819</sup>. That is to say, in order to understand the origins, the big *Why* of the world unfolding before our eyes, we must explore the external appearances to the same extent as we dig diligently through the base of the epistemic edifices of our towering worldviews, reaching out for the heavens above at times, almost like the Tower of Babel. As usual, to arrive at a divine destination, we need to move in two diametrically opposite directions at the same time, as illustrated by the image of the Christ torn apart on the cross, as if dying in bliss while attempting to extend his arms to far left and far right. Now, even though there are definite limits to our knowledge imposed by the finiteness of our beliefs embedded in its basic postulates, as human conceptual cognition evolves, so do the expandable boundaries of our knowledge inflate, for as long as we resist to push whole oceans into the miniature bottles of our minds and accept that the miracles and mysteries of Nature are too great and immense to fit inside of our comprehension

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<sup>818</sup> See Karl Popper’s *Realism and the Aim of Science: From the Postscript to the Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Routledge, New York, NY (1956), pp. 102.

<sup>819</sup> See Gabor L. Hornyak, John J. Moore, Harry F. Tibbals, Joydeep Dutta – “Introduction to Nanoscience & Nanotechnology”, CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL (2009), pp. 853.

apparatuses. Resultantly, humanized imageries of the divine and of ultrafine qualities of Nature are accepted as more abstract and inexplicable than before despite the fact that we still stick to using their overly simplified metaphors, from atoms to molecules to gods and galaxies, in communicating and mutually coordinating our experiences. Such models thus become ideally acknowledged as sets of metaphors, which do not depict the real and objective nature of the reality, but merely serve a pragmatic purpose in terms of helping us build and sustain a beautiful material world that engrains innumerable spiritual treasures, all of which ultimately stand for signs that teach us how to become stars of spirit as we walk along the road of evolution holding on to science with one and religions and arts with another hand of ours. Atoms and molecules are thence taken to be merely pragmatic, but not truthful metaphors of the elementary ingredients of the reality, while humanoid gods are transformed to an ineffable and omnipresent intelligence that penetrates each detail of the physical reality, resembling a turtle that holds the entire existence on its shoulders, should we recall the old theological picturesque model and remind us that metaphors are inescapably invaluable means to communicate meanings through language.

The co-creational thesis, as such, brings us closer to seeing divinity in each and every detail of the world as we know it, distancing us from both theism and deism, “two things almost equally abhorrent to Christianity”<sup>820</sup>, as Blaise Pascal noticed, and bringing us close to the heart of the most authentic theism conceivable. Thence we could be reminded of the worldviews held by Rudolf Steiner who likewise claimed the experiential reality to emanate from the duality whose poles he christened Spirit and Nature, while the aim of our spiritual journeys was to find the way to reconcile the two, arrive at the doorsteps of their unity and from there on glimpse at each and every detail of the world with the eyes of a spiritual superman, seeing through objects into the outlines of a deeper, spiritual reality that underlies their physical appearance<sup>821</sup>. In such a way, by putting the philosophical spectacles of the co-creational thesis on, we would be able to see how a tension between the dreams of human spirits and the streams of divine foundations produces waves and ripples that come to compose the sensory manifestations of reality. This envisagement of the universally existent encounter of mind and Nature endows the world seen through our eyes with a genuine spiritual purpose, while at the same time it integrates the divine presence right here, right now, in each detail of our experiences rather than placing it far beyond the clouds of mysterious gates of Paradise. Quite in concordance with this viewing of everything material as a wraithlike appearance emerging from the ineffable communication between the rudimentary, but developing human spirit and the omnipresent Divinity hereby named Nature, in his speech given in Florence at the age of eighty-six, Max Planck remarked the following: “As a man who has devoted his whole life to the most clearheaded science, to the study of matter, I can tell you as a result of my research about atoms this much: There is no matter as such. All matter originates and exists only by virtue of a force which brings the particle of an atom to vibration and holds this most minute solar system of the atom together. We must assume behind this force the existence of a conscious and intelligent mind. This mind is the matrix of all matter”<sup>822</sup>. Or, to quote Paul Davies, another inspiring advocate of spreading the arms of religion and science to each other and bridging the gap between the two, “The conceptual framework I am developing can accommodate a universe with something like ‘purpose’, albeit one that is inherent in, and

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<sup>820</sup> See Blaise Pascal’s *Pensée* No. 449, Section II, Chapter V: Two Essential Truths of Christianity, Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK (1669).

<sup>821</sup> See Anthony Storr’s *Feet of Clay: A Study of Gurus*, HarperCollins, London, UK (1996), pp. 71 - 75.

<sup>822</sup> See *Das Wesen der Materie* (The Nature of Matter), a speech given by Max Planck in Florence, Italy (1944). From: *Archiv zur Geschichte der Max-Planck-Gesellschaft*, Abt. Va, Rep. 11 Planck, Nr. 1797.

emergent with, the universe, rather than imposed upon it from without”<sup>823</sup>. Exactly the same breathing higher purpose and an ability to recognize signs of alive and responsive divinity in the world into the modern worldviews that may otherwise, through the eyes of science, see the world as cold, passive, inert and unresponsive, purely materialistic and mechanistic can be ascribed to the philosophical views that I have built upon the concept of the co-creational thesis. Now, if you were to ask me what this overwhelming purpose is, my first and foremost guess would be that it must relate to our transmutation from the seed of a spiritual star, an embryo of divine spirit lulled in the belly of a goddess that Nature is, into an independent celestial body shining with light that will have bedazzled the Earth as a whole and illuminated whole galaxies now veiled in darkness, though I am certain that this would be hinting on my behalf at but a tiny thread in the teleological ball of yarn that is far beyond our ability to grasp. Still, I have zero doubts that there are guiding hands of Nature reaching out from each and every corner of reality to lift our spirits and help us transform them from dead and dusty to vivacious and sparkly, like starry skies looming over our heads. At the same time, not only could be the voice of the divine heard ringing from within the heart of every natural detail, but explorations of reality through the spectacles of science mounted on the pragmatic pedestal of the co-creational thesis could be equally seen as journeys deep into the philosophical, moral and aesthetical essence of our views of the world. As opposed to the apathetic, indifferent and observer-independent reality experienced from the pedestal of objectivistic premises, the world seen through the eyes of the co-creational thesis appears as if sprinkled with the stardust of sheer magic, the same one we used to thrillingly sense whenever our childhood head would feel deliriously immersed in cosmic wonder over the origin of the beauty that surrounded us. For, when all is seen as the product of creative engagement of both the observer’s intrinsic imaginativeness and the mysterious voice of the divine echoing in waves from behind the veil of our perception, a sense of enlivening magical insights into the core of reality on both of its sides, spanning from the profoundest depths of the human heart and mind to the deepest floors of the spiritual sea of divinity from which everything perceptible appears like foam on its wavy surface, arises in us. The three essential Christian qualities – hope, faith and love – which are naturally put to sleep in a world governed by materialistic values thus become revived and rejuvenated in human hearts, while never threatening to obstruct the path of scientific progress. New dimensions of scientific creativity are being built instead in accord with the ancient spiritual teachings, thus instigating an ever greater and more fulfilling process of scientific discovery. In view of building such bridges between science and religion, both of which ignite human wonder by different means and both of which could be accommodated as pillars on top of the foundations of the co-creational thesis, I have always found myself in-between the two worlds, holding the homeward tradition of profound religiousness and belief in the internal dialogue with the divine in one hand and the westward tradition of pure rationality and reliance on the plain and palpable in another. Wynton Marsalis recognized that intrinsic to John Coltrane’s quest for a musical language that combines the entire world music into one, but also unites analyticity and religiousness was his deep spirituality manifested as a constant urge to bring people together<sup>824</sup>, and the same spiritual drive, rooted in the innate longing for peace and love, the exact opposites of which got inflicted upon me as a child and a youth in a country ravaged by war, is perhaps what brews deep inside of me, impelling me to dedicate my life to the

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<sup>823</sup> See Paul Davies’ response to the responses of J. Coyne, N. Myhrvold, L. Krauss, S. Altran, S. Carroll, J. Bernstein, P. Z. Myers, L. Smolin, J. Horgan and A. Sokal to his essay entitled Taking Science on Faith and published by New York Times, November 24, 2007; available at [http://www.edge.org/discourse/science\\_faith.html](http://www.edge.org/discourse/science_faith.html).

<sup>824</sup> Watch Chasing Trane: The John Coltrane Documentary directed by John Scheinfeld (2016).

bridging of science and arts, the two streams of thought that have torn the intellectual spheres of humanity apart since their dawn. On that road, I have known that the secret of majestic creativity lies right there: in the balance between divine intuitiveness and brilliant logicity. Many intellectuals who emigrated to the US from former Yugoslavia, including Nikola Tesla, Mihajlo Pupin and the colloid chemistry wizard for which I worked as an apprentice during my first postdoctoral appointment in the US, Egon Matijević, the uncrowned world number one in terms of the splendor and the symmetry of the fine particles he synthesized with his coworkers, could be said to have owed their success to their ability to maintain exactly this balance and resist giving up the virtues of esoteric and irrational on the account of pursuing the Western path of pure reason and analyticity.

For, intellect and beauty are like parallel rails of the railway along which the starry train of human creativity runs. Ever since the dream of the Glass Bead Game was spun in my 17-year old head, never to cease to drive to me to seek ways to reconcile analyticity and artistry, I have strived to send the trains of my thoughts and expressions along this magical railroad where both the criteria of intellectual clarity and artistic inspiration are satisfied. Although most products of human creativity stream along one or the other side of these railway tracks, many are beautiful pieces of sciences and arts that remind us how science can be conducted and told in inspirational ways as well as how artistry unsupported by the foundations of logic and not allowing for the waters of analytical clarity to stream through it does not survive the passage of time. From “the universal man – a combination of scholar, poet, painter, and statesman – of the T’ang dynasty”<sup>825</sup> to the polymathic oeuvres of Renaissance masters on the Apennine Peninsula and beyond to Wolfgang Goethe to Pavel Florensky to Gregory Bateson and Heinz von Foerster, the road of humanity has been paved by the twinkly pearls of occasional blissful showoffs of brilliance wherein the scientific and the artistic are seen holding hands and wherein the starry sign that we can be intellectually rigorous and inspiringly fanciful, a stone and a sea at the same time, has been shed. For, loving care for the creatures of the world can be seen as the profoundest drive of the wheel of creative, practical acting in the world, as illustratable by one of the final images in the life journey of Goethe’s doctor Faust, in which the goddess of Care breathes upon Faust’s eyes, making him reckon dreams of living fully for the world and engaging in simple actions for its bettering together with fellow humans, the moment in which he finally attains a long sought peace of mind and immediately becomes transferred to a higher plane of being, surrounded by caressing angels and flying high in his spirit. Even when we look at the evolutionary tree where our biological predecessors are lined one by one, we could notice that the ascent of life has corresponded to ever more careworn and close relationships pervaded with more and more of playful pampering and affectionate patting between members of the same species. For example, as we climb along this magical tree, we could realize that laying innumerable eggs and then fading away in the distance, leaving the hatched progenies on their own gradually cedes place to laying a lesser number of eggs but carefully watching over, then to the mammalian development of the progeny inside of the mother and then, finally, to unprecedentedly long period of nurture of human babies in both the animal kingdom and its mammalian province. From this petite observation we could make a mountainous conclusion, which is that caring intimacies develop in parallel with the intellectual capabilities of living species. Many fanciful starry nights I thus spent wondering if it may be an accident that humans are the only mammals that remain somewhat tolerant to lactose and thus able to digest the mother’s milk far into their adulthood and even the old age, or it is a providential sign that our perpetual childishness must be a key to

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<sup>825</sup> See Michael Nuridsany’s 100 Masterpieces of Painting, Flammarion, Paris (2006), pp. 36.

explaining our standing on the summit of the mountain of species that constitute the planetary being that some of the holistically inclined ecologists enjoy naming Gaia. Intensifications of feelings, embodiments and expressions of love for the neighbor will thus inevitably stand behind the further cerebral advancements of life on this planet. On the other hand, although it is a cultural cliché to accept love as the irrational antipode of knowledge, in reality it is far more rational and epistemic than it seems. For example, if we look really deep into the sea of love that shimmers within our chests we would realize that it is the power of intellect and intentional judgment that helps us find lovable traits in inherently imperfect creatures around us, or, even better, that helps us learn how to make all the traits of beings around us lovable and thus become closer to the ideal of a perfect spiritual creature, the one who, like the Christ, sees no evil anywhere, but merely millions of reasons to strew it all with the starry glitter of wonder and sunshine of love from every piece of his celestial being. Hence, searching for the foundations of knowledge takes us into domains of love, deepening of which makes us glimpse the charms of illuminative intellectual insight, even deeper from which the droplets of the ocean of love could be found, however sustained on the firm banks, shores and seafloors of knowledge, though ever since gently rocked in the arms of motherly Cosmos which is infinite and ungraspable Love in its nature. To install cosmic Love in the center of our mind is thus the way to erect an enlightened intellect, to polish the surface of the prophetic eye of *Ajna* chakra that rests like a star on our forehead, while enrooting epistemic clarity and orderliness within the core of our heart helps us sustain the shine of love radiating from the open azure flower of *Anahata* chakra planted by gods in our chests.

In the end, we can conclude that the sky of the human mind is reminiscent of the sky that stretches above a dazzling sunlit surface of the sea on a beautiful summer day. Wherever the rays of our attention land on it, the enchanting interplay of logical and predictable on one side and of aesthetic and lawless on the other could be seen. The position of the Sun can be predicted with certainty, but not whether the sky will be bright or gloomy. Clouds are, on the other hand, moved by the forces of the wind and with the help of the weather forecast, it can be told how dense their layers will be on a given day. Still, their shapes and the way in which they glide through the air, giving us great aesthetic satisfaction, cannot be predicted by any means. Birds fly driven by their quest for food, but still one could spot pairs of seagulls in their brotherly or romantic play, elegantly and lovingly travelling across the azure skies. This simplistic parallel should surprise no one who has been made aware of the alchemical correspondence between the worlds inside and the worlds outside. Open the door to one and the door to another will open spontaneously, as if through an act of magic, with no effort exerted at all. Likewise, should we desire to enrich the sky of our mind, we can always turn to the skies of Nature and look for inspiration in the world around us. In turn, what we need to develop a potential for beautifying the world with our creativity is to devotedly spend time inside and draw with care the seascapes of our personal hearts and minds. For, just as the co-creational thesis has taught us, the world of our experience is the product of entwined creativity of two sides: human mind and Nature, none of which could be known in isolation, independently of its complementary other.

To sum up this short meditation on the Way of Love, the balancing principle around which the whole world fluctuates as it rolls towards novel evolutionary horizons, like the striped ball that swung by me on a summer day in Maui, I will bring to mind yet another insight that was born in my head as the rising Sun on yet another enlightening summer day spent gazing at the Adriatic Sea in its shimmering dance in front of my eyes, prompting a similar combination of teary melancholic waviness of Love and glistening twinkles of joyous Wonder reflected in all

directions off its surface to arise in them too. Namely, for the one millionth time, although in quite a special sense, as ever before, it dawned on me then that the human mind is nothing but a giant starry swarm of questions that swirl around the sun of the human soul, while the entire sum of human perceptions at any given moment of one's existence is a *perfect* response of Nature to these questions, yielding answers in her subtle and mysterious ways. For this reason, we can say that, indeed, everything is at the right place at all times. Of course, since the evolution of the world crucially depends on incessant strivings to solve the puzzles that surround us everywhere we direct our glances, so do these answers that Nature hands us need to be of such mildly enigmatic nature, like the chord progressions of Pet Sounds. This impels her to draw merely ways that lead to desired destinations rather than to inaugurate us at these very destinations straight away. For, she surely knows that the moment we begin to feel as if we have found God for good, we inevitably lose it out of sight. This is so because preservation of godliness of our being is possible only insofar as we constantly seek it across the stellar realms of our consciousness. Of course, this embracement of uncertainties as pervasive in each and every aspect of reality implies being uncertain with regard to this very crowning of ubiquitous uncertainty in life, so that deep inside of us a room for beliefs in one's grasping final, ultimate and unchangeable answers to the questions of the sphinx of our soul should always remain reserved. Be that as it may, such an awareness of constant wordless conversation with divine Nature that our spirit is engaged in at each and every moment of its existence gives rise to supreme alertness that equips us with the ability to lightly read sunshiny signs that illuminate our consciousness like the flickers of light bouncing off the sea surface straight to the eye of our heart, as opposed to sulky ignorance, blind to innumerable beautiful flaps of angelic wings dormant in each and every detail of our perceptual realities, naturally resulting from the disregard of this ultimate divine dialogue outlined by the propositions of the co-creational thesis. This unending communication between the human mind and divine Nature, both of which lie impressed in every segment of our surrounding lies at the heart of the idea of co-creation of the world as we perceive it. It is a seed whose watering by means of our paying wondrous attention ceaselessly to it leads to its sprouting into magnificent trees of our sacred being in the world.

And so, as we stand gazing at a meditational landscape which has been with us since the earliest days of our lives, be it a seascape with the Sun setting tranquilly behind a bustling city on the hill and tightly packed heartbeats burning with ardor and craze amidst its streets, or crumbly facades and walls in the backyard in which we made our first steps as a child, surrounded by the face of our Mother, softly shaking cedar trees, fallen flowers and air wherein damp staleness and florid fragrances were mixed, impelling our spirit to begin to float one day on the wings of belief in the beauty of dialectical encounters of opposites, the co-creational thesis explains why the bricks of our hearts are being mysteriously touched and rearranged by some unknown emotional forces at those moments. For, at the same time as we formed our experiential reality by putting together a plethora of puzzle pieces of undefined, chaotic impressions into a grand organized collection which then became the world for us, as the tenets of the philosophy of constructivism suggest, this very world that extends beyond the boundaries of our physical self built the core of our cognitive being. The creation of our self is thus inherently and inextricably tied with the creation of the world, as could be naturally deduced from the proposition of experiential co-creation. Accordingly, a lasting withdrawal of our attention away from the world and into our self solely brings us not closer, but farther away from enlightenment of the inner landscapes of our spirit, as the allegory of Goethe's Faust's life nicely exemplifies, having taken the scholar from the spiritual void of being a bookworm in search of an answer to becoming a blissful soul

upon engaging oneself in common work with the commoners, proving along the way that “He comes to the thought of those who know him beyond thought, not to those who imagine he can be attained by thought: he is unknown to the learned and known to the simple”<sup>826</sup>. Hence, only empathic encounters with divine Nature whose angelic guidance lies dormant in each twit of nightingales, cuckoos and other birds of paradise, in each microcosm of matter sampled in our hands and in every pair of pearly human eyes can build the essence of our self, which brings us over to the central Christian principle: You only have what you give. To arrive back at the places from which our planetary journeys had begun is thus to come close to the center of our self, which is a necessary precondition for launching our beings into the starry skies and installing ourselves in their sublime reigns as one of them. For, if the co-creational thesis teaches us something, it is that the world as we see it is none other but us, an insight that infuses our spirit with a sense of divine oneness of it all and presents the first step in extinguishment of our ego and dissolution of the seed of our self to the world, letting it bear fruit that is greater than life. Once we annihilate our self and become none, we would be surprised to realize that we have become all (Matthew 5:3) and *vice versa*, as opposites in this life blend at their extremes, just like traveling far enough in one direction eventually makes us reach the starting point of our journey. To run along with empathic expressiveness illuminating our heart, so as to spread our spirit selflessly all over the face of the world, that is, essentially away from our self, thus brings us ever closer to the core of our creative being, while making steps that approach the latter in meditation takes us closer to realization that we are none but the world in our deepest essence. All thence merges into one and one becomes all as we knock on the gates of the Garden of Eden arrived at for one final time at the end of this long Beethovenian second chapter in the symphony that this book aspires to become, with the teary waterfalls of beautiful childhood impressions that formed who we are at this very moment, having been the stairway to stars, the beginning and the end of it all, the departure point and the destination of the journey to stars that this life has been.



Spun in the center of a circle wherein the subjective and the objective, the passionate and the sane, the imaginative and the disciplined, self-absorbed and selfless are like adjacent links of a chain, zooming past one another before our eyes, we become dizzy at first. But then, like a whirling dervish who spins and spins and at one moment falls into a trance and recognizes a clear vision, the same thing happens to us. And the muse I could see in front in me thence turns out to be the very goddess of the Way of Love, of the divine philosophy that I have relentlessly taught.

Already mentioned a few times throughout the journey of this book, you may wonder now in peace what **the Way of Love** really is. Looking at it from these cosmic depths of the mind, as if it is a planet Earth quietly dancing in circles around its axis, a detached colorful fairy light which we could almost hold on the palm of our hand, I see the Way of Love as a concept that is as rhapsodic and enwrapped in mysticism, a poetic pantheon of a kind, as it is psychologically and psychotherapeutically profound, induced from decades of research in

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<sup>826</sup> See Juan Mascaró's Introduction to The Upanishads, selected by Juan Mascaró, Penguin Classics, London, UK (1964), pp. 21. The quoted line is from the Kena Upanishad.

cognitive science and applicable as a guiding principle in conducting any observation and query or deriving any inference we could think of. In its simplicity, it resembles an equation in view of which each one of us may stand in amazement, rub eyes and pinch oneself, disbelieving that one such simple relationship between the worlds inside and the world outside governs the evolution of the Universe. For a ballerina, an epitome of an artist, interested in finding out the recipes for enlightened *being* in this world, the Way of Love may serve as a guiding star, showing the direction to cognitive stances from whose pedestals we might pirouette like the aforementioned planet Earth, the home of our hearts, while shedding stardust of divine grace, sprung up from out of this world, all around us. For a scientific, analytical mindset, on the other hand, the Way of Love may serve as an equally precious guideline, enthroning one's consciousness on enlightened grounds, from which the tree of creative *thinking* may naturally flourish in front of one's intellectually imaginative views.

The Way of Love is the central column of an enlightening worldview which sees reality as an incessant dialogue between human mind and Nature. It is the pillar built on the foundations of the idea of co-creation, which states that the world as we experience it with our senses is not objective and identical for all of us. Neither is it completely subjective, the mere product of our unique imagination. Instead, it arises from the combination of the two, that is, of our inner sphere of existence, of our dreams, aspirations, intentions, assumptions and biological and cognitive predispositions on one side, and of the outer sphere of existence, of the world as-it-is on another. The world as we see it can be therefore imagined as arising at the intersection of the creative spheres of influence of us as observers and of the objective reality which we may call Nature. Owing to such a nature of experiences, which dictates that everything that is perceivable and knowable presents an inextricable entwinement of our own act of creative drawing qualities of the observed experiential wholes, and that of Nature, the ultimate creator of it all, the creative cores of both sides, that is, of human spirit and of Nature, are unperceivable and unknowable *per se*. Neither the deepest core of our values, aspirations, desires and dreams nor qualities of the presumably divine Nature that dwells behind the veil of the experiential appearances, can be known as-they-are since they can be both compared to Kant's things-in-themselves or the inaudible sound of one hand clapping from the famous Zen puzzle. In order to gain insight into one, we need to look at its reflection from the other. Hence, to realize how bright or gloomy the core of our spirit is, we can look at the world around us and try to notice whether its objects and creatures appear sunshiny beautiful and divinely meaningful to us. And in order to realize the extent of the divinity of the underlying foundations of the physical reality, we should be reminded of the Delphi oracle or the riddle of the Sphinx, which both whisper to us that the answer dwells within us. This brings us to one of the crucial guiding stars that the Way of Love outlines in the sky of our mind; it is the one telling us that in order to enrich our spirit, we should desire to enrich other people's minds and hearts and bravely go out and explode, like a burning sun, with shiny expressions. On the other hand, in order to be successful in our attempts to ornament the world with the stardust of love and grace, we need to be meditatively immersed deep within the core of our being where we burn our essence and forge spiritual treasures in terms of wonderful ideas, impressions, aspirations, emotions and drives, again just as every star does.

Hence, all that we perceive is partly subjective and partly objective. In one part, our perceptions and intellectual insights are the products of our own creativeness, that is, of our values, assumptions, expectations, intentions, aspirations, emotions, knowledge and biological predispositions. For example, what a human creature may perceive in a surrounding landscape,

the dog on a leash or a cricket in the field would perceive in completely different manner, owing to the difference in biological structures and sensory makeup between these different animals. However, we can observe equally striking differences in the worlds seen through the eyes of different human creatures too. To do so, we may call to mind Bill Watterson's Calvin and the way in which his childish imagination makes spaceships and dinosaurs out of objects that surround him, and instills life and personality to his tiger puppet, which are all visions incomprehensible to Calvin's insipid parents. Although the difference between the worlds seen through the eyes of a child and those of a grownup person may seem enormous, they may be equally drastic when one compares an insensitive and unsophisticated mindset with a delicate, artistic one as they both encounter a moving piece of art or a simple but beautiful natural detail. Whereas the former person may be bored by it, the latter may find it deeply touching. Hence, we should be sure to know that although creatures of the Universe may look highly similar to each other, transferring our prejudged impressions and thoughts about their inner worlds from one to another would present a grave mistake. If we aspire to become a space traveler such as the Little Prince, we should be aware that every human creature upon which the rays of our attention curiously land will be a unique planet floating through the endless cosmos of being, one and only, unrepeatable moment in the history of Universe as a whole. At the same time, if we look really deep into the eyes and the soul of one such lonely planet, with the empathy of an angel, we would realize that this lonely planet is, in fact, a Universe unto itself. Because if one sees stars, galaxies, suns and clouds through one's eyes, a Universe in essence, one is none other but one such Universe alternately lit up and darkened by the vilest and the divinest emotions known to it. And for these bridges of empathy to be built and for the world to be seen as one from the eyes of I and Thou, the reality, lest the establishment of its etymology be a grand act of illusion, must have a realistic element intrinsic to it.

Therefore, the world as we see it must be at least partly realistic and objective, that is, independent of our own observational stances and our very being. If we look at the starry sky, we could agree that constellations are of given shapes and that they are mostly the same for all of us, even though I may perceive Orion as a joyful being with victoriously raised arms and another person may see in it a warrior with a starry belt or a canoe with two brothers who have gone fishing with the stars. Had the worlds seen by each one of us been completely unique and solipsistic, with no commonalities between them, mutual coordination of our experiences and sharing of things, insights, ideas and feelings would not have been possible. The fact that there are agreements and compatibilities in our communications signify that an element of objectivity is intrinsic to the physical reality in which we are immersed and which we are part of. Every object on which two perceptions collide with a sense of agreement, usually implicit, as to what it represents can be thus interpreted as a grand connector of minds and an embodiment of that greatest of all cosmic feelings: Love. Or, as Juliette concluded upon gazing at the galactic cup of coffee in Jean-Luc Godard's 2 or 3 Things I Know about Her, "An object is what serves as a link between subjects". Of course, these objects can remain existing as independent entities and be perceivable as such, along with this quintessential cosmic emotion, only insofar as the two subjects whose attentions intersect on these objects stay separate, in the same way as a way can exist only if the two endpoints that it connects remain distant from one another. Correspondingly, in another one of Godard's films, *Le gai savoir*, another one of his heroines, Patricia Lumumba stressed out that "to make a connection between things, we need to know what separates them". A direct implication of this is that the existence of subjectivity is conditioned by the existence of objectivism and *vice versa*.

Yet, these two aspects of each and every product of our experience, subjective and objective, idealistic and realistic, are inextricably entwined so that there can be no way that one could be untangled from the other and seen in its sole light. Zen masters have thus insisted on their disciples' understanding that there could be no sound of one hand clapping, metaphorically signifying that mind can never form the world that the mind sees had there been no Nature to guide it, and *vice versa*: that human eyes are necessary for Nature to look at its own creation, which is, on the other hand, always dual, always the product of a dialogue, of an encounter between minds of sentient beings and the very Nature. Or, as put into words by Vladimir Nabokov, "Our existence is but a brief crack of light between two eternities of darkness"<sup>827</sup>. In the song *Stillness is the Move*<sup>828</sup>, the question "isn't life just a mirage of the world before the world" is posed, urging us to rethink how the reality as-it-is, lying hidden behind the veil of our experience, is unknowable *per se* because our objective perception thereof is always mixed with our own assumptions, anticipations, intentions, values and the overall biological makeup of the evolutionary stage that we currently occupy in space and time. The words of Evelyn Underhill thus come to complement this stance: "This sense-world, this seemingly real external universe cannot be *the* external world, but only the Self's projected picture of it. It is a work of art, not a scientific fact... a picture whose relation to reality is at best symbolic and approximate, and which would have no meaning for selves whose senses, or channels of communication, happened to be arranged upon a different plan. The evidence of the senses, then, cannot be accepted as evidence of the nature of ultimate reality: useful servants, they are dangerous guides"<sup>829</sup>. This also explains why ancient Hindu philosophers and theologians, as well as Friedrich Hegel, insisted that every human being carries a sprout of the divine mind, of the very God, within oneself. On the other hand, we can also insist that everything that we are aware of in our world hides the essence of our own being in it, for it is the observer that co-defines the appearance of each and every product of his perception. And so we see that we are indeed spun within a circle where every subjective insight conceals an objective one in its core and *vice versa*, which is somewhat similar to the black color sleeping in the heart of the white one and *vice versa*, as depicted on the celebrated Tai-Chi-Tu symbol. We know by now that every complexity hides a seed of simplicity sprouting in its heart, while every simplicity, somewhere deep inside, is sustained on inexplicably intricate networks of relationships, and here is a rather trivial example: namely, if you have come to believe that there is not much diversity in the ways Chinese names are configured, dig deeper and you will be amazed to realize that, though this lack of versatility does hold for Chinese last names, the first names are usually chosen so as to be perfectly unique, existent nowhere else on the continent. In concordance with the profound symbolism of the interplay of black and white in the Tai-Chi-Tu emblem, this minute observation hints at the spirit of unity lying in the heart of the most authentic and stellar uniqueness imaginable and the other way around, that is, at the spirit of veracity to one and only self in the eye of the most vigorous cyclones of empathic energy that bedazzle and enliven, implicitly telling us that wherever we look, the routes towards our coming face-to-face with the goddesses of the Way of Love lie open.

The Way of Love as a concept that occupies a central place on the pedestal of my personal philosophy can be thought of as having sprung from my long time fascination with the act of alchemical sorcery that the creation of unexplainably illuminative effects via dialectical

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<sup>827</sup> See Vladimir Nabokov's memoirs entitled *Speak, Memory*, Vintage, New York, NY (1951).

<sup>828</sup> Listen to *Stillness is the Move* by Dirty Projectors, from the record *Bitte Orca*, Domino Records (2009).

<sup>829</sup> See Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism*, Methuen & Co., Ltd., London, UK (1911), pp. 6.

juxtaposition of opposites is. Way as a symbol has been impressed on the whiteboard of my memory as a most direct representation of one such blend of opposites because, simply saying, every way connects what stands in separation. Likewise, as a recollection of something that has been lost<sup>830</sup>, every abstraction is a way too, including this representation of the Way in my head and any representation of this representation and so on, *ad infinitum*. But where neither separation nor connectedness exists, no ways could be found, which is why Way is a way of saying that division and oneness are to be fostered in parallel in every thriving physical system. The Way of Love, from this perspective, can be seen as a way of ascribing one such dialectical nature that dictates eternal fluctuations around the balance between being one with another in empathy and being one and only, true to oneself with one's whole heart, to the Art of Loving, as Erich Fromm named the most significant skill that we have come down to Earth to acquire before ascending back to the heavenly realms of reality as angels with rejuvenated wings. The Way of Love is, thence, akin to a secret code that tells us that only insofar as our mindset can be described with an image of the way, of a road, are we predisposed to exhibit an incessant glow of Love, the most powerful force that stands at the beginning and the end of the Universe as a whole. As each way epitomizes simultaneous separateness and connectedness, one such enlightened mindset likewise engrains an attitude of meditative self-withdrawnness blended with the one of fully expressive, honest and joyous openness driven by infinite compassion and empathy. "Travel is made up of arrivals and destinations; one never remains in either state for long"<sup>831</sup>, the film critic Linda Ehrlich noticed once, concordantly pointing at the need to constantly fluctuate between the states of unison and separation, getting electrifyingly close to surrounding spirits but only to bounce back into most remote cosmic spaces and then again pounce on the human hearts by surprise and so forth as we endlessly continue our journey as a spiritual wave on this plane of existence; for, such is the recipe for enlightened living whereby inaudible music of being that makes omnipresent gods sweetly peering behind each corner of our experience smile. From this beautiful panorama of thought, it immediately dawns on us that the key is found in balances and optima rather than in fosterages of single poles on the account of drowning their opposites. Through the eyes of the Way of Love, it becomes clear that to get closer to creatures dear to us we need to partly distance from them too, for overly clinging onto them may be a perfect way to fall into a blind spot of our aesthetic perception and lose their beauty out of sight. It also tells us that to grasp the treasures of precious insights that we have been endowed with and never share and dissipate them in the airs of the world is to make them shrink and become useless while in our sole embrace, as much as that to give more than we have is to gain the whole world in return. To be always safe and found is thus to become truly lost in the long run, while at the same time to be lost is verily to be found.

In light of this insight, a petite detour follows: "I remember my Mom and Dad, the guardians of my spirit, holding hands and watching me from the shore while I bathed like a dolphin in the Azure; I remember Fido and I tossing beach ball to each other in water and playing millions of games that enkindled peace and love in our hearts; I remember the first kiss of a girl, a Maia, on the crumbly wall of a rusty desolate shipyard in Kumbor, on the other side

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<sup>830</sup> In his review of the work of the painter Howard Hodgkins, specifically his painting titled Venice Evening, Andrew Graham-Dixon says that it is "a picture suspended between recollection and loss", and so is every memory and abstract thought, as a matter of fact. See Andrew Graham-Dixon's Howard Hodgkin, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, New York, NY (1994), pp. 61.

<sup>831</sup> See Linda C. Ehrlich's Travel Toward and Away, In: Tokyo Story, edited by David Desser, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK (1975), pp. 72.

of which was, symbolically, Idn, that is, Eden, a bar open only that summer and never before or after, and the aftermath of its taste, sweeter than honey or a fanciest bubblegum, which I savored in my thoughts that night, while gazing at the ceiling full of stars onto which a cypress tree hit by a lightning had fallen years ago, scattering hundreds of its cones, like confetti, across the portico, but miraculously leaving me unhurt in spite of being made of a material little stronger than cardboard; I remember falling in love and my heart palpitating and soul flickering like a most wonderful lightshow and strange fields flowing like tsunami waves of static charges at the point of contact with my lover's hand, and all the political and socioeconomic worries that haunted my mind, along with every last feeling of repugnance dispersed throughout it, dissipating in this electrified atmosphere in the twinkling of an eye and making it a home for sympathy and sympathy only; I remember watching sunset from the island of Maui, over ancient volcanoes all smeared into a crayoned mishmash of colors of the rainbow as the sunlight glided through the distant clouds, and turning sideways to glimpse a goddess that the Little Bear appeared like under the bronzed light falling on us from the Sun, resembling a living ahu off Easter Island, strong and determined, and yet soft and squishy, embodying a concoction of careworn sensitivity and stellar powerfulness in her veins; I remember Deki, my older bro, playing pinball in the arcade alley alone, like a big manatee, with the sweet 80s notes bouncing off the walls of the penny arcade, along with dreams of sea and sunshine; I remember juggling ball in the backyard, thinking of how the same name as that of my older step bro, orphaned in a footling measure since the earliest days, stands in this realm of *joga bonito* for Pet, an inductee to the hall of fame at the Maracanã stadium, a three-time winner of the contest for the best midfielder of the Brazilian league and the world record holder in the number of the Olympic goals scored, who was despite his footwork talents never selected to play for our national team due to corrupted ties between the football association and agents, sending off yet another sparkle in the dazzling glitter of the crystal ball of destiny in front of my eyes, flickering with the message that says that rejection by the world is tied to an existential excellence in the eyes of the Universe, bringing forth the image of Tycho Brahe clung to the wall of my Red Room, altogether with a sign saying One Against the World, and building the spirit of a resolute warrior of light inside of me, a rebel that will always stand in defense of the ideals of divine ethics and aesthetics before the greedy and selfish hands of spiritually rotting humanity, dedicating one's whole life to save the 'beauty that will save the world'; I remember lying in bed and listening to Pet Sounds while watching the three cypresses in our garden through the rusty windows of our Belgrade home, and then the sound of my Mom's cough, caused by her having an open  $\lambda$ -shaped crossroad in her pharynx, letting 2 become 1 at all times, the cough I could recognize among billions of other ones in the blink of an eye, and of the house key opening the front door on workday afternoons, which would make my heart leap like the liveliest bell, awakening birds of paradise in my heart, soaring me high in joy and ecstasy and making me fly around on their wings through the house decorated with marble Venus de Milo statues, paintings of the Dalmatian seaside at dusk, Indian elephants and squaws, dusty books, icons of saints and embroideries in the shape of the sun; I remember the rain from the sunny skies beginning the very moment I stepped on the Kumbor ground for the first time after my Mom had sailed away from this earth and of the sunrays illuminating everything around me, magically, through a sky thickened with gray clouds as I exited the sea on that very same day, proving that my Mom has indeed continued to live in every wisp of the wind, in every sway of the sea waves, in every hum of the trees, in the crescent Moon and a star hanging off its edge on the eve of that magical day and in every single sound or vision landing softly on my saddened senses; I remember arriving to Belgrade for the second time since my

Mom had sailed away, straight from the visit of Domine Quo Vadis church in Rome, built on the very site at which Saint Peter intercepted the Christ and heard that eternal *Eo Romam iterum crucifigi* fly out of his lips, tenderly, and, during the ride from the airport, with Fido and my Dad in the car, hearing the bells of the Saint Sava church, the biggest Orthodox church in the world, starting to ring to the sound of ‘hey, hey, I save the world today’<sup>832</sup> from the radio, then watching Pedro, i.e., Peter in Spanish, the name of the saint crucified upside down, but also the name of my grandfather, a canonized martyr, symbolically score a goal in minute number 1<sup>833</sup>, the number of oneness of it all, in the only game that the three of us watched during that short visit of my beloved hometown; I remember the face of two-year old Evangelina, pretty ‘like the Moon’ or the little star that danced around the Earth’s satellite above our heads in those days, smiling at me from behind the eucalyptus trees in the late afternoon Californian sun, when it finally, between a ‘pick-a-boo’ and a ‘surprise’ hollered into the air, hit me that it is OK to let ideas pass through my mind like the summer breeze, without being captured in the butterfly net of my pretzel logic and written down – ‘twas, I would love to believe, the first ray of the sun that dissipated the darkness of my addiction to writing and signaled the beginning of a holy life, a life that lives out all these magical thoughts arising in my head and/or communicates them to the higher powers that be, the powers that oversee every step our feeble beings make on this ball of blue; I remember walking down the Pine Grove Avenue and other Lincoln Park streets with three-year old Theo by night and watching him point at the ceiling fans in solitaires and count them unmistakably, then heading tomorrow morning over to the lakeside windmill sculpture, a.k.a. the blue fan, resting right where the end of a double rainbow had been the eve before, and watching him run laughingly, with the wind tangling his scruffy hair to the rhythm of seagulls and puffy clouds sailing gloriously over him and the lake waves saying hi and bye with every splash of theirs, just as Theo waved his to the kitchen and to the dishwasher and to the shoes and to Play-Doh and to the Moon every night before going to sleep; I remember spending time in solitude, dwelling in a daydreamed blue moon of fancy drawn in front of my mind and realizing how it would become yanked down, turning slowly into a tear-shaped balloon and then a heart, the sign of love, reminding me how a meditative realm of inner spirit not slid down and shared with the world, merely resting inertly within ourselves, is futile and pointless, as well as that sheer ballooned joy, without any compassionate melancholy residing in the home of our heart, is unable to lead us to fulfillment of our strivings to become a missionary messenger of divine love for the world; I remember recording True Love Waits and running to gaze at my Mom’s eyes, to which I had dedicated my first line of poetical expression intermingled with a work of science, realizing that I indeed impressed the lively concoction of devotion and fear dancing in these eyes in threads of notes; I remember watching with wonder the city lights of Belgrade southwest of it, from the ‘window with a broken wing’ of the Red Room in which I incarnated the twinkly cries of joy and sadness of stars of the night sky in the sound of my guitar; I remember petting Fido’s caroty and silky *à la* Prince Valiant hair with burning wishes to deliver peace and harmony with my touch and with a sense of the great One taking over my entire being; I remember little Lena flapping her arms and leaping after a dingy dove, with my Mom, who taught her the art of joyful play, quietly smiling from a park bench, underneath softly dancing shadows of chestnut branches and leaves; I remember hiding in the shade of lovably feeble pine trees that resembled gentle giants guarding me from summery ghosts, gracefully plucking the brownish coatings on their

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<sup>832</sup> Listen to Eurythmics’ I Saved the World Today on Peace, RCA Records (1999).

<sup>833</sup> It was an English Premier League game between Chelsea and Manchester United played on October 23, 2016, which Chelsea won with four goals to nil.

offshoots, amused by the sound of my airborne steps over pine needles under moonlight in the backyard of our suburban house in Mala Moštanica and yet deliriously whizzing towards Belgrade city lights, with their neon flicker washing over my eyes, hugging and kissing all that is around me in blasts of wondrous empathy, predisposing me to find equal satisfaction in quietness and solitude of my meditative self and in expressive outbursts of my communal self, which I would mysteriously happen to merge one day into the concept of the Way of Love; I remember hugging cherry and apricot trees and playing with spirits that only I could see swooping through the air amidst running after my Dad and yelling ‘Remember, remember’, words which nowadays stand forth as an early epitome of my thirst to impress inspiring insights into images and words and yield signs as reminders for myself and the world on how life should be lived; I remember being carried on my Papa’s shoulders of giants, being sung the melodies of love and silently taught that the greatest beauty is seeing beauty with the eyes of another and that selflessly elevating creatures far beyond the intellectual stances we occupy rather than tying them close to our own levels on the ladder of advanced being is the most supreme approach to teaching, nurture and communication; I remember my Father standing, like a giant, at the edge of the Sun resort garden, next to the swimming pool in which I, swimming backstroke, distanced myself from him when I glimpsed the dark blue, stormy clouds gathered behind his back and over the Luštica peninsula on that last day of the summer and last swim of the season, and then, as I swam back even further and had the view of the vault enlarging before my eyes, saw a clear patch of the sky, having the shape of a heart, hanging above his head, toward the center of the celestial sphere, neatly reflecting what his thoughts were being made of – a careworn storm with the calm of pure love in its core; I remember sitting with my Mom and Dad in the backyard and thinking how ‘this must be what the Garden of Eden is like’, over and over again being enlightened by the most sacred knowledge of it all, the one that tells us that Love opens the gates to Paradise even in the most ruinous places and is the simplest and the most magical key that unlocks all the gates in the Universe; I remember all these things and many more, and they all stir the ocean of emotions in my heart and enkindle the brilliants of sparkly thought in my mind, and yet they may leave you thoroughly indifferent”. The reason I have decided to pick a grain of sand of memories from the endless beach at sunset that is the landscape for my meditative remembrances is that I wanted to show you that sooner or later all of us will realize that little memories that are completely subjective will present the most precious ones in our lives. The “photograph on the dashboard” immortalized in R.E.M.’s cult song, Nightswimming, has been a perpetual reminder that displaying pictures of persons and events endearing to us on the screens of our minds could provide for a heartrending experience, bring us to tears and simultaneously illuminate our mental spheres with sunshine, thus creating rainbow arches stretching from our heart to head and back. And yet, these ordinary objects and images capable of drawing some enchanting rainbows in front of the eyes of our hearts would leave those who are unfamiliar with the imaged creatures and moments thoroughly indifferent. By recalling a few of the wonderful memories, such as those that I have just pulled out of the backdrop of my mind, the beauty of which could be understood by us only, we could catch a glimpse into the endless moving energy that they may provide us with, which would serve as a pointer in the direction of the immense meaningfulness of the most subjective things in life. The feeling naturally arising in us from this point on is that the most precious things that we come to hold in life are so deeply rooted in the subjective traits of ours and drawn by the eye of the beholder that they could never be objectified and shared as such with others. On the other hand, all of those brilliant subjective memories that tie us to the creatures dear and lovable to us could be made possible only insofar as the world

itself had been made to support a partially objective transmission of information. In other words, seeing the same, hearing the same, touching the same and feeling the same is a precondition for those precious subjective memories to arise in our minds, resembling stems that rise higher and higher, all until they bring us sweet and fruitful visions that may even ameliorate the suffering that human lives, sooner or later, lead to. Besides, life deprived of the great desire to shine to the world with the ineffable beauty that one has seen and known and share it with others by all means, as imperfect and humane as they are, cannot be said to be worth living, as it would close upon itself, form a silent and unexpressive cocoon and become an epitome of the dark spiritual matter of the Universe. What this all tells us is that the objective lies at the heart of the subjective and *vice versa*, which is the flowery essence from which the co-creational thesis was born.

The Way of Love is somewhat like a pillar built on the philosophical foundations of the co-creational thesis and the concoction of subjectivism and objectivism intrinsic to it. The Way of Love applies to everyday social circumstances and in simple terms tells us that we should always look for the Middle Way between our meditatively being focused on burning the starry essence of our visions and emotions inside of our mind and heart on one side, and compassionately moving forward to attain oneness with the views of the world of creatures around us on the other side. It prompts us to extend one of our arms inwardly, in the direction of reaching a perfect oneness with oneself, listening carefully to the divine music that reverberates within our heart and holding on to the twinkly sound of the guiding starlight and the missionary roads that stretch ahead of us, and the other arm outwardly, so as to deliver our entire heart, tender and soft, overflowing with love and beauty, on the palms of our hands to others and hold hands with them in peace and sympathy. With this picturesque metaphor in mind, whenever I look at the image of the crucified Christ, I cannot help seeing an embodied message of the Way of Love. The Christ's bowed head here epitomizes his withdrawnness inside the depths of his heart where stars of sparkly insights are being aligned and the flames of celestial love enkindled, while his stretched arms symbolize his limitless, mountain-moving desire to give more than he has or has ever had, to selflessly share and spread one's spirit endlessly, all until the ideal of being perfectly "poor in spirit" is being reached and, with it, the "kingdom of God" (Matthew 5:3) entered.

The Way of Love tells us that our awareness should be always plucking strings of the lute stretched between our own heart and the heart of others, never approaching either of the sides too closely, knowing that music of our being in this world would thus disappear. In other words, should we become overly introspective and extinguish the flame of compassionate stretching forward, so as to overflow them with beauty and creativity that reside within our heart, we would become imprisoned within our own soul, unable to release the great potentials that the divine spirit has infused in all of us fully. On the other side, should we approach other people's hearts too closely and at the same time neglect the need to remain faithful and intimate to our own missionary road that beats inside of our heart, we would turn into captives of the loved ones, passively and unimaginatively following their steps in the world. The secret of the Way of Love is to balance the two; to keep our ears closely leaned to the music of our heart and to the music of the hearts of others too. Hence, the closer we move to the fellow earthlings, the farther away with one part of our awareness we ought to move too, and *vice versa*. And so, as we travel far, far away from the creatures we love, we ought to keep them firmly impressed in our mind and tightly anchored to the ocean of our heart, knowing deep inside of ourselves that "the stars are beautiful because of a rose one cannot see"<sup>834</sup>. On the other hand, as we move closer to the loved

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<sup>834</sup> See Antoine de Saint-Exupery's *The Little Prince*, Mladost, Zagreb, Croatia (1943).

ones, caressing their hair means also traveling towards the deep ends of the well of the divine One inside of our mind and heart, and gazing into their starry eyes means also having our mind connected with the most remote Universes, as if flying through fascinating faraway galaxies, the stars of which vivaciously swirl inside of the space of our mind. Consequently, as if having a reflection in the famous visual effect employed in Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, composed of simultaneous zooming into the object and retracting the camera from it, eyes of the creatures journeying along the Way of Love exhibit similarly intrinsic antagonism in their becoming increasingly inwardly oriented as they expand the focus of their visual outreach outwardly, and *vice versa*, outstretching the expansiveness of their views and the breadth of imagination that they yield, all until the most distant clouds of Cosmos are touched, as the focus on fine, fine features of reality is deepened. And remember that not only eyes, but every single detail of a being embodying this guiding principle within itself can be dissected to pulls along diametrically opposite directions. Nature can thus be said to have inseminated the principle of the Way of Love within every single detail of the world, lighting up the lampions of Wonder that resemble spinning galaxies in our head and heart as we come close to cosmic creatures in Love and empathy, and letting the rays of Love mysteriously emanate from the soulful source of our being when we distance ourselves from others in wistful Wonder, flying far, far above human heartbeats and the social buzz they create in synchrony. To roam along the uncharted cosmic spaces of one's soul is thus the enlightening highway that takes one straight into the hearts of earthlings around him, equipped with the ability to fertilize them with the seeds of divine beauty, and all that "not because he has moved away from the world; rather because he has come truly close to it"<sup>835</sup>, as Martin Buber noticed. Or, as a film critic and the Allegheny College professor of religious studies, Charles B. Ketcham summed up the ultimate message of Federico Fellini's *8½*, "the resolution of 'the old problem of communication, the desperate anguish to be *with*, the desire to have a real, authentic relationship with another person' is achieved by a journey which takes one deep within himself"<sup>836</sup>. For, like the cosmonaut from Arthur C. Clarke's and Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, venturing farther and farther away from the Earth and becoming immersed into ever deeper and darker regions of the outer space, eventually transforming oneself into a baby, the emanation of divine spirit, as pure as the whitest lotus flower, able to unreservedly sympathize with it all and see but an infinite pureness in everything and everyone, so do we must detach ourselves from the earthly bonds and set out to an exciting inner journey towards ever deeper secrets of the soul if we wish to retain the role of a social butterfly that bedazzles and uplifts, lightly and effortlessly, like the star child does, and continue to glow with the fire of heartwarming kindness and cosmic love from within the hub of our heart. This is why I worry not when I realize that the planes of my attention have taken off and made my mind space out every few seconds or so during conversation and facing others, as they normally do. For, I know that just like distancing the audience from the movie characters is a technique pervasively used by filmmakers to stimulate reflections on their internal conflicts and their fate, so is a moderate sense of remoteness from even the most beloved souls in our surrounding a prerequisite for opening views of the fountain of wishes softly sprinkling the waters of life from within their hearts, the glimpses into which are required to reignite the eternal flame of our love for them time and again. Here come the televised musings of the moment that

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<sup>835</sup> See Martin Buber's *I and Thou*, Touchstone, New York, NY (1923), pp. 157.

<sup>836</sup> See Charles B. Ketcham's *Federico Fellini: The Search for a New Mythology*, Paulist Press, New York, NY (1976), pp. 66. The quote within the quote is attributed to Fellini himself; see Gideon Bachmann's *Federico Fellini: An Interview*, In: *Film: Book 1*, edited by Robert Hughes, Grove Press, New York, NY (1959).

swooshed through the head of Jean-Luc Godard after he was asked to explain the distance, emotional and physical, that he created in his films, reminding us along the way of the necessity of ceaselessly moving back and forth in relation to things to avoid basing relationships with them on names and maps only: “Sometimes, you have to go very far to have a possibility of taking a look at things. If you come too close, like in advertising, you are so close to the product that you don’t see it anymore. That is why you have to name it, because you see nothing. Even in love affair, you have to put some distance to discover the love again”<sup>837</sup>. Therefore, instead of crashing these airplanes of my attention down to earth with panicky sensations of antsy awkwardness, I let my spirit freely soar with them upwards and be taken to sublime heights wherefrom I can watch the world from distant, aerial perspectives and fly above it all like an angel, dancing on the clouds of the Way of Love, of simultaneous meditative remoteness and empathic intimacy, shedding starry signs from these heavenly reigns of mind and delivering raindrops of divine messages to the thirsty worlds below.

Indeed, everywhere our glances land, a bottomless ocean filled with a whole infinity of signs that point straight to the heart of the Way of Love could be found. As I drove on a neon-lit night on Highway 101 and the broken white lines on the road were flashing on and off in my eyes, I recalled how the most brilliant way of partying is when one approaches human hearts and unleashes the knots in their cores, stylishly knocking down the gates of ego and fearfulness therein so as to flood them with the ocean of love in which one’s spirit bathes like a dolphin in an azure sea, and then retreats in the distance, living up to the ideal of the Way of Love with its simultaneous binding hearts by the threads of an empathic spirit of togetherness and distancing in quietness, stepping away silently and gracefully, past a moonlit shadow, through a rusty window and onto a balcony, up into the branches of a cypress tree, gazing at the Moon and leaving a trail of stardust behind, quite in accord with the alternately flashing lines on the road ahead of me, I thought, as well as with the backbeat of music with its rhythmic ups and downs, spreading in waves whereby each climactic rise entails a hushed slide down the slope of this pinnacle that propels us onto the top of yet another hill and on and on as we ride the endless rollercoaster of life and this sentence, letting our mind and the world dialectically evolve along the way into ever more blissful emanations of divine grace. The Way of Love thus draws cerulean silhouettes on the celestial sphere of our mind that begin to dance after a while, and their dance tells us that its secret lies inscribed everywhere. From now on, it is only a matter of searching heartily for the signs of the Way of Love in any domains of our existence, physical and scientific or social and humanistic, before we find them and with a whole lot of passion and artistic skill turn them into words of God, equally authentic as religious scriptures of the world. And on the way to finding this stardust of divine signs of the Way of Love scattered through our world, we need to obey its very same principles on our quests. Thus, we should know that confining our creative and loving attention to only one or a few details or creatures of the world, while neglecting to incessantly move to and fro with respect to them and thus sustain the music of love and creativity that emanates from our being is quite destructive in the long run, and if there is a single and the most powerful message of the 7-hour saga of the Sicilian mafia family, *Godfather*, it is exactly this. Similarly, in Osamu Tezuka’s classic comic book titled *Apollo’s Song*, whenever Shogo, the boy who seeks to learn the secret of love, approaches too closely the object of his affection, a girl that he encounters in his adventurous dreamy experiences, and loses his sanity thereby, cutting the thread that provides a contact with the inner core of his being, the rocks start falling off the

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<sup>837</sup> Watch Dick Cavett’s interview with Jean-Luc Godard, Public Broadcasting Service (1980), retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYVWQ3aChPU>.

mountains, volcanoes erupt, the bullets fly and cities explode, evoking the efforts made by Nature to restore the balance by distancing the characters mildly apart. Yet, as Shogo begins the story as a boy who rejects any need for love, Nature assigns a goddess to help him find the way by endlessly facing him with situations meant to enkindle his feelings for other creatures and bring him closer to others. Now, this back-and-forth adventure of Shogo, bouncing between the extremes of attachment to the hearts of the loved ones and sheer solipsistic selfishness, rings the bells of the verses of the song that Pulp dedicated to the country singer, Bob Lind: “That’s the time you fall apart, that’s the time the teardrops start, that’s the time you fall in love again”<sup>838</sup>. It also reminds us that the droplets of mild desperation and melancholy, similar to those flowing through Romeo’s blood on the night when he met Juliet, need to be mingled with heroic optimism in order for us to be able to plunge into the sea of love properly. And so, Shogo travels back and forth, while being guided by the goddess of Nature who has taught him to retain the balance of the Way of Love at all times, neither approaching the hearts of others too much, up to the point when he loses touch with the missionary music delivered by his own heartbeats, nor diverging from them excessively, up to the point when he becomes selfish and disconnected from the hearts of others, thus losing the empathic drives of the divine powers of one.

The Way of Love can be thus imagined as a basic force of the Universe, integrated into its set of spiritual laws, impelling us to rebalance our mental and emotional attitudes whenever our mindsets start to deviate from the harmony between being meditatively one with oneself and being empathically one with the worldviews of others, which the Way of Love *per se* describes. In that sense, we may be sure that every time we approach the creatures or landscapes of the world close and become blinded by their wondrousness up to the point when we start losing the touch with the essence of our own spirit, this silent and imperceptible universal force will pull us inside, driving us closer to the spiritual center of our own being. Or, when we spend too much time in contemplative solitude, away from the creatures of the world, to the spiritual enrichment of whom all our creative actions should be directed, this gentle force of Nature will push us outside of our own skin and instigate us to open ourselves and freely spread our delicate essence to the world. That this is so I may turn to music as a proof. Namely, after listening and informally studying music for decades, I have learnt to realize that music made by artists who have dwelled in big cities, immersed in too much of hustle and bustle, implicitly invites the listeners to reestablish the contact with their own self, reinforcing a sane contact with their inner world of thoughts and emotions. This is merely a consequence of their inner need to travel inside and reinstall that inner silence and sanity within themselves in a world in which these outward pulls caused by their being attracted to innumerable appealing people and details of the urban settings dominate. This, in a way, is similar to how precious the awakening of the courage to be one and only, different from anyone else is on the European soil, traditionally dominated by the strong senses of communion, and how exquisite the development of sociability and genuine amicability is in an individualistic, dog-eat-dog society such as the American. Conversely, artists residing in small towns and villages, where the human contact is rare and meager, have made music whose underlying message fosters empathy and openness to others, enkindling desires to face another in the honesty of our hearts and give all the beauty that we have forged inside to them in utterly inspiring ways. It is as if the former can teach us how to be meditative and alone in the midst of a crowded party, how to dance as if no one is watching us, while the latter shows us how to spread the beauty that we have carefully kept inside us outwardly and constructively share it with others, how to dance without ignoring the world, but with spreading our arms freely

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<sup>838</sup> Listen to Pulp’s Bob Lind (The Only Way is Down) on We Love Life, Polygram (2001).

to it and engaging in an enchanting dance therewith. In their complementary togetherness, their message is the one of the Way of Love.

Hence, in the miraculous dialogue between our mind and Nature, through which all the experiences of ours arise, whenever we plunge too deep into the essence of our being and forget to feel empathy for others, Nature will redraw our paths so that the balance between feeling intimate with the music of our own hearts and feeling strongly for the worldviews of others is regained. When we attain one such balance, we no longer feel like a desolate traveler who lives merely in oneness with Nature but can, as in a poem in prose by Jovan Dučić<sup>839</sup>, pull out the endearing earthlings' eyes without feeling anything, nor do we become one who cheers and rejoices with others, but feels no mystic, starry and sacred unity with the entire Nature within oneself. Instead, we begin to live in balance with our insides where the divine music that shows us the way rings and with outsides where the starry souls wait to be sprinkled with love that resides deep within our hearts. In such a way, we begin to live in accord with the two ultimate Christian commandments – the love for God and the love for man (Mark 12:29–34). These two are then posed as the poles between which we stretch the strings of the music of our spirit. Whatever we play on them will reverberate far, sending enlightening beauty to fill the voids of sorrow, hopelessness and despair that permeate the world.

That is the secret of the Way of Love. To love oneself enough so as to dig wonderful creative incentives from within one's heart and yet to love others so as to be able to bless the world with the beauty that we have forged deep inside ourselves. "I love you, but I got to stay true", Duffy sang in her platinum-certified tune<sup>840</sup> that got mixed into the barbecue smoke over a food joint on Batutova Street in Belgrade, using simple words to let us know that despite all the spirit of oneness that empathy gives rise to, one part of the amorous person's mind has to remain cosmically spaced and thus able to give rise to the meditative, inward flights of fancy that bring about genuine trueness to oneself and, henceforth, overcome the inherently submissive reflections of the psychological makeup of the one enwrapped in the soft rays of loving attention. For, although loving others as much as one loves oneself has been innumerable times posed as the ultimate secret of fulfilled being, it does not take much insight to notice that this equation would fall flat in reality had we only depreciated and disrespected our own selves, as, unfortunately, many inhabitants of the planet Earth do. The demise of the entire edifice of the central Christian doctrine based on St. Paul's partial interpretation of the Christ's lessons, whereby the Apostle highlighted the norm that says "love thy neighbor" (Galatians 5:14) on the account of deeming our own innate nature inherently malign and evil (Romans 5:12), leading Calvinists further to consider "human nature to be radically corrupt" and that "there is no redemption for any one until human nature is killed within him"<sup>841</sup>, can be considered to have been caused exactly by this rejection of feeding the ego of a superstar blasting with inspirational energies within one. The decision of the artist struggling under a block of frozen inspiration in Fellini's 8½, a 2½ hours long satirical allegro in movement, vocal lines and visual contrasts, to order the allegorical lynching of his alter ego who happened to recite Stendhal's words to his ears, "A self-centered man is on the road to emotional deprivation and creative futility", thus seems quite lucid in view of this perspective that throws light on the necessity of a brilliant mind to constantly orbit the sunlit core of itself with its spaceships of attention and thus be very, very

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<sup>839</sup> See Jovan Dučić's *Radost u Kosmosu* (Cosmic Joy) (early 20<sup>th</sup> Century).

<sup>840</sup> Listen to Duffy's *Mercy* on Rockferry, A&M (2008).

<sup>841</sup> See Robert Wright's *The Moral Animal: Evolutionary Psychology and Everyday Life*, Vintage Books, New York, NY (1994), pp. 12.

self-centered in essence, if it is to give rise to a dazzling glow of creative energy able to wash the world as a whole with its shine. Now, note that when we find two bushes at odds with each other, we should make sure that they do not grow from the same roots, so to say; that is, although science may pretend to have successfully branched out from what it considers the stream of obsolete religious views, the truth is that when it comes to the belief in inherently evil, animalistic nature of human beings, they are shared by mainstreamers on both shores. Yet, just like Erich Fromm, amongst many other progressive thinkers, heartily challenged the classic Freudian idea that tendencies to exhibit aggression would emerge onto the surface of our beings had we only let them go with the flow of our nature<sup>842</sup>, so do we need to go no farther than the foundations of Hinduism and the concept of Atman, the divine seed dormant in each one of us, from which perfectly harmonious actions originate, the same one that Lao-Tzu perpetuated in his concept of Tao, the blissful energy that brings itself to fruition all around us when we free ourselves from our superficial thoughts and desires and begin to glide on its waves, to dig out the treasure trove filled with faith in the inherently divine nature of human beings. “Ye are Gods” (John 10:34), is the Christ’s message that unambiguously reiterates these beliefs; yet, due to the propagation of this idea that made humans aware of their endless creative potentials the Christ was rejected as a heretic by his peers and sentenced to death; “because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God” (John 10:33), as his judges concluded. Yet, without believing that all the atoms in the world dance in harmony with the rhythm of the divine waves emitted through the radio head of ours tuned to celestial harmonies of planets and stars, all that we do will fail to leave the divine trail that leads to the sun of sacred oneness around us. In the New Testament, the Star of Bethlehem, quite like the teeny tiny one blinking on the bleak wall of a church in which the Little Bear and I attended one of our Xmas masses, not knowing that a beautiful baby is being brewed in this beloved bear’s belly, is mentioned to have shined with its light to point at the newborn Christ (Matthew 2) and, indeed, if we are to awaken the divine powers in us and transform our earthly fragileness into a source of an endless gust of spiritual energy, we ought to look at the world from the eyes of a chaste child whose heart leaps with joy while exclaiming, “Look out, the stars, the stars, they shine for you”<sup>843</sup>, as Chris Martin sang by the ocean shore in the video clip for Coldplay’s song about sacrificial friendship that catapults us to stars. Yet, as a result of distorting the original teaching of the Christ in the direction of praising the empathic inclinations of the soul on the account of bashing its egocentric inwardness, many followers of Christianity have tended to turn to others with lame and lukewarm attitudes, more sinful in their root with their obsession with various Thou Shalt Not norms than many humanly erroneous but touchingly enthusiastic acts derived from the Thou Shalt drives. To avoid instances of such spiritual lameness, the Christ posed the norm of listening to the voice of God within one at all times and simply letting this internal vibration of infinite love find the way to the surface of our being, which then turns into an antenna that emits waves of divine energy that healingly wash the face of the planet, as a complement to another unending search of the human heart – for unison with heartbeats surrounding one. Verily, it may be no coincidence that the temperatures of the Earth’s inner core and of the surface of the Sun are the same – 5700 K; it has always been a sign to me that our innermost core must be the link to the surface radiance of a star and that our descending deeper than the darkest depths of our being on the ladder of meditative introspectiveness is the road that would take us to the other side, to the blissful expressiveness of the Sun. This is how we come straight to the doorstep of the Way of Love, which tells us that

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<sup>842</sup> See Erich Fromm’s *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, Henry Holt & Co., New York, NY (1973).

<sup>843</sup> Listen to Coldplay’s *Yellow* on Parachutes, Capitol (2000).

only if we faithfully follow the missionary path of our being, the signs that point in the direction of which are scattered like stardust across the dainty chamber of our heart, can we engage ourselves in social interaction through which people around us will be healed and beautified in holy spirit. If truth be told, should our acts be driven by empathy, having us incessantly look at the world from the eyes of another and constantly searching for the ways to satisfy other people's thirsts and spiritual desires while neglecting to act in harmony with the inner voice reverberating within our heart, we may end up being a meek and loving creature, but never able to release the godly creative powers from the core of our being and enlighten the face of the world therewith. On the other hand, if we decide to be one who only listens to the inner voice of one's own, irrespective of how divinely devotional our intentions may be, and yet neglects to find precious time to compassionately gaze at the world from other people's eyes, we will eventually burst like a balloon pumped up by an intensive energy from within, but unable to channel it outwardly, for the sake of beautifying the worldviews of others therewith. In the end, we may realize that this moving back and forth between the careful listening to the music of our heart and running empathically to see how the world looks from the eyes of another feed on each other; that living so as to satisfy other people's spiritual cravings eventually illuminates the way forward inside ourselves, whereas following the voice of our own heart leads us to develop starry powers that impel us to strew others with the beauty divine. This message, of course, resonates well with the verses scribbled down on a piece of primrose paper by Alexander Pope almost three centuries ago: "On their own Axis as the Planets run, yet make at once their circle round the Sun; so two consistent motions act the Soul; and one regards Itself, and one the Whole. Thus God and Nature linked the gen'ral frame, and bade Self-love and Social be the same"<sup>844</sup>. The poet flying high on the wings of these thoughts perhaps wished to tell us that pious inwardness and the bounciness and amicability of angels are the stems of each other's fruits because genuine descents into the depths of our being always give us a powerful outward push and a momentum that catapults us to the other side, the side of social engagement that inspires and illuminates the nearby souls, whereas the sincere sociability and chaste expressiveness are such that they always stimulate fruitful introspection by magically unbolting the gates leading into the darkest and the dustiest chambers of our inner abode. As such, he unknowingly grazed the surface of the monument to the Way of Love that is being built here, line by line, sentence by sentence, whim by whim. And it is the Christ's words once again that are now free to reverberate in their eternal meaningfulness all around us: "When you make one out of two, and when you make inside as outside, and outside as inside, then you will enter the Kingdom of God" (Thomas 22).

Inspired by these words, on one of the nights when I would jump from one starlit rooftop to another in my skinny pants, like a Peter Pan of the modern age, I sprayed the writings on the wall, "And then everything turned itself inside out..."<sup>845</sup>, letting the painted message bleed with its sprouting relevancy to the spiritually frozen passersby. When I was little, my Indian Mom taught me a trick to perform whenever an eyelash entered my eye: "Pull it inside out three times". And so, the same recipe can be applied to any impressions that incite intense feelings within our hearts: we should turn our insides out and let our hearts freely bleed on the surface of our being, while at the same time pulling the outsides inwardly, straight into center of the open

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<sup>844</sup> See Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Man*, Epistle III, lines 313 – 318, The Library of Liberal Arts, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, NY (1731), pp. 40.

<sup>845</sup> 'tis a take on the title of Yo La Tengo's quietest record, *And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside-Out*, which itself is a line found in a Sun Ra's poem in prose. See Wikipedia article on Yo La Tengo's *And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside-Out* retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/And\\_Then\\_Nothing\\_Turned\\_Itself\\_Inside-Out](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/And_Then_Nothing_Turned_Itself_Inside-Out) (2018).

flower of our heart, ready to absorb these impressions with an infinite wonder, trust and empathy. The same message then reminds me of how a true star of spirit likewise turns itself inside out all until its beautifully glowing and rainbow-colored essence emerges on the surface, dazzling the viewers with its celestial beauty, spinning in front of the spectators' eyes like a cosmic carousel and reaching the ideals of perfect expression thereby. For, only when we completely turn ourselves inside out, when we crave to give to the world all that we have, all until we become perfectly poor in spirit, would we begin to live to the fullest of the divine potentials instilled in us and stream unstoppably toward the kingdom of God. However, the real star of spirit does not forget to simultaneously turn itself outside in too, empathically absorbing a slew of little impressions enwrapped in the waves of the divine love radiating from its heart and sending them inwardly, towards the mouth of the mine of its spirit wherein these outer, raw impressions will be processed into precious gems that will ornament the inner palaces of this spirit and used to produce an ever greater luster and shine of its insides when they reappear on the surface again during this incessant spinning of the magical wheel of her starry being. For, with such spinning inside out and outside in, the star turns itself into a divine wheel that leaves each and every one in speechless amazement over the celestial beauty that unfolds in all its lush in front of their eyes. With the essence of one's being floating on the surface, one also becomes subtle and delicately sensitive, almost as if one's heart has turned into a lotus flower that opened its petals, welcoming all and everyone straight into its essence. One thus recognizes the infinitely rich sources of beautiful and soul-enriching insights flickering in the world around us from all sides and angles, as if we were standing in the middle of a meadow filled with glowworms on a warm summer night, the scene which I could not take my eyes off for a whole hour when I witnessed it in Potsdam, NY, many, many years ago. With the essence of ours emerging on the surface during this spinning of the wheel of our celestial being inside out and the other way around, we lightly absorb impressions from the outer space, which then efficiently feed the inner glow of our spirit, resulting in ever more beautiful shows of delightful expressions. As evidenced many times before, empathically uniting our views with those of the surrounding creatures and details of our experiential reality enlightens the way inward, towards enkindling the flame of inner creativeness, imaginativeness and beauty, whilst releasing these inner treasures of our spirit outwardly makes us see ever greater beauty in life around us.

The Way of Love thus tells us that our mind has to attain a balance between the states of meditative inwardness and empathic expressiveness if it is to become the source of bedazzling blasts of creativity in the world. A state of perfect compassionateness and unreserved oneness with the world would imply our streaming passively with the flow, moving in the direction determined by other people's desires, aims and aspirations. Although one such state of mind may prove to be very inspiring for a certain period of time, in the long run it would exhaust our inner sources of creativity, and if not listened, the voice from the inside, reverberating with the divine paths that we ought to take, would shut itself off and become barely audible. On the other hand, of course, listening solely to this inner voice and tending only after accomplishing our own missions in life would gradually make us insensitive to the surrounding people and, thus, compassionless and deeply dissatisfied. After all, we can never expect to change neither ourselves nor the world for better if we constantly dwell in either one of these extreme states. These two paths, the inner and the outer, the one that builds our selfness, introspectiveness and sanity and the other that fosters our empathy, expressiveness and communicability are to be walked on in parallel because sooner or later we would realize that signs on one of the paths point at the vital need to follow the other path and *vice versa*. This, in a nutshell, is the essence of

the Way of Love. Only by leaving enough room for sane introspections and meditative insights in the starry space of our wondrous mind can we sustain our power to love and creatively give to the world. And on the other hand, only by stretching the arms of our spirit forward, so as to freely give the essence of our being to the world, can we open up the way inside, leading to the greatest insights of who we are, where we come from and where we ought to be heading to in order to become a true star of spirit.



But how do I become **a star**? This has been a question resounding from the farthest ranges of infinity, a mantra imagined to have been held in the heads of all poets, muses, saints and deities from the past, present and future, a prayer sensed to awaken the divinest powers in a human being, the drawing of a resplendent, but also small and narrow road to enlightenment during the writing of this manual, which now reveals itself as an attempt to provide one out of an infinitude of possible answers to this question. Summing up the ages of human wonder about the missionary meaning of our lives on this planet, this question has been the one that could awaken the wondrous starry skies of my vivacious mind, in their greatest splendor, at any given moment. Whenever I would spin it in my head, an awareness of the polarity composed of a Sun of oneness on one side and swarms of stars on the other would arise in me. For, the parallel fosterage of unity and diversity is what any harmonious and sustainable evolution on this planet has to be prepared to exert.

First of all, what I believe in is that everyone is predisposed to become a Christ-like star in life. Whenever I look at the sun-like appearance of a cooked egg, with the sunshiny ball of yellow residing inside its core and the saintly white aureole surrounding it, I get reminded that everyone truly has the right ingredients inside one to become a sunny star of spirit, an endless source of inspiration for the world and gods alike. Since this luminous core is dormant in each and every one of us, plunging deep inside it in meditation and introspective thought is a vital track that leads to the sprouting and the emergence of these divine potentials outwardly, while opening our heart and senses to absorb and unite with the enchanting details of the world and the worldviews of the souls inhabiting it presents the other track along which the train of our spirit is ought to travel along this majestic ride to stars, according to the Way of Love. Spreading our arms outwardly, so as to bring the world around us closer and unite ourselves therewith in empathic curiosity, while keeping our heart quiet and humble, meditative and partially withdrawn, as much as open and radiant, is the stance that the Way of Love has instructed us to adopt. And when we do succeed in that, we may realize that there is nothing other but the image of the crucified Christ that is emblematic in it.

As we watch a dancing silhouette on a starry night, all sparkling with “grace and truth”, the recipe the Christ gave to Mary Magdalene according to ancient Gnostic writings<sup>846</sup>, shedding beauty that enchants and makes us gaze at it untiringly, like a lively ocean, and yet graciously dropping guiding signs that strike us with their inspiration and relevancy for our lives, we may recall what the recipe to become a superstar is. To put it simply, it is to be who one is, without much pretension and phoniness, but at the same time to feel as if one is striving to reach for the stars in one’s monumental aspirations to deliver inspiring words, music and moves to the world.

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<sup>846</sup> See Pistis Sophia translated by George Robert Stow Mead, J. M. Watkins, London, UK (1921).

It is to know that spiritual constancy, the inner stillness of our spirit, the center of the Taoist wheel of our being has to be kept in touch with incessantly, while at the same time knowing that the only way to keep in touch with oneself, to be true to one's essence is to freely undergo a process of change that life naturally brings. It is to listen to the simple advice my Mom gave me when I asked her what she would love to see me become in life, "What you are", and correspondingly live up to that monumental "I am that I am" (Exodus 3:14) recipe that is a route to attaining divineness in our ways of being, striving to let every move of ours be hatched from that celestial egg nested in the center of our spiritual being, in perfect trueness to oneself, but also to lift our heart, in all its humble humanness, to a higher plane whereon it would palpitate and shimmer with every emotional wave traversing the neighboring hearts, sympathizing with them all unconditionally, knowing that no constancy could be preserved but through constant change nor could intimacy of the touch with one's deepest self be retained without losing oneself constantly by becoming one with each and every heart encountered on the way and fulfilling the famous St. Augustine's premise, *Ex Pluribus Unum*<sup>847</sup>: Out of Many, One. As such, one naturally embodies the magic blend of Love, which spreads from the heavenly heights of one's mind downwards, to the earthly reigns and makes one embrace the foundations of one's humaneness, and Wonder, which spreads from one's earthliness upwards, to the very stars, transcending one's human fragileness and infusing the eternal and limitless in one. Thereupon, one shows signs of deep and humble humaneness, but of unearthly grace and starriness too at the same time, living up to the ideal that Love is staying, but also appearing to be walking propelled by Wonder along a shiny road of one's heart that leads to blissful horizons, as many dancers, artists, sages and other superstars who have walked along this majestic trail would agree. For, after all, only with such a grandiose Love that enlightens our heart and acts as gentle hands that hold kites of our spirit firmly and prevent them from flying away in their fanciful wonder and adventurous thirst can we arrive at wonderful treasures along these wonderful journeys of ours that bring us closer to stars. Of course, to balance being oneself, unpretentiously, with striving for the stars, pretentiously, will sooner or later bring us close to the cliffs of imbalance on one or the other side. However, there are angelic hands of Nature that never sleep and that mysteriously guide us and keep us on the Way of Love at each moment of our lives. Thereby, whenever we become too much like others in our empathy and objectivistic reflection of other people's feelings and panoramas of thought, the circumstances will work in the direction of restoring our uniqueness through anchoring our attention inwardly, tying it to the ocean depths of the inner world of our emotions, thoughts and the meditative contact with the divine. But also, whenever we become so original and unique that our expressions become too solipsistic, distant from other people's feelings and intellectual capacities, without being able to find compassionate and understanding spirits in the world, the angelic powers of Nature will open the ways that bring us closer to people's hearts and immerse us in the charms of being humanly equal to them.

Hence, to be one with oneself and yet to be one with many is the way of the stars. Indeed, stars always seem to reside in multitude, yet spaces between them are immense. Seen from a larger perspective, they appear to be dancing around each other in their fascinating orbits, yet when we look closer, we realize that most of them live alone, separated by enormous distances.

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<sup>847</sup> This phrase ends the eight chapter of the Book No. 4 of St. Augustine's Confessions: "These and the like expressions, proceeding out of the hearts of those that loved and were loved again, by the countenance, the tongue, the eyes, and a thousand pleasing gestures, were so much fuel to melt our souls together, and out of many make but one". See the version of Augustine of Hippo's Confessions (AD 398) translated by Edward B. Pusey and retrieved from <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/augustine/confess.txt>.

Still, their rays of light are interminably reaching each other, igniting sparkles of starry wonder in one another and thus sustaining each other's glow. Thus, although they may appear lonely and distant, millions of light years apart from others stars of the night sky, just as most of those inhabiting the Milky Way, including the Sun, are<sup>848</sup>, they still attract with their silky shininess and mysterious radiance. Even though they may be far away from us and come into view as petite and merely slightly twinkly, we should be sure that there are worlds that they inspire so much that they passionately rotate around them so as to profit from their light. Despite their seeming distantness, stars are able to momentarily establish empathic connections with any other star or planet entering their orbit, as well as with any passing icy comet or rocky asteroid, melting them with their love on the way and turning them into shooting stars or showers of light that decorate the nightly, wondering skies of human minds.

As we look close into the eyes of one such spiritual star drifting across the face of the Earth, we would have an impression of simultaneous receptiveness and alertness that enchant anything that attracts her attention with the sunny rays of empathy meltingly directed onto it. At the same time, we would realize that a starry dreaminess dwells therein, yielding an impression of the person's not being here at all, but rather flying on the wings of one's fancy across some distant cosmic landscapes. Able to magically awaken the soft waves of Love and the graceful shimmer of Wonder in the starry pools of human eyes with every single glance, and yet appearing untouchably distant, as if each act of hers emerges from the darkest and the most remote outer spaces, having home in galaxies far, far away from this world, ready to turn around at any given moment, make a hushed pirouette and jumpily, like a moonlit pan, a boy and a girl in one, begin to blow the soap bubbles in which Hermann Hesse saw a symbol of frivolous inconstancy<sup>849</sup>, leaving only a whip of air of ineffable excitement in the wake of its turn, she is. Combining all of Degas' Four Ballerinas Behind the Stage into one, she embodies the celestial Wonder that moves galaxies and stars with her graceful gesticulation, resembling a child that bears no malice or the burden of intense reflections, a child that has succeeded in finding a peaceful coexistence within the home of her heart for the two pulls that rupture the spirit of every infant from the inside: (a) away from the surrounding souls and into the waters of independence, where every act begins to arise from the depths of her soul solely, and (b) into soft snuggles of sympathy with the neighboring hearts that resound the thunderous vibe of the all-pervading cosmic energy all around her. One such utterly inspiring personality resembles a sunny parachute that shields some mysterious, cosmic peacefulness in the midst of a buzzing social environment wherein people mostly lack this powerful intimate touch with their stellar cores, being overly obsessed with satisfying each other's expectations, thereby wasting precious potentials of their infinitely potent divine cognitive cores, to which most of people are, in fact, blind. One such creature appears as if there is an invisible thread that vertically stretches across one's body axis and connects one with the starry spaces above. Immune to any kudos or criticisms from the surrounding world, she makes an island out of herself, never ceasing to burn the bridges instead of compromising her creativeness by obeying the authorities of the world, whoever they may be, listening faithfully all the while to the divine voices that echo across the insides of her heart, while still fully living so as to bring light and redemption to every single creature on this planet. As such, a genuine tourist in this world she is, an unearthly, out-of-this-world creature streaming through its spaces while never becoming attached to the earthly treasures, thus avoiding the curse

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<sup>848</sup> See Ker Than's Scientists Rewrite Guide to Milky Way Galaxy, retrieved from [http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11591902/ns/technology\\_and\\_science-space](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11591902/ns/technology_and_science-space) (2006).

<sup>849</sup> See Hermann Hesse's Soap Bubbles, available at <http://shonpapi.tumblr.com/post/267621878/soap-bubbles>.

that most earthlings sooner or later fall into traps of. Detachment is a key feature that directors and painters have looked for in their actresses and models<sup>850</sup>, and our muse, a star on earth, embodies it in heaps, sinking ever deeper into herself in order to mesmerize and touch the nearby hearts ever deeper. Exactly because she is unattached to anything around her and merely space-bound, devotionally holding onto the music divine that plays in her chests, she is able to hop from one planet of human worldviews to another, like the Little Prince does, empathizing with each and every one of them and bringing some starry insights to their reign, spontaneously ornamenting them with some celestial beauty on the way.

As the Way of Love tells us, to become a star one needs to reside deep within oneself, to focus onto the core of one's being where the fusion of elements, driven by the meditative motivation to see all things as One, is carried out for the sake of producing luminescent energy, which is then sent into outer space. If this energy is produced in large enough quantities, the bursts of light will be sent out, no matter what. There would be no barrier to suppress this explosion of warmhearted emotions forged within our heart. Irrespective of what we do or say, this inner shine will find the way out, breaking apart all the fences and obstacles posed on its way and being revealed in its fullness to the world. Even the words and acts that tend to dress us in the clothes of sheer blasphemy had they been interpreted based on their superficial meanings would be turned into the most charming and enlightening ones if they are carried out with the light of love illuminating the core of our being. Then, when we are out there, on the stage of life, even the squealing feedback noise that tends to deafen and horrify ordinary listeners will turn out to be the sound of opening heavy and rusty gates, locked for a long time in front of many, enabling them to glimpse enchanting worldviews that stretch behind those doors in inexplicable majesty for as long as wonder and love illuminate our being and send their glow from our insides outwardly, washing the face of the world with their holy waters, which, we know, are always partly sea-salty tears of compassion and partly joyful water-park droplets on which beings of the world can surf and slide in exhilarating happiness. Hence, should our insides be tuned to twinkle with Wonder by precisely setting the visions, ideas and emotions of ours into inspiring celestial configurations, while producing also sunshiny bursts of Love in our heart, there would be no dams posed in front of us that could suppress the "bleeding" of the sacred rivers of our being onto the surface of our world. They would bless and beautify it with a mysterious healing energy that opens the white petals of the pure and visionary lotus flowers of our minds and let the blue ocean of our hearts be released, fully flowing outwardly all until it floods the surrounding world therewith and make a New Atlantis, with mermaids, dolphins, sleepy ships, sunken treasures and pearls and bubbles of an aquatic enlightenment, in our eyes out of it. Yet, we should know that without this living inside, a star, spiritual or night sky one alike, would not live to the fullest of its potentials and would become dimmer and dimmer over time, eventually turning into a faint red giant or a cold neutron star, disappearing from the face of the sky of the world.

This may be the reason why Bob Dylan proposed his landmark song, Desolation Row, for the national anthem; in it, some of the greatest and most inspiring mindsets from the history of humanity were depicted as peeking at the world from imaginative landscapes of their inner solitude, never fully embracing the world in their warmhearted openness, but always leaving room for meditative withdrawnness that keeps the inner flames of their creativity enkindled. In times in which too much respect of the authorities of the world, be they seen in one's friends, parents or peers, has suffocated the intimacy of the touch with the inner missionary music of one's own being, this rock 'n' roll prophet served as the voice of a generation by calling in this

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<sup>850</sup> Watch *When Evening Falls on Bucharest* or *Metabolism* directed by Corneliu Porumboiu (2013).

homage of his to “America the Beautiful”<sup>851</sup> for more of the meditative withdrawnness and eventual carelessness regarding what others will have to say in regard to one’s actions in the world, as in concert with André Gide’s motto, “It is better to be hated for what one is than to be loved for something one is not”, as well as the popular adage saying that “what you think of yourself is much more important than what people think of you”. After all, ever since the birth of the narrative arts, most of their ethical contents revolved around the question posed by the British movie director, Mike Leigh: “Who is the real you and who the persona defined by other people’s expectations or preconceptions?”<sup>852</sup> Remember in this context that relentlessly and heedlessly going against the established values and expectations of our surrounding, in anything we do, is to no lesser extent indicative of our being enslaved by them than doing all to conform to them, and at the end of the day it can only transform us into a desperate walking epitome of Jean-Luc Godard’s *Weekend*, the movie in which the French film critic went against almost every single feature of the Hollywood blockbusters of his times, relying on read declarations and monologues instead of natural dialogues, starting off not with benevolent heroes who wish to save the world but with utterly mean characters who crave to destroy each other, ceaselessly dissecting the continuity of the story with random visual passages, occasionally repeating parts of the scenes, a big no-no in any movie industry, letting the camera wander off and then come back to the scene for no apparent reason, intruding the plot with odd intertitles, and so forth – a destination by no means worthwhile settling on. Utterly inspiring and genuine acts are, in fact, always born from the cocktail of the common and the unique and carry on this heritage of theirs in all of their facets. And just like Odysseus had to navigate between the monsters of Scylla and Charybdis on his epic journey through the narrow strait of Messina, that tiny space between the ball of Sicily and the tip of the boot of the Apennine Peninsula, so does one’s seeking the answer to this question take one dangerously close to the rock shoals on which one’s creativity could be smashed if only one subdues the inner voice of reason to cravings to unquestioningly obey the worldly authorities, whoever they may be, as well as close to the solipsistic whirlpools of withdrawnness from the society and the rupture of all the cordial connections between our and other people’s hearts, with the aim, of course, as told to us by the Way of Love, being to find a midway route, respectfully disrespectful, as some may say, and saliently sail along its course. For, although a sense of Big Brother of some imaginary authority monitoring our acts can indeed instill a sense of stability and safety in our moves and mental states, it ultimately presents merely a crutch onto which our crippled and insecurely secure – rather than securely insecure - spirit leans as it crawls through the world. For it to fly again across the worldly skies, it has to rip up any artificial, self-preservation-oriented threads that keep it submissively and idolatrously tied to the sinkers of authorities of one type or another, from the parents to the preachers to the lovers to the peers to the social or professional leaders and trendsetters to the masters and overseers, and plunge deep into the core of one’s being where the only guiding voice to act in harmony with, the one of the divine spirit dormant in us, resides. If the perpetual failure of humanly established courts, councils and committees to demarcate destructive ideologists from the unpretentious humanists and pretenders from genuine strivers for beauty and freedom can teach us something, it is that only when we cut ties with the worldly judgments and become an absolute nonconformist in spirit can we expect to have the doors to the utmost outpours of the river flows

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<sup>851</sup> See Greil Marcus’ *Like a Rolling Stone: Bob Dylan at the Crossroads*, Public Affairs, New York, NY (2005), pp. 172.

<sup>852</sup> See Anthony Frost’s and Ralph Yarrow’s *Improvisation in Drama: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY (2007), pp. 39.

and waterfalls of creativity from the essence of our being, the seat of our soul, open. To be encouraged to think with one's own head and crave to express oneself before all as well as to be constantly inspired to conceive of that single thing that one and only one can produce in the world instead of getting subdued to the peer pressure and starting to follow the crowd and float inertly down the mainstream have, consequently, been my tireless advices to students, in the midst of which I have known that by motivating them for this self-expression I have been subliminally painting the bleak world of science in the colors of art, the creative domain where the quintessential goal is to express oneself as veritably and intensely as possible. This imbuelement of science with the spirit of art has crystallized over time as the most sublime task posed before myself, the task that is that one and only that only I, among every other scientist I have encountered in life, could accomplish properly in this world where - as exemplified by my instructing the students to seek that one and only thing in the world that they can do and thereby clarifying the vision of the one and only thing that I can do in it - the path one lays before others becomes the path lain before one, too. After all, the very concept of the Way propagated all across the pages of this book implies a decisive pursuance of one's own way, the missionary road inscribed on the most subterranean seabed on one's soul, with no regard of the temptations to crook it by conforming to petty social streams of numbly unimaginative ways of being and thought that challenge it from behind every natural bend of it in this pantheistic fairytale called life; for, only one such inner way takes us to the holiest depths of the hearts of fellow souls, the probing of which, in turn, deepens the divine spaces dormant in us, and so on. Of course, one thing that I warn students about to complement this advice to seek that one and only thing in the world that they can do and then do everything to do it right is that when one indeed does engage in this singular and unique task, because it is so different from everything else and does not align with any trends out there, it is indubitably going to provoke massive disparagements of one by these mainstreamers and one better be prepared to face the dire consequences of social exclusion and marginalization. Because, as it appears to me, the more unique one's point of view, the greater the degree of its diversion from standards and norms and, thus, the greater the probability of one's facing callous derision and being denounced as a lunatic by the society. Now, that obeying the will of gods whose voices echo between the wallpapers of our soul implies disobedience of stale social norms is an age-old ethical problem, dating back to Sophocles' Antigone<sup>853</sup>, a rebel maid who sacrificed her life at societal stake to defend the divine laws on Earth, and continuing to exercise its relevancy on daily basis in the head of every social creature, which, needless to add, anyone reading these words ineluctably is. It is exactly for these reasons that the teaching of St. Paul the Apostle, who had placed the love for the neighbor and the sense of brotherhood at a higher pedestal compared to the inward, prayerful love for God (Galatians 5:14), was heavily criticized at times, including by such philosophical likes as Friedrich Nietzsche, Leo Tolstoy, Bertrand Russell and Ammon Hennacy. All this time, though, the key has lain on the middle ground between prayerful inwardness and charitable agency. And balancing this inner focus, which resembles a sort of gravity that every star experiences, with an inherent openness to the world, which makes the release of the inner shine possible, is, of course, embedded deep in the secret of the Way of Love. Standing in-between the two commandments declared by the Christ as the two ultimate ones (Mark 12:29-34), one focusing inwards, on the meditative and prayerful love of God, and the other one spreading outwards, reaching out to stand in empathic unison with the surrounding creatures of the world, holding on to both of them

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<sup>853</sup> See Albin Lebsky's *Die Griechische Tregodie* (1964) as the introduction to Sophocles' *Antigone* (340 BC), *Svjetlost*, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (1990).

at the same time, though without leaning onto one while neglecting the others, with crystal clearness epitomizes the balance of the Way of Love. And every time we enter a prayerful state of mind and begin our descent into the center of the Sun of our shiny spirit, the lantern to illuminate the way to salvation for worldly souls lost in the spiritual darkness of our mundane lives, driven by the Christ's first commandment, all so as to forge the fusion of many little impressions and memories that roam around our ardent head into sacred oneness whereby powerful streams of enlightening energy are released, distancing ourselves to come close to all-pervading divinities, never losing out of sight that "everything is he"<sup>854</sup>, the ultimate mantra of Persian poets and mystics, and that our lives can have purpose only insofar as we "die before we die"<sup>855</sup>, so to speak, and annihilate ourselves to bring light to the world of another, driven by the Christ's second commandment, our being becomes an authentic embodiment of the Way of Love.

Having mentioned the desolation rows of inner silence dwelled in by the most creative spirits that have adorned the Earth with their celestial presence, I bring to mind a spontaneously conducted and, some may say, trivial experiment that involved befriending a person previously unmet in person and adding her to the circle of friends on one of the online social network sites. Initially I was impressed by the imaginativeness of her posts, but then, when I finally managed to hear her voice over the phone first and then meet her in person, I realized that her vocal and bodily expressions were far less original and creative than the textual ones. This prompted me to seek the reason for this, and what I believe, as of the very moment I encountered this discrepancy, is that writing is most of the time done by involving a far greater inward immersion of the subject's awareness, which, as you may assume by now, leads to a greater potential inventiveness of the resulting expressions. Compared to them, the oral and body language expressions are more complex, which leaves room for their transformation into something far more original too, and yet this was not the case in this behavioral experiment. For, unlike the act of writing, which is performed with the relative freeness from the immediate need to conform to behavioral standards, speaking and physical movement are done with our being much less inside of our minds and much more out there, in the social space, where we tend to spontaneously turn into slaves of public norms and expectations, which naturally results in more predictable and less imaginative expressions by their means. This is how we can conclude that the deeper we dive into the sea of our spirit and release ourselves from the bondages set by the ghosts of conformism in us, all until we start to resemble Pierre Bonnard's *Gray Nude in Profile*, with a veil of meditative inwardness over her face and a poise that awakens the otherworldly beauty of divine dreaminess, the greater the pearls of enchanting expressions we would be able to bring over to the surface of our being. For, when we discover the pantheon of beauty inside of ourselves and begin to ceaselessly hang around its garlanded lounges through which the muses of grace, love and eternal wonderment pass in their airy glide, any action performed, be it a subtlest wink or shift of our silhouette in the sunlight, will be just about enough to enlighten the world and inspire its creatures in an unutterably powerful manner.

Now, although we may be tempted to think that by withdrawing our attention inwardly, partially away from the creatures around us who crave to be loved and strewn with the stardust of utterly inspiring, divine acting, the extent to which we could beautify the world will suffer, it

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<sup>854</sup> See Annemarie Schimmel's *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC (1975), pp. 147. See also William C. Chittick's *Sufism: A Beginner's Guide*, Oneworld, Oxford, UK (2000), pp. 92.

<sup>855</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135. See also William C. Chittick's *Sufism: A Beginner's Guide*, Oneworld, Oxford, UK (2000), pp. 108.

is not so. For, meditatively placing a veil of mystery between our inner world and the social clique that surrounds us like a most enchanting and colorful carousel of being we could think of is the key to sustaining the creativity of our expressive outflows. In that sense, we could recall the following words with which Ernst Fritz Schumacher ended one of the chapters of his *Guide for the Perplexed*: “I am called upon to ‘love my neighbor as myself’, but I cannot love him at all (except sensually or sentimentally) unless I have loved myself sufficiently to embark on the journey of development as described. How can I love and help him as long as I have to say, with Saint Paul: ‘My own behavior baffles me. For I find myself not doing what I really want to do but doing what I really loathe’? In order to become capable of loving and helping my neighbor as well as myself, I am called upon to ‘love God’, that is, strenuously and patiently to keep my mind straining and stretching toward the highest things, to Levels of Being above my own. Only there lies ‘goodness’ for me”<sup>856</sup>. In other words, abiding deep within the inner realms of the microcosm of our emotions and thoughts, wondering over the nature of reality with all our heart and searching for the guiding voice of the divine within the core of our spirit - as embodied in the Christ’s commandment calling for an incessant communication with God - conditions our ability to deliver acts that beautify the world with an inexhaustible creativity – as epitomized in the commandment outlining the need for all our creative acts to be oriented towards enlightening others. As a matter of fact, such was the Christ’s emphasis on the former commandment that he inaugurated it as the first and the greatest (Matthew 22:36-38), possibly insinuating that by resting with our attention deep within the core of our spirit, by happily walking along the beautiful seashores drawn by our imagination, leaping from one pillar of the cognitive foundations of our views of the world to the next, gazing at the sun of love and stars of wonder that ornament our spirit, all acts delivered outwardly will send sparkles of enlightenment all over the fields of the world, irrespective of how an ordinary observer would interpret the purpose of our acts by grazing their surface only with the rays of his attention.

As I lay down in the corpse pose, watching the early morning clouds rolling over the murky Calcutta skies, I recollected the feeling shared by the fresh attendees of Yoga sessions or any other spiritually oriented gatherings, which is the one of a strange combination of cosmic distantness and empathic closeness of the masters of the given arts. But what the eyes of the wise recognize in this encounter of seemingly irreconcilable opposites in these enlightened mindsets is nothing but the sunrise of the Way of Love above a seascape whereupon the waves of compassionate melancholy shimmer and the stars of unbound, stellar and sparkly joy twinkle. Crowned with an aureole of stars, as distant and untouchable as they could be, and yet sending sunshiny rays of attention that melt human hearts and mysteriously illuminate the way forward for each and every one, these gurus succeed in blending a captivating remoteness that promotes a sense of peaceful and autonomous search for enlightenment in the heads of their followers with a sense of protection, amity and indestructible relatedness to each and every heartbeat and physical impulse that fills the Universe. They surely must know that just like parents who give in to each and every whim of their child tend to raise whiny brats, so is it with teachers and all other exemplars in life that satisfy every intellectual thirst of their adherents with the right answer, never building the wailing walls of distance to complement the unconditional sunrays of love poured ceaselessly over their followers: they produce helplessly needy mindsets easily moldable by the authorities and destined to drown in the mainstreams of passive acceptance of whatever the social trends are, rather than thinking with their own heads and, self-empowered, travelling upstream, against the current, a prerequisite for fulfilling the otherworldly potentials dormant in

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<sup>856</sup> See Ernst Fritz Schumacher’s *A Guide for the Perplexed*, Harper & Row, New York, NY (1977), pp. 135 - 136.

us. The Christ thus, for example, had the divine ability to hold human hearts so intimately close that their dry and craggy coasts would feel washed over by the healing waves of love radiated from the ocean of his heart, while at the same time he potentiated the importance of distantness and belonging to realms lying far away from the planet on which he walked, breathed and empathized with fellow earthlings. That is why he exclaimed the following words during his monologue in the Garden of Gethsemane: “I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17:14). Hereby he clearly pointed at the origins of all saintly acts in the realms that lie beyond the ordinary physical planes of our beings, in the silent starry spaces of our soul. For, meditative connectedness with the divine lights within us is nothing short of essential for our efforts to successfully bear signs that will orient others towards enlightening ways. This thought resonates with the ruminations on the heavenly order that came out of Aristotle’s pen more than thirty-three hundred years ago: “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”<sup>857</sup>. Hence, the sign engraved above the altar of the Church of Saint Anthony of Padua in Belgrade, not far from my home, a fabulous architectural piece towards which I headed every catholic Christmas, hand-in-hand with my Mom, to endear to us the child in heart that the Christ in us is, as depicted in the meandering set of nativity figures and figurines: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32). For, to distance oneself from the world and levitate above it, together with seraphs and sirens of one’s fancy, all the while remaining in the state of outmost empathic intimacy therewith, is a prerequisite for undergoing that magical transformation from a reckless river into a sea of spirit and become a place wherein all the creeks, runnels and rivulets of this world can find their solace.

With this partial dwelling of our awareness within the deepest crypts of our psyche, where we recollect memories, introspectively reflect on our ideals and images and draw threads that connect us with the divine energies through prayer and meditation, we do not become distant and unable to relate to the beings of this world, but quite the opposite: our interaction with them becomes pervaded with inexhaustible doses of creativeness thanks to our giving the shine forged deep inside us to them. Should we become driven by the idea that only the empathic unison with the worldviews of others and our existing merely so as to serve their spiritual aims is the point, without ever invoking the need to spend time listening to the music of the orbits of our own spirit, during which the missionary path of our being becomes laid on the canvas of our heart and mind, we would stray from the Way of Love and tumble into the impasse of its objectivistic terminal, which is, by the way, where most dwellers of the modern world reside. In such a way, many of us may be tempted to think that a perfectly honest communication is the way to go. But, alas, we would then merely resemble Dostoyevsky’s Idiot, having exclaimed all our aspirations and desires and, thus, never getting to fulfill them in reality. For instance, even though one’s ultimate ideal may be to live so as to enlighten a creature dear to one, should one decide to explicate this ideal literally, word by word, to the given creature, one may never have a chance to truly fulfill this aspiration. On the other hand, by keeping this sacred wish hidden deep inside of one, surrounded and protected by the concentric circles of one’s consciousness, like a seed swaddled with the layers of warm and sodden soil and not exposed to air, which threatens to make it infertile, one would let it sprout and produce the desired fruits one day. What enables

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<sup>857</sup> See Aristotle’s *On the Heavens*, Book I, Part 2, Translated by J. L. Stocks (4<sup>th</sup> Century BC), retrieved from <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/heavens.html>.

one to keep these sacred aspirations in the long run partially secret and fertile as such is exactly the guiding star of the Way of Love blazing within one's mind. Thus, to display the outbursts of bedazzling creativity while acting in communion with others, we need to stand deeply withdrawn and distant with respect to them as much as to be intimately tied to the inaudible music of their spirits, as if walking along a thin thread extended between the essence of our own heart and those of others.

Now, as opposed to the imbalance resulting from one's exceeding tendency to empathize with others on the account of neglecting the inner voice of one's being, if the star lives inside but tends to keep its energy all to itself, resisting the need to send it out to the outer space and the planets that crave for it, it could either turn into a black hole, provided that the star is massive enough, or might eventually explode like a supernova, losing its integrity and dissipating its essence once and for all through the great Cosmos. In both cases, the balance between the inward pull of attention, whereby the shiny spiritual energy, ready to be sent out to cosmic spaces, is formed and the outward pull whereby this energy crafted inside is expressively radiated all around us, the balance which we have named the Way of Love, is being ruptured at the cost of disturbed inner harmony of the being in question. Truly, if you have ever placed your hands on the head of a creature while it is in a mentally and/or emotionally agitated state, as I have done many times of the Little Bear's, you may have noticed how its brain feels steaming hot and the surface coldish and mildly sweaty, as if the core of one's being is withdrawing the energy from the surface to its core, suppressing its release to the world outside. On the other hand, the aura surrounding a saintly mind like a glowing crown composed of millions of suns, depicting the mysterious healing bio-energy that an enlightened creature sends in the air by her very being, reflects their balanced nature wherein the force that pulls the precious impressions and insights inside, to be forged into a powerful flame of spirit, equals the force that sends this inner energy outwardly, so as to bless and sanctify every piece of the world around her.

In one of Christ's many parables, he tells us about a man taken to his master after it was found out that he had squandered a certain amount of money. When he was told that he needed to pay for the money he had irrationally spent, the servant fell on the ground and began to beg for mercy. The king was compassionate enough to forgive him. However, having left the king's palace, the servant went straight to another servant who owed him money and ordered him to repay him immediately lest he be sent to prison. When this other servant began to cry for forgiveness, the servant to whom the king had earlier forgiven had no mercy and ordered the punishment to be enforced. When the king heard what had happened, he was angry at the wicked servant and "delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him" (Matthew 18:34). "Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee" (Matthew 18:33), said the king, and the Christ finalizes the story by saying, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (Matthew 18:35). This story depicts exactly those who, when alone, tend to be in an intimate relationship with the divine voice dwelling within their deepest cores, but become merciless and cruel as soon as they face another human creature, living out of touch with the Way of Love, overly shifted to its solipsistic, meditative pole and away from its objectivistic, empathic one. Thus, on one hand, with a whole lot of reason did Pascal make the beautiful following lines be a part of the first out of a thousand or so of his *pensées*: "Jesus wants his witness to be nothing. The quality of witnesses is such that they must exist always,

everywhere and wretched. He is alone”<sup>858</sup>. It is as if the French mathematician and theologian wished to denote that a step inside, into the center of the dome of our consciousness under which the divine voice resonates with deafening magnificence, eclipsing the echo coming from the expectations of the surrounding clique and the irksome glint of the censorious eyes gawking at us, presents the first one on the long journey towards becoming a Christ-like soul on Earth. This central precept in his existential philosophy coincided with one of the ancient Egyptian inscriptions that Beethoven kept framed and mounted on his worktable: “He is of himself alone, and it is to this aloneness that all things owe their being”<sup>859</sup>. Bob Dylan may have wished to make the same point as Pascal’s when he requested from the imaginary listener to send him “no more letters, no, not unless you mail them from Desolation Row”<sup>860</sup>; that is, only if a word or an act come from that silence within, that site of perfect solitude, the Desolation Row, will he count it as valuable and worth absorbing in search of a higher meaning and divine inspiration. Lest we vulgarize the matters a bit, Sir Alex Ferguson’s insisting that each player on his team be “on the island”<sup>861</sup> in his head in order to display the highest quality of play can be invoked here only as an analogy of an imaginary island in the middle of an ocean that consciousness churning otherworldly creative ideas and expressions resides on, untouched by the worldly concerns and freed from the desire to seek approval from peers, from the public or from any elitist authorities. This is, of course, not to negate that without enforcing a counteracting outward pull, in love and care for the very same creatures whose voices and views we have partially hidden from view, all this wayfaring into the center of our being for the sake of finding solace for our saddened soul in an enlightening sense of unity with God will be in vain. For, as Pascal would have said too, “Instead of speaking about human matters that they have to be known before they can be loved, which has become a proverb, the saints, speaking of divine matters, say that you have to love them in order to know them, and that you enter into truth only by charity, which they have made into one of their most useful pronouncements”<sup>862</sup>. To that end, the recognition of all-encompassing wretchedness, of every soul and thing on Earth<sup>863</sup>, has a vital role in promoting our spiritual growth, as it infuses our spirit with compassion and, as if through a vacuum tube, pulls out the gluey stuff that our soft heart is made of and merges it with whatever lies in the chests of others, healing and harmonizing their entire beings in wholly invisible manners, with no words spoken or physical moves made. Thus, we must be sure that a route to attain the perfect spirit of loneness, which is also oneness with it all, logically, hereby counterintuitively too, leads through the gate of compassion with the earthly souls, always wretched, as Pascal would have had it, and thus always infinitely lovable, acting as suns around which our earthlike spirit could revolve in devotion for eons and be nourished like a blissed baby by their limitless lights.

After all, the ultimate message of the Christ and of innumerable other saints that have walked across the tear-sodden fields of this planet has been that only living for others and

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<sup>858</sup> See Blaise Pascal’s *Pensée* No. 1, Series XXII, Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK (1669).

<sup>859</sup> See Norman Lebrecht’s *The Book of Musical Anecdotes*, The Free Press, New York, NY (1985), pp. 87.

<sup>860</sup> Listen to Bob Dylan’s *Desolation Row on Highway 61 Revisited*, Columbia (1965).

<sup>861</sup> See Jon Livesey’s *Gary Neville Reveals Why He Didn’t Shake Ex-Temmate’s Hand in Tunnel Before Huge Game*, *Mirror* (November 16, 2018), retrieved from <https://www.mirror.co.uk/sport/football/news/gary-neville-reveals-didnt-shake-13599031>.

<sup>862</sup> See Blaise Pascal’s *The Art of Persuasion*, In: *Pensées and Other Writings*, Translated by Honor Levi, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK (1660), pp. 193.

<sup>863</sup> See Blaise Pascal’s *Pensée* No. 1, Series XXII, Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK (1669).

sacrificing our integrity for the sake of integrating others and solidifying their spirits is the way to reach peaks of satisfaction, happiness and fulfillment in life as well as to preserve our own integrity and spiritual solidity in the end. Or, as the Christ himself noticed, “whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 16:25). As we see, as the key lies in the balance, as the Way of Love tells us, distancing oneself away from the things and beings that we aspire to fully give our heart to is the way to truly succeed in doing so, as much as diverging from the railway of our own visions and dreams is the way to endlessly travel along it. For, the way to the spiritual unison with the divine music that reverberates across the space of our mind and heart leads through hearts and minds of creatures of the world, whereas the way to the spiritual unison with other earthlings leads through the deep spaces of our own heart and mind. In that sense, we are brought straight to the two main principles of the teaching of Swami Vivekananda: “Each soul is potentially divine - the goal is to manifest this Divinity by controlling nature, external and internal” and “Serving God is serving man”. Posed side by side, these two principles are similar to the two major Christian commandments in that they outline the polarity of the Way of Love by showing us that the road to the most supreme connectedness with the divine spirit through enlightening meditation opens only when we fully open our heart to other creatures of the world in love and empathy, while bestowing our heart to the world will be efficient and inspiring rather than lame and pathetic or hypocritical and phony only when we incessantly draw a meditative vertical line that ties us to the sublime and heavenly spirit upon whose waves the entire visible reality floats. As the Way of Love suggests, we need to stand in the middle, with one arm spread to our inner core of creative shine, and another arm spread outwardly, as if selflessly giving alms to the world. In such an archetypical posture, we may see how we resemble none other but the crucified Christ, carved up between the world inside and the world outside, and yet making one out of the two and finding magic in it, as encrypted in his aforementioned words: “When you make one out of two, and when you make inside as outside, and outside as inside, then you will enter the Kingdom of God” (Thomas 22).

To sum up, every shining star experiences a balance between (a) the gravitational force that pulls its contents inwards, tending to collapse it into a black hole, and (b) the radiant, expressive force arising from the enormous energy bursts caused by the internal fusion of chemical elements, the metaphors of dreams, visions, emotions and ideas brewing inside us, tending to dissipate the star all across the Universe. What this powerful metaphor tells us is that in order to become the source of a permanent spiritual light for the world, we need to live in accord with the same balance. The meditative and prayerful drives in us should focus our attention inwards where we craft our impressions into an ever greater shine of our spirit, whereas the desire to love and look after another should send the rays of our attention outwards so as to exalt and beautify the world with the treasures forged deep within, lest we remain in possession of meltingly hot and glowing insides, but have it encrusted and incapable of illuminating the Universe, like the planet Earth, which in so many respects signifies the current stage that we, humans, occupy in the spiritual growth from the grimy stardust to a shimmery starriness.

Gazing up, at the enchanting lightshow created by the starry skies above us thus leads us to retrieve the precious insights relevant for the earthly reign wherein stars of a different kind, of animate spirits, twinkle and glow. Signs able to guide us along our spiritual paths could thus be found literally everywhere, while these exquisite insights of psychosomatic and metaphysical natures could help us discover ever greater and more valuable findings of scientific nature. For, the scientific and the spiritual man ought to always walk hand-in-hand if we are to give rise to a

holistic science of being, such as that advanced on the pages of this book. Going back to these sparkly stars for one final time in this chapter and referring to the analogy between the astronomical bodies and stages in the spiritual evolution of our beings, we could tentatively divide both to three most common types: stars, planets, and black holes. Spiritual stars, like their celestial counterparts, need not external sources of inspiring impressions; instead, they are focused solely on the creative core of their own beings, following this inner bliss and spontaneously and magically yielding impulses that illuminate the @evolutional paths for the surrounding planets. Thinking of them makes us see in them for a moment a reflection of Meister Eckhart's poor man whom a seeker of human embodiments of the divine was sent to see via the voice of God, in a desolate church, crumbling away under the burden of time. When the seeker asked him whence he found God, the sage answered, "When I forsook all creatures"; when asked where he has left God, he replied, "In pure hearts, and in men of good will", adding that he is a king, not a man; finally, when asked what his kingdom is like, he resorted to pointing at his soul, a kingdom greater than that of the earth in his own words, claiming that silence, high thoughts and union with God brought him to this perfection<sup>864</sup>. In other words, fully relinquishing the attitude of a follower of other people's dreams and expectations, directing the focus of one's mind solely to one's insides and following the inner bliss is what this sage correlated with the first step in forging the sunrays of divine beauty within and around us, which, however, as we all know, could originate only from the grounds of heavenly desires to dissipate them everywhere, to become an epitome of a being impoverished in spirit while tirelessly watering the spiritually thirsty creatures of the world through a hose of passion and the open arms of infinite empathy with these inner rivers, geysers and waterfalls of spiritual beauty that run through the landscapes of his heart and mind.

Hence, the inward pull of attention that a star incessantly subdues itself to, alongside the yearnings to open up and bleed, so to say, that is, to wash over the world with the blissful glow of beauty crafted by means of a giant meditative focus and contemplative creativeness, is what truly differs it from its stellar antipode, the black hole. The dichotomy between shining stars and black holes could thus be seen as predominantly equivalent to the one between desiring to love and desiring to be loved. With the passion to selflessly love enrooted in the soil of our mind, we are able to explode with a plethora of inspiring impulses to the world rather than implode and collapse under the pressure of gravity caused by the enormous amount of impressions that constitute our being and no empathic drives to channel this inner energy outwardly, as happens to black holes in life. Peer-pressure in terms of obsessions to satisfy the behavioral standards and norms set forth by our surrounding inherently arises from our desire to be loved and eventually leaves our creative being in this world frozen and lame, away from the glistening road that would lead to the fulfillment of our stellar dreams. In that sense, the path before us branches out to two directions, one of which leads us into a state of lackluster sycophancy, secret celebration of our ego and selfish grasping of outer impressions driven by cravings to pile up treasures within us and never ever share them with others except when attempting to have our ego profit on them. The other one, however, takes us deep into the forest of challenges, which many sages crossed on their way to the stars. On that road, we would be selflessly running after becoming ever poorer in spirit and miraculously gaining the whole world thereby, gradually turning into an epitome of the grand One, the numeric symbol of the star, along it. While walking on it, we would be incessantly losing and restoring the balance of the Way of Love, meditatively immersing our awareness into the inner sea of spirit, beautifying our mental and emotional

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<sup>864</sup> See Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism*, Methuen & Co., Ltd., London, UK (1911), pp. 209-201.

landscapes thereby, and bravely bursting out with our creativity and yielding a sea of light that would dazzle innumerable eyes of the world and make them literally see stars. Clearly, then, our missionary self in this life has to strive to reach this ideal of a star and thus ascend from the planetary realms on the ladder of the spiritual evolution and to the stellar spaces that hover with heavenly beauties above our heads.

Planets of spirit can radiate enchanting lights all around them as well, just as the majestic Earth does. Some planets, however, are cold, dry and rocky, such as Mars, volcanic and fiery like Venus, or gaseous and groundless like Jovian planets, failing to yield the beauties of cosmic being and emit sympathetic twinkles of light even when soaked in and overflowed with life-giving sunshine. In any case, for the sparkles of beauty to arise from planets, purgatories of a kind in the realm of spirit, inspiration from the outside has to arrive on the surface of theirs, so as to turn the wheels of creativity within their cores and generate sputters of spiritual light in their vicinity. Black holes, on the other hand, are merely selfishly grasping the impressions of the world and turning them into dimness and shade, providing purely abysses for the showers of divine beauties falling onto them to vanish into nothingness. Collecting spiritual energies without willing to share and freely dissipate them is typically connected with the sprouting of a monstrous ego from within the deep layers of our consciousness, transforming us gradually into an embodiment of a black hole in the domain of spirit, despite our and quite often the world's conviction in our spiritual excellence. In contrast, only by constantly giving away some of the essence of our being, like a snake that sheds its skin from one second to the next, for as long as the Sun shines, can we preserve the standing of our spirit in the divine Eye that oversees our moves on the star-rising stage called life, in theory potentially blissful, but in reality lame and listless, from some celestial heights. Or, as Ivo Andrić put it in a quote that defines his most popular novel to date, "On the bridge, between the sky, the river and the mountains, generation after generation learned not to regret inordinately all that the turbulent water carried away... they absorbed the unconscious philosophy to the town: that life is an incomprehensible wonder, for it spends itself and runs out perpetually, and yet it endures and stands firm like a bridge over Drina"<sup>865</sup>. For, without balancing our spiritually thirsty absorption of illuminating impressions and their meditative self-production with the drives to explosively express the divine beauties that we carry within ourselves and sanctify the world with their graceful stardust, the stairways to the stars will carelessly crumble under our ascending feet. Or, as the very Christ warned us, "If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you; if you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you" (Thomas 70). The stars, on the opposite side of the spectrum, are therefore all about giving, giving, giving, infinitely and perpetually, knowing that the only way to sustain their shine is to ceaselessly give it away. Another thing they know is that being meditatively withdrawn into the inner creative essence of their own heart and mind is the only means by which this fabulous lifesaving shine could be created and radiated outwards. Likewise, with our simultaneously exploding with the spiritual energy confined within and yet imploding with the meditative focus sending rays of our attention into the inner blissful landscapes of the mental and emotional core of our being, the magical

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<sup>865</sup> See Ivo Andrić's *The Bridge on the Drina*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL (1945). The quote in the original form goes like this: "Tako se na kapiji, između neba, reke i brda, naraštaj za naraštajem učio da ne žali preko mere ono što mutna voda odnese. Tu je u njih ulazila nesvesna filozofija kasabe: da je život neshvatljivo čudo, jer se neprestano troši i osipa, a ipak traje i stoji čvrsto kao na Drini ćuprija". The translation to English, with the exception of the modified last few words, was found in Celia Hawkesworth's *Ivo Andrić: Bridge between East and West*, Athlone Press, London, UK (1984), pp. 141 – 142.

balance of the Way of Love, analogous to the one between the gravitational and explosive pulls that every shining star subdues itself to, is produced, leading our beings by the hand of Nature along its stellar tracks, all until we rise in the midst of the starry heavens and become the ultimate ideal posed before us in this life: a star of spirit.



“Music is the mediator between the spiritual and the sensual life”, Ludwig van Beethoven noted once, and the Way of Love poses itself as a similar bridge between these two realms of experience, showing us how lightened up landscapes of our soul naturally lead to enchanting expressions, while acting that has benevolent and empathic drives engrained in it illuminates the inner road to enlightenment. So far, then, we have seen that the Way of Love opens a road in front of us upon which inspired expressiveness and meditative harmony walk hand-in-hand as well as that our ability to deliver enlightening acts requires the cultivation of an inwardly oriented attentiveness. Likewise, however, in order to preserve the introspective focus and maintain the doors to visionary insights open within the landscapes of our mind and heart, we should never cease to conceive of sending out blissful outbursts of creativity. For, should our drives to shine like a star and feed the world with the light of our spirit start to dwindle, the futile pensiveness of the intellect would take over, whereas acts devoid of the moving energy would result should we give up on watering the inner garden of our spirit with the godly nectars of divine feeling and thought.

How threateningly powerful the machinery of human imagination is can be neatly witnessed by grasping the following words of Pascal, which were found on a piece of parchment sewn into the clothing in which he died: “Men often take their imagination for their heart, and often believe they are converted as soon as they start thinking of becoming converted”<sup>866</sup>. What this thought makes us envision are noble minds blissfully gazing at Noah’s rainbows imagined in the sky in front of them with every inspiring thought that they absorb, as if consuming a spiritual food of a kind, and yet without ever considering embodying the muses that levitate in front of themselves, finding ultimate satisfaction in this contemplative act, rather than the enlightening action that these inspiring visions should eventually lead to. Yet, we should never underestimate the immenseness of the extent to which merely reading and thinking about enlightened being in the world, without ever making a real move towards personifying it, takes toll on the inspirational scope of our acts, diminishes the divine potentials that could turn our body into a burning star of untouchable cosmic beauty in the dazzled eyes of the world, and gradually and imperceptibly instills in us the ills of hypocrisies, self-sufficient ignorance of another and the wicked feelings of self-importance, all the while pushing the sense of humbleness and strivings to **act, act and act** into dark abysses, away from the grasp of the eye of our intellect.

Moreover, the extent to which we stick to the balance between meditative withdrawnness and affectionate expressivity that the Way of Love epitomizes can be best estimated in the moments of our acting rather than during our merely composing words and guidance for acting. While it may appear to us that we reside quite close to the heart of the Way of Love as we sit at home and dreamingly contemplate about pulling off charming and inspiring moves that are in

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<sup>866</sup> See Blaise Pascal’s *Pensée* No. 975, Chapter C. Fragments from Other Sources, Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK (1669).

harmony with this balancing principle, our awareness of how sadly far from this balance we are may fall shattering on us upon the first attempt to act in accordance with the Way of Love, that is, in both outwardly inspiring ways, but also in smooth and seamless harmony with the music of our heart. Of course, the point is neither to be focused on plucking the celestial signs off the center of our being up to the point of our becoming unresponsively disoriented, speaking languages that no one will be able to understand and resonate with, nor to be an insecure slave of other people's dreams and intentions, never speaking our own mind due to our being dazzled by the sense of authority and power that we have attached to the beings surrounding us. And the best way of receiving the feedback from Nature as to where we stand with respect to this balance between meditative saneness through which we become one like no other and expressive receptiveness through which we become one with all others is to perform an act and then carefully listen to the tremor of the sea of Nature as it sends its subtle waves towards our sensible spirit to tell us how well our being is balanced on the thin thread of the Way of Love upon which the acrobats of our spirits are predestined to incessantly walk. Needless to add, the nature of this balance is such that the deeper we reach out to our insides so as to dig out the enriching impulses from which lifesaving action will originate, the greater the potential for producing an incredibly moving act and *vice versa*: the more we crave to enlighten the world that surrounds us with our expressions, the more open the way towards the center of our being and landmines wherein these impulses as precursors of the most precious actions conceivable rest. If you ever begin to doubt that the introspective focus on opening the way to the seabed of our soul, pulling out its eternal shine to the surface, along with the magical impulses for enlightening action arising therein, so powerful that it turns itself blind to the disapproving grimaces and frowning faces of arrogant wiseacres around us, is the key to achieving divine flights of creativity in this world, think of: how the most striking notes in the history of music may have been composed by Ludwig van Beethoven, who has stood at the opening of this chapter, in the days when he had grown deaf and able to create music solely from his inner world, undisturbed by the external sounds; how some of the greatest movies ever made were those by Charlie Chaplin, who was the producer, the main actor, the director, the screenplay writer and the musical score composer for his movies, all at once; and how only when we enter the stage whereon stories told by our body language, by the dancing of our spirits through the ether and by the music of our words become so original that the impression is that they could be told by us and us only do we get to step on the road that leads us to the highest summits in our strivings to express the divine potentials dormant in our godly natures. All of these speak in favor of our chance in succeeding in the latter only insofar as we are meditatively plunged deep inside of the spheres of our psyche and remain untouched by critiques, praises, expectations, trends or allures that abound like devilish traps all around us. After all, look around you and the first thing you may notice is that our civilization has been built using chemical elements found deep within the Earth's crust, having been forged in the belly of a primordial supernova that sacrificed itself and turned into dust to give us the integral components of life as we know it, and, likewise, if we are to live up to Pablo Neruda's literary veto on "not being oneself before others, feigning in front of people and fake being funny just to make them remember you"<sup>867</sup>, we should set ourselves in such a state of mind that all our bodily expressions originate from the deepest insides of our elusive soul, for the sake of which the meditative maintenance of an introspective focus is needed. On the other hand, of course, without spreading the network of empathic connections all around us, radiating like sunrays from the core of our

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<sup>867</sup> See Pablo Neruda's poem *It Is Forbidden/Queda Prohibido*, retrieved from <http://www.susans.org/forums/index.php?topic=57457.0>.

being in all directions, at any given moment of our lives, we would merely implode in our pensive inwardness, like a black hole, if it only remains unbalanced with the explosive expressiveness that tends to disperse our creative core all over the place. And unless we bravely step forth, make an act and then, hushed, listen for the susurrus of stardust shed in its wake, in which infinite signs as to how stable our standing on the narrow bridge of the Way of Love lie quiescently concealed, it is certain that we will never arrive at the other side of this bridge where the manifestation of our stellar natures takes place in all its celestial glory.

So, stand up and dance, sing or engage in the most imaginative acts aimed at bestowing wonderful treasures of spirit and beauty that we keep deeply concealed within ourselves upon others. As we reproduce the divine glow of spirit and love that enlightens our entire being, from our head to our toes, we ought to let it shine to the world in explosive bursts of creative energy rather than keep those enlightening feelings tied to ourselves only. As the Way of Love tells us, expressive outward stretches of the arms of our spirit in compassionate creativity add fuel to the fire of meditative beauty that glows within ourselves and *vice versa*: partly dwelling inside, meditatively and introspectively, is the only way to sustain the creative drives that help us enchant the world around us with beautiful and inspiring acts. Therefore, should we forget to act, act, and act and thereby try our best to deliver the beauty of our insides outwardly, sooner or later this enlightening interior of our soul would become barren. After all, either acting so as to produce a healing harmony around us or building the sunshiny core of drives and incentives from which these acts will flood the world by dreaming about these enlightening acts is what sustains our ability to plunge deep into the starry wells of our soul and hear the divine voice therein. If we ever curl up and roll our spirit into a ball of yarn that tends never to unwind its threads that could connect us with the surrounding hearts, we should be sure that even our time spent in solitude would soon lose its fulfilling appeal, as the ocean of our spirit would dry out and all that remains would be dead seashells of remembrances of our dreams of becoming a deliverer of beautiful messages and enlightening acts to the world.

Before we start acting naturally, while being dragged to the earth with our unpretentious lovingness, and yet streaming to reach stars, to unlock vistas of seeing the world and dancing on top of it that the world has yet to see, we should be reminded that hypothetically perfect acts would leave traces of stunning awe and frozen admiration in their wake. Only an imperfect act has the power to instigate people to act likewise, either by antithetically confronting it and thus contributing to continuation of the spin of the wheel of the dialectical evolution of our beings and knowledge, or by being moved by the fragilities, humane flaws and other touching weakness that are blended in with the untouchable beauties that our acts shed like stardust everywhere around us. It may be for this reason that humans are by default unable to dig perfect acts from the treasured depths of their soul; or, as the Christ would have reminded us, “Why do you call me good? None is good, save one, that is, God” (Luke 18:19). Hence, if we are to search for a perfect incentive for a perfect act, neither would we find it nor would we with it inspire the world to link similarly perfect acts onto it and produce an avalanche of enlightening perfection to cover the world like a blanket of light. Instead, an inherently imperfect act can be the only perfect act in this world as it either melts human hearts with awakened waves of compassion or instigates them to search for an antithetic alternative, a missing link, and thus step a little bit closer to the ideal of a perfect act, which, however, will always be imperfect in the eye of the whole.

The music ringing on this wonderful cosmic panorama of thought reverberates with the message delivered by the Austrian constructivist philosopher and magician, Heinz von Foerster,

“If you desire to see, learn how to act”<sup>868</sup>, as well as with that proclaimed by a protagonist of the movie *Red Desert* directed by Michelangelo Antonioni, the so-called master of alienation and the prince of *temps mort* and thwarting tardiness, of the shadowy spirit of waiting in screened motion, placid, quiet and inexpressive: “You wonder what to look at. I wonder how to live. Same thing”<sup>869</sup>. For, without continuously spinning the wheel of willpower within our heart, over and over, all until it magically impels us to perform action of one kind or another, neither could our contemplative focus and an introspective eye to our insides be kept sharp nor the shine of our expressiveness spotless. For this reason, St. Augustine of Hippo claimed the following: “To Be, to Know, and to Will... In these three therefore let him who can, see how inseparable a life there is... finally, how inseparable is the distinction, and yet a distinction”<sup>870</sup>. Consequently, the mantra repeated by Kate Victoria Tunstall, “The power to be, the power to give, the power to see”<sup>871</sup>, could be seen as a three-bead necklace wherein each bead reinforces the other two; this is so because inspiring acts draw ever more beautiful outlines of the world and its creatures in our eyes, while enriching ourselves from the inside so as to see every segment of the world, irrespective of how demeaning or neglectful it may be considered by the mainstreams of humanity, as immensely beautiful, as filling our eyes with the devotional tears of river Jordan, tends to endow the most elementary acts of ours with a mysterious charm and an irresistible appeal.

The co-creational thesis tells us how every line we draw with our fingers in the sand, engrave on the bark of a tree, or paint with crayons on sunlit asphalt tells us immensely about the essence of our being and the Cosmos as a whole. Our deepest cognitive qualities and questions that swirl around the seabed of our mind and heart on one side and subtle smiles and sympathetic winks that Nature gives us in response thereto on the other are mysteriously entwined and inscribed as such in every product of our creativity, be it philosophical tomes we write, a flight of the ball we kick on the soccer field or a single and desolate circle impressed in the sand. Should these details of the world be recognized as bearing sources of such immense insights, we would be momentarily parachuted amongst the starry sky of a brilliant mindfulness. In that sense, instead of passively waiting for exciting and uplifting expressions to be delivered on our plates, which is, by the way, what the mainstream culture of the modern world implicitly teaches us to be like, for the more obedient followers and the less rebellious paradigm-breakers, the better from the eyes of the establishment and powers of the world, we should be urged to act, to make a move, irrespective of how miniscule and negligible it may be. For, once made, the entire Universe and our whole being will be reflected therein. Held on the palms of our hands subsequently, we could look at it from multiple angles and thereby be able to learn immensely about who we are, how well our progress on the spiritual plane, during which Nature walks with us towards stars, is proceeding, as well as how well the entire world around us is doing. In such a way, we live up to von Foerster’s ideal posed a bit earlier, starting an endless chain reaction

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<sup>868</sup> See Heinz von Foerster’s *On Constructing a Reality*, A lecture given at the opening of the Fourth International Conference on Environmental Design Research on April 15, 1973, at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg, Virginia; reprinted in Heinz von Foerster’s *Observing Systems*, Intersystems Publications, Salinas, CA, pp. 284 – 309 (1984).

<sup>869</sup> This is the quote with which Roger Copeland opened his essay *Merce Cunningham and the Politics of Perception* (1979), In: *What is Dance?* Edited by Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen, Oxford University Press, New York, NY (1983), pp. 307.

<sup>870</sup> See St. Augustine’s *Confessions*, bk. 13, cap. 11 (AD 398); translation found in Evelyn Underhill’s *Mysticism*, Methuen & Co., Ltd., London, UK (1911), pp. 111.

<sup>871</sup> Listen to KT Tunstall’s *Suddenly I See on Eye to the Telescope*, Relentless (2004).

whereby the tiniest action we could conceive of, be it “the mild raising of one’s shoulders”<sup>872</sup>, which, as the Austrian magician claimed, could change the fate of the Universe, might lead to an enlightening stardust of graceful insights and feelings to begin to fall all over the meadows of our mind and the pastures of our heart, inspiring us to spontaneously bear even more gracious and enlightening acts, be they akin to a gentle lift of a hand, such as that of the Virgin Mary as a child on Titian’s painting that now decorates Gallerie dell’Accademia in Venice, a stone’s throw away from the church of Santa Maria della Salute, leaving all around her astonished with the beauty emanating from such a minor move, or to dancing pirouettes performed with immaculate coordination and dexterity, thus yielding expressions that would lead to ever more dazzling insights, and so on and on. As prophesied by the chaos theoreticians, the most minor acts, the tiniest waves sent out to travel throughout the world, are akin to waves of air pressure produced by a single flap of butterfly wings; under specific conditions, the amplitudes of both could be magnified all until they cause frightening storms and showers of enlightening ideas to befall upon us and the dwellers of many other parts of the world, from the nearest to the remotest ones. After all, mosquito, not a shark, a whale, a hippo or an alligator, is the deadliest creature on the planet today<sup>873</sup> in spite of being one of the smallest animals visible to the naked eye, and, conversely, we should be sure that the most powerful actions in our worlds must be those that are tremendously tinier in their appearance than those that readily attract our attention due to their ostensible enormity and influence. With the vision of a teardrop rolling down Calimero’s muddy cheeks, falling onto the snow around him and starting an avalanche that is to cover the entire unjust world, “big while I is small and that is not fair, oh no”, as the little chick would have said, we could then recall that not only do powerful snow avalanches begin from a teeny tiny slip that gets magnified as it slides down the hill, but microscopic weaknesses of inner layers of snow of comparatively high porosity are the cause of this natural effect that has ever since stood for an archetypical metaphor of the ability of little acts to become intensified all until they eclipse the most gigantic things of the world with all their phony pompousness.

Henceforth, we should know that sitting aside, in the safe shades of summery treetops or uneasily squatted in the corners of rooms vibrant with life, merely dreaming of enlightening expressions of the treasures that glow with an eternal beauty inside of our heart and mind, but never finding great enough strength, motives and drives to make these insides of ours burst like the core of a superstar and scatter their treasures outwardly, won’t take us far on the road of the Way of Love. To reach the superb destinations that the Way of Love paints in front of a vivid mind, we need to shed beautiful acts in face of the world, each one of which will bring us one step closer to the peak of the mountain that the Christ drew in front of us as an ultimate ideal of being. This ideal is a perfect poorness in spirit, in front of which entrances to a blissful cosmic consciousness, the most sublime and heavenly states of mind we could attain, become open everywhere around us. And yet, shedding these treasures of spirit everywhere, becoming poorer and poorer in spirit with every breath of one while sowing the world with an immaculate beauty from which many trees of knowledge will arise in all their grandeur and delight, one never looks back at their fruits and tries to collect them for the sake of one’s own profit nor is obsessed with glimpsing these doors that would lead to one’s own crowning with an aureole of enlightened consciousness. Instead, at the very sight of one of them, they dream of taking by the hand

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<sup>872</sup> See the conversations between Bernhard Poerksen and Heinz von Foerster published in *Cybernetics and Human Knowing* Vol. 9 (3-4) pp. 149 – 157 (2002) and Vol. 10 (3-4) pp. 9 – 26 (2003).

<sup>873</sup> See Bill Gates’ We Need Mosquito Week More Than Shark Week, *Mashable* (April 28, 2014), retrieved from <http://mashable.com/2014/04/28/meet-the-worlds-deadliest-creature-the-mosquito/>.

afflicted ones of this world and bringing them over to their doorsteps to be instantly blessed by the shine of love that entering through would bring thereto. For, they know that only by dedicating one's entire being to conceiving other people's angelic flights of spirit rather than being preoccupied with those of one's own is the way to spontaneously transform one into a bird of paradise and soar into the fabulous skies of spiritual being. Driven by an immense love for another, these enlightened creatures do not intentionally dwell in heavenly reigns of mind, but are rather always on the move, journeying towards the most hellish spots of the world one could envisage, for the sake of saving others and bringing them back to light. With one hand spread in the direction of the light and another one immersed in the darkness, crucified between the dialectical polarities of the world and posing themselves as bridges for many people to be carried on to the angelic coasts of being, they make it clear why we live on the planet Earth, the big blue ball with the blends of opposites that it embodies and through which we all evolve.

Therefore, even though it may be a little line drawn on the hardwood floor, on the soiled street ground, or on the seabed of your mind, do it, draw it. And if drawn with a genuine sense of One in your heart, with holding the thoughts of a dear and loved spirit of the world on the pedestal of your mind, or with any other enlightening feeling blazing within, it will be a line that illuminates the face of the world with the waves of the soft and hushed bells of the music divine. On the other hand, even if randomly drawn, with a vacant heart deprived of any glow inside, this line will still reflect the core of our mindset as well as hold the response of Nature thereto hidden in it, as this dialogue between the two is ingrained in every detail of the world of our experience. As such, it will radiate with immaculately important messages for our spiritual evolution. From this impressive stance we could envisage the future of artistic creation as one not necessarily lying in pieces of art being transmitted through mass media to people helplessly craving for them, but reoriented towards more creative, simultaneously more individualized and collaborative, co-creative artistic efforts. In search of one such fine balance between personalized and collectivized art, we might be able to learn a lot from failures of other disciplines to achieve it, usually helplessly and inertly fluctuating from one extreme to the other. Science, of course, presents one notable example, given that it transitioned in the last decade or so from a traditionally solitary activity, where each scientist occupied its own highly specialized planet, like one of those that the Little Prince occasioned on his space adventure<sup>874</sup>. Confined to this solitary locus, the scientist's communication with other scientists, especially those populating other fields of science, and with community as a whole was most of the time predestined for miscomprehension. The recent years, during which this traditionalistic individualism has attempted to be done away with by the mediocre powers that be, however, brought about the opposite extreme of insistence on collaboration under all circumstances, lest major research funding never be obtained, even when it was clear to everyone that it would dilute the strength and quality of research perspectives crafted and polished from highly individualized angles. Thus we have arrived to this day when the emphasis on collaborative research is abused by many, including the skilled middle men and women with solid, usually professorial positions and reputation, who earn authorships, usually prominent, by simply connecting two or more sets of people to work on particular problems and investing no real effort on their behalves. Another group of scientists abusing the system that exceptionally values collaborative research are those who contribute measurements on single, usually rare and relatively inaccessible instruments and thus boost their publication record based on routine and unimaginative, purely technical work. But being aware of these chasms slidable into if we only swing too far toward the extremes is

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<sup>874</sup> See Antoine de Saint-Exupery's *The Little Prince*, Mladost, Zagreb, Croatia (1943).

vital in our preserving the stand on the middle ground and approaching steadily the days of an art that would have just enough of the auteur attitude to speak directly to the soul of the listener, but also be intimate enough to allow it to be touched and recrafted by the hands of others. Through the eyes of an enlightening mindset raised on these premises, everything around us will ring with an ever deeper and more striking relevancy for our own climbing to the stars along the ladders of Wonder and Love, and yet it will all point to the beauty of the world as a whole, urging our creative efforts, even the drawing of a tiny little line to be carried out for the sake of enchantingly spreading the starry essence of our spirit to the entire world. In other words, all of us would be increasingly invited to create anything, for the benefits for the spiritual evolution of oneself and the world are immediately obvious: namely, even when seemingly not appealing to others, every note composed by one will always ingrain messages of an immaculate importance for one's life in it. One such viewpoint clearly conceals the sprouts of an idea that unavoidable subjectivity permeates all our creations and evaluations of qualities in life, which should prevent us from proclaiming these individually relevant artistic pieces as of worldwide importance. Instead, by realizing the beauty of small things, which the co-creational thesis conceals in its essence, enwrapped by the idea of the dialogue between the human spirit and Nature as underlying each moment of our existence, we would become overwhelmed by the feelings of humbleness, which would transform us into an ocean to which all the rivers of human hearts naturally run as their emotional solaces.

Perfect hideout is not sustained by digging one's head in the sand like an ostrich. Quite contrary, to hide flawlessly, one has to increase one's visibility by setting up vistas for vigilant observation of one's surrounding. For this reason, the commander of the samurai armada in the Seven Samurai advised the inhabitants of the village they defended that perfect defense does not consist in completely barricading oneself and leaving no open gates to allure the enemy to and no room for the counterattack. Hence, even when we tend to be fully defensive and invisible to the world, moves are to be made to succeed in this mission. Productive passivity thus requires a certain amount of activity to be woven into it, which is why dancing fluctuations of one kind or another are ingrained in even the stillest states and postures, as atoms and molecules oscillating at even the absolute zero know quite well. Experienced strategists also know that making a move that disrupts a *status quo*, even though it may imply an inevitable display of one's weak points, is oftentimes the only path that leads to triumph. The evidence that this approach is more of a rule rather than exception comes from the fact that the most popular closed games in chess start with one or another form of hypermodern openings, which are all about inviting the opponent to either accept a sacrificed piece or settle in the center, revealing positional weaknesses which the initially defensive side then tries to exploit. Although many people employ this rope-a-dope strategy with cunning intentionality, since we know that "the worst thing in acting is acting", we can conclude that spontaneous expression of chaste feelings is the most effective rope-a-dope one could conceive. When I think of Party Girl, the world's first movie to have been premiered online, the first thing that comes to mind is Parker Posey's acting, "which treads a fine line between irony and sincerity...acknowledging the artifice of her craft whilst convincing you of her authenticity"<sup>875</sup>, and in this context it serves as a reminder of how the most credible prefigured acts are those riding on the waves of sincerity, notwithstanding that, like in this movie, such acts will have always acted as powerful attractors of envious looks and malicious

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<sup>875</sup> See Nick Lee's Lost and Found: Party Girl at 25, Royal Holloway University of London (February 18, 2000), retrieved from <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/research-and-teaching/departments-and-schools/media-arts/news/lost-and-found-party-girl-at-25/>.

counteracts that strive to stumble the actor. To open the petals of one's heart in perfect honesty, while nourishing beautiful images and ideals within one's mind and heart, is the way to invite many attackers driven by jealousy, greed and a desire to dominate to try to suppress our voice in the world and eclipse the shine of our untainted being. In that sense, it is such mild and humble characters that spent their youths innocently dreaming about peace, truth, justice and beauty that often turn into the most piercing battlers in defense of these ideals that the world has ever seen, bringing to mind the post-epilogue fate Fyodor Dostoyevsky had in mind for Alyosha Karamazov and the verses of a Mercury Rev's song: "Soon the dormant patient roots will show themselves as child that shoots, and the streams of consciousness tumble over rocks they kissed"<sup>876</sup>. Therefore, rather than holding our imperfections and fragilities to ourselves and keeping them away from other people's views, we should stretch the arms of our spirit inwardly, grasp these grains of dust around which pearls are being formed, collect them and drop everywhere around us, releasing billions of burdens that keep our spirits grounded and engage in gleeful flights of angelic fancy, knowing that these are embryos for our becoming a warrior or light in some distant future.

In fact, from spies in search of confidential information to strategists who allure their opponents to rope-a-dope traps to gossipers who seek new stories on celebrities and friends they fancy to creatures that crave to receive heavenly blessings, they all know that making a move and shedding an innocent act, revealing one's presence by pointlessly babbling or dropping pearls of wisdom and sketching stars in front of the eyes of the world is the way that results in satisfaction of their yearnings. Hence, whenever we are found stuck between the crevices of a stony cold surrounding, feeling as if we have become bubbled and caged into our own emotional space, without any inflow of enriching information from the starry spaces of human souls and extraterrestrial heights, we should make a move, knowing that perfection of the most perfect state and posture that we could attain will inevitably crumble away with the passage of time and that a dynamic flow of states and moves, boldness to undergo the process of reshaping our spirit with every moment of our existence, is the only way to sustain perfection and creative fertility of our being. Likewise, the balance of the Way of Love attained in one magical moment will cease to be so very soon unless we bravely make a move to one or the other side, jumping into the essence of ourselves or leaping out to reach the cosmic hearts of beings that surround us. For, valiantly stepping out of balance after we found it is as crucial for the long-term harmony of our being and continued progressive streaming to the stars as sensibly stepping towards the balance when found away from it.

Therefore, act, act and act: it may be the only way to master the art of following the Way of Love and inspiring the world and oneself alike with every moment of your life. What is typical for those who have reached harmony with the Way of Love is living and incessantly communicating with Nature in terms of various muses, gods or shines of beauty that one attributes to the voice of Nature. Such luminaries keep these endearing visions close to their hearts, not necessarily as literal mental images, but rather as mere senses of their emitting mysterious glows that fill up their insides with something holy. Then, when the moment to act in an inspirational manner arrives, the connection with this meditative mental ocean wherein muses and angels swim will not be lost on the account of entering hastily a panicky state of mind, becoming frozen with fear and obsessed with what others will think of us. Instead, we will remain swimming in this magical sea and from it deliver sublime incentives for our acts that will entice the world with a mysterious shine coming from the deepest insides of our being. This is

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<sup>876</sup> Listen to Mercury Rev's First-Time Mother's Joy (Flying) on The Secret Migration, V2 (2005).

why the moment when one is about to step on the podium and start acting is, if prepared well for it, preceded by one's descending deeper and deeper inside one's inner world. For, as the very stars teach us, the greater the shine of our expressions, the deeper we have to descend inwardly to bring them about and in greater grasp of our inner world we must be to be able to navigate our way across these dark depths flawlessly. As they approach the final hours before giving birth to a new life, women in labor become increasingly inwardly focused and distanced from their immediate surroundings, as if they have begun a descent to the deepest chasms of their inner worlds, and so is it with bearing fruits in any other domain of human creativity: (a) the greatness of the outcomes of our reaching out to others with the aim to strew them with the diamonds and pearls of beautiful moves and lifesaving insights, and (b) the depth of our probing introspectively the spheres of our consciousness and the core of the Sun of our spirit where these treasures are being forged by fusion of visions and emotions, are directly proportional to one another, which is the principle that lies at the core of the doctrine of the Way of Love. In such very special moments of our lives, it is as if we become instantly attuned to that magnificent balance that all the world's actors have strived to attain and all the world's acting instructors have tried to pass on to their disciples, the one where "the actor must listen fully to his inner voice, as well as attending fully to the surrounding environment"<sup>877</sup>. Therefore, when the moment to act is imminent, it is as if a starry muse becomes placed on my forehead, to guide me in bringing forth moves, melodies of voice and gestures that will be sane and composed and will yet inspire the world, inducing avalanches of astonishment throughout it. The imaginary arms of my spirit then spread inwardly, depicting a complete devotion to this inner muse of mine, to whom I pay full respect while conceiving my acts and on whose pedestal I place any laurel wreaths receive along the way. With love and compassion that drive us to open up and balance the meditative folding of the petals of the flower of our attention with hearing and following devotedly the music played by the radios of surrounding souls, the grounds for action in accordance with the Way of Love are set and we are ready to launch the spaceships of inspiring action into the starry skies of the world.

There is no doubt that, as it befalls all the rockets streaming towards stars on the wings of *grace*, we would be dragged down, towards Earth, by the counteracting force of *gravity*, of people's propensities to cohere together and become glued into a giant floccus of gunk, when they could be scattering themselves from one another and dispersing like stars of the night sky, the celestial bodies knowing that their coalescence might supersede their critical mass and transform them altogether into a black hole, diminishing their individual shines thereby. This is why the recognition of authorities dwelling even in far subtler social domains than the professional or the political ought to be recognized and the tentacles they extend all across the rooms of our mind gently folded and tossed out by the cellular army of authentic anarchists in us. One of these authoritative forces is that of creatures' cravings to influence us, sometimes in the finest ways possible, be it via exertion of concordant opinions during a casual chitchat or via types of behavior that they expect from us to exhibit. An inability or unwillingness to cope with these miniscule authoritative forces, conflicting with our immense love and respect from them and causing our heart to break by a bit during every social gathering, has, in fact, forced many sages to dig a hole in the ground and isolate themselves from the society, having fallen into the trap of being able to love humanity so long as they stay sufficiently distanced from it. Although

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<sup>877</sup> "How can one possibly do both at once?" is the question given in continuation of this quote by Robert McNeer in his paper entitled Listening at the Threshold: Perceptive Play with Voice, Word and Body, *Scenario* 16, 149 – 155 (2022).

this withdrawnness and constant correspondence with the voice of the Divine emerging from the ovule of the flower of our soul and undyingly bouncing off the walls of our consciousness does pose challenges for maintaining worldly relationships because our intimacy with surrounding souls is being partially substituted with the intimacy with God, we need not take the traditional route for saintly spirits in search of salvation and heavenly wisdom and end up unmarried, in a monastery, solitary and with a heart heavily disconnected from those of our brethren, if we are only powerful enough to incite the outbursts of love that would counterbalance this meditative force that pulls us inside and establish a balance between contractive and expansive forces typifying every star in the Universe. To live with God does not necessitate withdrawnness for eternity; rather, the Way of Love offers a path that leads to bringing the energy gain through meditation back to the surface of our being in the form of stellar outbursts of celestial Love that heals and attunes all that it touches with its infinitely light hands. The mission, thus, posed before those embarked on this ultimate spiritual voyage is to descend deeper and deeper into the stellar reigns of the soul and be guided from there on by the divine voices that echo therein, but at the same time to counteract this descent with maintenance of the bedazzling glow of Love for every creature that has ever emerged before them. It is thereby that the balance between the two essential forces defining the Way of Love, meditative withdrawnness and expressive explosions of empathy, can be attained, enabling us to continue to glow with the lights that restore harmony in everything they come into contact with in the course of our mere presence, be it ecstatic and eruptive as that of a bursting supernova or silent and still as that of a solidest stone in the world, making less than an iota of a difference to the overall effect.

In view of this, it may be no wonder that people who are able to break through the walls of constraining self-awareness in terms of an exceeding respect of other people's expectations, to keep in silent and gracious touch with the muses that dwell in the quiet ocean of their hearts, and, as such, to sanely and serenely shed enlightening moves that could draw the attention of no one, of one or of millions, making no difference to their satisfaction or approach depending on who, if anyone, is watching, but awakening the starry twinkle of inspiration in their animate or inanimate eyes, are named what they are: stars, the magic word whose symbolic significance is so immense that Dante Alighieri made it the last of each of the three parts of the Divine Comedy. The challenge that they will face from the establishment of their starry status onwards will arise from their tending to feel blinded by the limelight, as if rays of other people's attention all converge on the surface of their celestial silhouette, making them unable to see and penetrate through the hearty essence of the creatures surrounding them. A sense of emotional remoteness is thus naturally experienced by extraordinarily famous people in life and a twofold strategy is employed to break through these walls of spiritual isolation that then appear to be springing everywhere around one, challenging one's further ascent to the heavenly platforms of divinely inspirational being. On one side, one has to boost the shine of love and empathy from one's heart and overcome with it the bedazzling glare of spectators. On the other side, one has to be incessantly driven to move away from the blinding and pretentious stage lights. Combined, these two roads would take one to step down from the stage in which one finds oneself celebrated and into the darkness surrounding one, where he would mingle with the audience, embracing the whole world thereby, humbly and joyously. In that sense, every star is constantly being drawn to dark corners in life. This, however, makes their radiance even more pronounced and dazzling. Just like the Taoist sage who becomes closer to the heavens with every step with which he lowers himself in front of the wonders of the world, so does the shine of spiritual stars become more stunning and glittery the more they humbly sink into the dark, dusky and dreamy spaces in

life. Eventually, they will find their place in the cold cosmic vacuums, away from it all, and yet the shine that they will deliver will be enough to spin the whole evolving planets, thriving with some phenomenal forms of life, around them, like celestial carousels, homes to sprouting of the divine seeds of Wonder and Love in the hearts of some new starry children of the everlasting Cosmos.

One such magnetic personality, be it Thom Yorke singing with drooping eyelids on a starlit stage, Björk happily hopping while holding a crystal ball in her heart from which sunshiny wonder radiates in all directions, or frolicsome, lollipop-licking Audrey Horne together with a few other Twin Peaks character dancing next to us on a lazy summer afternoon<sup>878</sup>, spotlessly unpretentious and natural, always gives an impression of deep meditative withdrawnness inside of the core of one's mind and heart, while at the same time messages strewn into the air with her words, gestures and body movements manage to glow with an immaculate relevancy for our beings right here, right now. As if secretly knowing what we need at the given moment to spur our drives on our spiritual journeys, the visions of which have become forgotten and slipped off the back of our minds in this world in which the suns of spirituality, beauty and love are constantly overcast by the clouds of stormy runs after success, gloomy obsession with ourselves only and the lightning arrows of egotistic anger and jealousy, they mysteriously point at the roads that lead us to escape from the latter and walk into spaces within which the sunshiny skies of our mind that glow with the lights divine, with the sun of Love and stars of Wonder, are revealed. For, the firmness of my belief that Wonder and Love act as wings that will launch our spirits to the heavenly heights and instill the starriness of our beings in the eternal realm, beyond the clouds whereon angels and gods dwell, comes from their mere absence in the world which we inhabit. When I look at people around me, what strikes me most is how minuscule the glows of Wonder and Love engrained in their beings are. One of the first psychedelic experiences in my life enchanted me with the beauty of exploring that dawned like an undying sun on my head. While my friends turned into statuesque contemplators and smiling gods, I leaped up and began to explore every corner of the room I was in, then the garden that surrounded it, and then the streets and the house facades that lined them, the tram tracks, the asphalt, the Moon, climbing onto the roofs, touching every piece of solid matter around me and gazing at the world with the shiny crescent consciousness, with the starry eyes of a divine child, kneeling deep in my spirit before its infinite mystery. Therefore, I claim that before we begin to live just as I began to live from that starry night on, when the trains of Trans-Europe Express rolled across our audio landscapes, exploring with an everlastingly ignited curiosity every piece of the world that surrounded me, the world which now I know is the co-creation of our mind, the divine Nature and billions of her creatures, we will always be lacking one of those magical wings by means of which we could be lifted to the spheres of sheer spiritual ecstasy. The other wing is, of course, Love, another magical ingredient that is equally lacking, or at most pettily shone forth, in minute amounts, in human beings of the modern day. What one can glance with the eyes of a superman that penetrate through the outlines of the perceptible reality and into the spiritual sea upon which the ships of our beings float are these vacancies in human hearts that make earthlings confused, awkward and lame in social relationships, and this state of affairs will remain unchanged for as long as the great drive of the power of Love is missing in the wheels of their hearts. Unless we truly turn into suns that radiantly dazzle human eyes in their vicinity with the extent of empathy released, melting, recasting and healing their hearts thereby, we will hardly ever succeed in

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<sup>878</sup> Watch, for example, the Hayward family diner scene in the third episode of the TV series Twin Peaks directed by David Lynch (1990).

integrating this magical wing onto the arms of our spirit. Remember also that a bird flapping only one of its wings is predestined to spin in circles, never reaching far. Likewise, unless we pour the nectar of Love into our genuinely wondrous heart, we would end up resembling aged and withered, once radiant explorers who became lost in the labyrinths of the world, failing to realize that Love, which seemingly interfered with their freedoms, was the key to unlocking the doors that hid runways for leaping off into utterly free flights of spirit. As we, without Love as a fuel for the glorious spin of the wheels of our chakras, become yet another one of the mainstay occupants of the academic universe of the modern day, more akin to a Gollum with beady eyes flashing with sanguinary greed and egotism than to angelic creatures with sunshine in their eyes, yearning to scatter all the diamonds and pearls of intellectual treasures that they hold in the wind so as to exalt and empower the sad spirits of the world, we may first glimpse ourselves reflected in St. Paul the Apostle's claim that "knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth" (Corinthians I 8:1) and then let our spirit break into tears upon finding itself face-to-face with the Serbian sage's, Ava Justin Popović's saying that "knowledge without love is one horrendous 'nothing' and pure intelligence with not even a zest of love is the devil himself... knowledge is born from love and only through love does it rise to divine infinities... knowledge that loves is the force that transforms a human creature into an angel"<sup>879</sup>. On the other hand, should we fail to infuse love and devotion of our stances with the zest of wonder, we may end up stuck in the rivers of melancholic compassionateness, motionlessly gaping at others, fascinated by their charms but unable to yield moves that would express the feelings that boil within ourselves, guarding our sacred heart that is "the very same one that we're dying to reveal"<sup>880</sup>, as Feist would remind us, and making sure that it becomes a well-protected seed in the soil of our body, never dying, but also never realizing itself and yielding fruit in terms of infinitely inspiring expressions, waiting for a sign, without ever gaining enough courage and curiosity to explode in our spirit and engage in exploratory adventures that would lead to grasping them, letting what once used to be showers of these signs strewn like stardust all over the arches of our being turn into dry spells above our spiritually deserted and desolate self. This is why most of the time I feel as if we, the humans, have hit the grounds of this purgatorial planet, probably because we have grown deprived of these magical wings sometime in our karmic past. For, whenever we lose these soaring streams of Wonder and Love in our heart, our spirit thrashes on the ground of depression and fruitless hollowness. Therefore, neither do we explore enthrallingly enough, nor we empathize strongly enough with the world, and that is why we are stuck at this stellar station that we call planet Earth. Once we figure out how to embody these two fundamental pillars of sublime being in us, we will be able to launch our spirit into an eternal realm of sheer starriness, like the Christ and many other saintly, enlightened minds did. To restore these wings, becoming aware of their missing presents the first step; or, as Lao-Tzu pointed out, "The one who pretends to know what one does not know is of ill spirit; and the one who sees that spiritual illness as an illness is not of ill spirit" (Tao-Te-Xing LXXI). To that end, a step backwards can be said to present the first step forward on our journey to the fulfillment of our dreams of living divinely and turning ourselves into a shiny star on earth, as it did during Dorothy's walk along the Yellow Brick Road, before the next few steps on it swung her 'round and around and into a spiral, perhaps evoking a sense of futility of every newly made step, and only then became turned in the right direction. And once the road that leads to a destination becomes drawn in the back of our mind and we become

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<sup>879</sup> See Nevenka Pjevač's *The Evangelical Ladder of Virtues of Saint Ava Justin*, Blagodarnik, Belgrade, Serbia (2009), pp. 70 – 71.

<sup>880</sup> Listen to Feist's *Secret Heart on Let it Die*, Universal (2004).

accustomed to treading it, not like a Pope's devil, hastily and heedlessly, but like an angel, cautiously and gingerly, with every step we make this aim would seem nearer to our heart, all until one day, without even realizing it, we enter its realms. And with making these steps, we travel inwardly and outwardly at the same time, getting closer to the ideals of meditative unison with the divine music that echoes within our heart on one side and of shiny expressiveness that uplifts the earthly hearts on the other, as if pulling the arms of our spirit ever farther, ever wider, like the Christ on the cross, all until we become a sacred bridge between distant coasts of being and knowledge, enabling the wings of Wonder and Love to be attached to these arms and lift us over to genuinely blissful states of mind.

Mysterious distantness of the dazzling and captivatingly beautiful stars of our soul thus becomes blended with the loving proximity, endless admiration of another and genuine intimacy of the perfectly honest, trustful and openhearted light of the sun that is so direct and intense that it would blind us with its benevolent beauty if we were to stare at it directly for too long. Once we become one such star of spirit, wherever we find ourselves we would fill the room with our presence, making everyone aware that we are there, with each act of ours striking an impressive message to reverberate throughout the world that surrounds us. Yet, at the same time we would radiate with a mysterious, starry silence, giving away the overall impression of immersion in the river of Tao, which "recedes by coming by and comes back by receding"<sup>881</sup>, to a soul absorbed in our stance. Gazing into our eyes would then make us see the dazzling rays of loving attention radiating from their center, signifying our presence right there, while a mild, starry distantness would make it clear that a part of our mind is also not there, soaring on the wings of spirit through some distant skies of divine feelings, visions and thoughts.

For, just as the Christ's road to resurrection and eternal being led through his crucifixion, so is our way to the stars paved by the need to stretch the arms of our spirit to the opposite directions, being ever more introspectively withdrawn into the meditative silence inside and yet shining with an ever more intimate light of expressive empathy outside. With one such dialectical pull along antithetical courses, opening our hearts to others in Love and descending ourselves ever lower, leaning ever closer to others, while at the same time launching our spirit to distant stars of thought on the wings of Wonder, our flight to the dome of Heaven, the greatest voyage of our beings, starts. And this very start, the first step that we make, the seed of aspiration from which our action rises to life, determines how beautiful the star that we will enkindle in our heart will be.



How does **a shift away from the Way of Love** and either onto the side of extreme objectivism and respect of another that makes us become deaf to the music of our own heart or onto the side of extreme solipsism and dwelling inside of our heart's music that makes us insensitive to the beauty that others shine with look like, many may wonder.

As for the former, if you ever find yourself being guided by expectations of others, frozen and unable to dig out wonderful words and moves that you only dream of to the surface of the

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<sup>881</sup> See Ellen Kei Hua's Kung Fu Meditations: Chinese Proverbial Wisdom, Arion, Zemun (1987), pp. 53.

world, know that you may belong to this objectivistic extreme in which one values opinions of others more than those of oneself. Incessantly worrying whether one would fit into the world and satisfy other people's expectations leads to one such excessive amount of respect for the beings of the world that we make powerful authorities of. This obsession to satisfy other people's cravings and aspirations takes us away from an intimate contact with the depths of our soul, where the missionary path for our being in this world lies inscribed. By not paying attention thereto, we are predestined to blindly and inertly bounce off of creatures of the world, without being guided by the starry music of our own heart and without following the path that would take us to destinations of blissful insights and fulfillment of our mission on Earth. This is why enlightened creatures always appear slightly withdrawn within themselves, carefully listening to the music divine that their hearts beat to the rhythm of, but still not forgetting the compassionate element, the one of limitless respect and veneration of another, for whom one ultimately lives one's life. For, all this passionate following of the path of one's heart has one and only goal: to bring salvation to fellow human souls and life as a whole. In the end, therefore, these two poles of the Way of Love, the meditative and introspective one and the empathic and expressive one, feed each other, and just as in the Tai-Chi-Tu diagram, the essence of each sleeps in the heart of the other. Both the extremes of meditatively slumbering within the light of our soul and of keeping our hearts, chastely and innocently, in unions with those of others, placed side by side, overlapping each other, present us with the key to truly fulfilled living. That key is called the Way of Love. However, for as long as we stay unilateral and lean exclusively onto one or the other side, every impulse for action arising in us would bring forth not creative and inspiring acts, but mere futile nothingness, which would at the end of the day resemble the mysterious Zen sound of one hand clapping, a miniscule ripple snuffed out by the waves of the sea that Nature is.

Should we fall from the balance that the Way of Love describes, we would find ourselves in a dark and dissatisfied state of mind, where none of the thoughts or preconceived acts of ours would seem to be able to restore the glow of happiness to the then darkened stage of our mind. But to make the latter a scene of a lively show, where each one of our moves or visions would have lights thrown on them and be made to shed stardust of wondrous and loving inspiration like waterfalls or veils in front of the staggered gazes of the audience, and thereupon become a true star of spirit, we would need to go back on the track of the Way of Love and dwell in the inner silence of our being as much as to strive to unite our worldviews with those of others while being moved by a giant love and empathy. "That's me in the corner, that's me in the spotlight", Michael Stipe sang<sup>882</sup>, as if reminding us that even when all the stage lights are shed on us, when we are in the midst of a most expressive act that sends blasts of the sun of our loving emotions to the world, a part of our being has to be withdrawn inside and away from it. For, only by showing a meditative, opaque and dark side of the moon to the world alongside its shiny and expressive side can our creativeness reach the sublime heights of inspirational inexhaustibility. Told during her legendary trial that "the Church would abandon her if she fails to abjure and she would be left alone", Joan of Arc, the shining star of courageous dissent in the midst of Dark Ages, merely whispered, "Yes, alone... alone, with God"<sup>883</sup>, striking the chord that rings in cosmic harmony with the Way of Love, according to which journeying into the silence of our being, the state of perfect loneliness and independence on desires to satisfy social expectations and be liked by our milieu, is a prerequisite for our reaching the state of oneness with all that is

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<sup>882</sup> Listen to R.E.M.'s Losing my Religion on Out of Time, Warner Bros (1991).

<sup>883</sup> Watch The Passion of Joan of Arc directed by Carl Theodor Dreyer, available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vR3Ah9joyEI&feature=related> (1928).

and delivering the most supreme shine of healing empathy from the heart of our being to the world. Then, as we step on the Way of Love again, a miracle happens and a nihilistic perception of the universe suddenly cedes its place to the yellowish, sun-like smile of glowing happiness enlightening our soul, reflecting an infinite cosmic joy that is interwoven into it all, and yet letting subtle shades of compassionate sadness taint this joy with some melancholic softness. For, if the Sun, the star that brings life to our planet that encircles it, secretly tells us something, it is that the path of possibly every star that makes the revolving planets flourish with life is to be both a rising and a setting Sun in the eyes of its creatures. Likewise, both a setting Sun with its melancholic and fiery falling down the abysses of sacrificial empathy and love, and a rising Sun that bursts with lighthearted joy and happiness are to be entwined in starry spirits born on this planet. Also, with one pole of our being incessantly diverging and departing, and the other one approaching and arriving, the ideal of the Way of Love and the symbol of every way with its simultaneous separateness and connectedness become spontaneously actualized within ourselves. The ideal of mixing the starry glow of Wonder and the softening sunshine of Love, the two greatest forces that soar us upwards on our evolutionary ascents to ever greater vistas of being and whose neglect, conversely, pushes us downwards, into the karmic lowlands of being that we ought to have left behind long time ago, is thus achieved and let wash every corner of our being with its holy waters of divine devotion, making each and even the most delicate of our moves and incentives arising across the endless starry space of our mind blaze with the fire of immaculate meaningfulness and genuine purposefulness of it all. “Everything in its right place”<sup>884</sup>, we may then start to sing silently with every pirouette made, tumbling cymbals upheld by ethereal shadows in our graceful glide through the enticing terrains of the spiritual realm.

The Little Bear’s play, *In Limbo*, starts with the following words: “A darkened stage, suddenly a single circle of light is seen on stage and within is a person. The person is sitting, arms wrapped around knees, head bowed. Motionless. The person within the circle of light raises his head, looks around, confused, turns a circle within the circle of light. He reaches out his hand but cannot extend it beyond the light. He pushes, it doesn’t give. He is trapped within the light”. These words and the entire play powerfully depict a shift to the solipsistic side of the balance of the Way of Love. Three characters sit on a dark stage, each confined within a bubble of light. It turns out to be their spirit, which they helplessly try to break through with their arms. The impression is that they may either deem that the world, of some kind, must be out there for them to emerge to, but is only temporarily eclipsed by the darkness, or have come to terms with the idea that the world is hopelessly dark and impenetrable, when the truth is that this dazzle of the inner light has made it invisible to them. But then, after a long series of kicks and pushes, they begin to feel an upward lift. Like the movie director, Guido Anselmi, in the opening scenes of Fellini’s *8½*, locked in a car during a traffic jam, unable to open any of its doors and slowly suffocating in its gases, but only to let his spirit break through and find itself levitating above an open sea like a kite, drawn down by fellow human beings, so may have been the delirious impression of these earthlings found midway between two karmic stations of life, alternately feeling infinitely cramped and caged and yet sensing the upcoming soars into skies of new and unborn life. Soon these creatures will have realized that they are in limbo, presumably those awaiting us at the final stage of our lives, practically waiting for their spirits composed of memories and wasted impressions to wither away and dissipate in the cosmic darkness. Neglecting the world and the needs to pray and act so as to draw rainbows of happiness in the eyes of the people around us and instead withdrawing oneself meditatively inside, seeking

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<sup>884</sup> Listen to Radiohead’s *Everything in Its Right Place* on *Kid A*, Parlophone (2000).

enlightenment that would bring bliss to oneself only, so frequently advised by many of the followers of the Oriental theological teachings, might lead to one such state of mind. All the drives to use flesh to deliver the treasures of one's spirit to the world and beautify others therewith would thence cede their places to preoccupations with enlightening oneself, even though sooner or later we would realize that there could be no enlightenment of ourselves without badly craving to bring enlightenment to another, and *vice versa*. Our wish posed in the past and pertaining to our own enlightenment first and foremost has been fulfilled and although we would badly want to go back, here we are, dwelling in our own light; however, the realization of unbearable imperfection of one such stance would become strikingly obvious at the same time.

As the play goes on, one is invited to look at the abyss which may be the final moments of one's lifetime, and feel fear in face of it. A similar feeling of fear is invoked as the bellboy of Hell in Kim Collier's version of Jean Paul-Sartre's play *No Exit* drops pieces of paper, word by word, from a tall shadowy ladder, saying something along the line of "Feel fear by looking at these inhabitants of hell. Do not err like them. You are my last chance for escape", while in an eternally lit room three characters, freshly arrived from life on Earth to this hellish limbo of a kind realize that they are hell to each other and that nothing worse could be then spending eternity together, which is what they are about to do, however. "Hell is other people", one of the characters notices, while the audience is invited to observe that constant repetitiveness, a single door standing for a lack of options and null freedom, and no passage of time, which is to a mind overwhelmed with a sense of vanity the greatest enemy, are what typifies life in hell. The train which brings evanescence of one thing and the sunrise of another, epitomized with a whistle following the legendary question that closed *Pet Sounds*, "Could we ever bring them back once they have gone?"<sup>885</sup>, is thus a savior to a divine spirit rather than its ominous foe, I thought in the midst of the play, feeling as if a sealed proof that infinitely gracious Nature loves us all by yielding us life that we live is being stamped on my heart. At one point, the jerky valet, who makes us convinced with his acting that mere wonder, with not even the slightest grain of love in its starry pools, is equal to our standing on the doorsteps of a hellhole, and that love could be the only rescuer for our strayed soul, the one that could parachute us in a second beyond the clouds of the most sublime heavens straight from the darkest hellish reigns, points at a light on the stage and shows words that read "This light can see into you". For, whatever our hearts strive to attain, Nature sees it and opens the paths that lead to these goals in front of us, and if these wishes turn out to be devastating for our spiritual growths, Nature may still bring us face-to-face with them so that we can understand the magnitude of their disastrousness and find a way back to the light. A selfish mind obsessed with its own wellbeing first and foremost could thus be brought to the brink of one's own enlightenment by the misery imposed onto others, prompting one to realize that one such road, inherently imbalanced with respect to the Way of Love, in fact, leads to Hell rather than to Paradise. All of us have encountered creatures in life who appear to be guided by the age-old Serbian proverb, "There is no sunrise to one soul but as a sunset to another"<sup>886</sup>, and get kicks of elation out of making neighboring souls petty and miserable, but such a karmic route sooner or later ends in spiritual chasms of one kind or another. Turning broken hearts into lucky charms can be an addictive game to play, but all it does is soar one high, into the clouds of pretense from which the player will fall and have its spirit smashed and smeared all over the face of the Earth. The play, in fact, takes us by the hand to realization that to a selfish mind people are

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<sup>885</sup> Listen to the Beach Boys' *Caroline No* on *Pet Sounds*, Capitol (1966).

<sup>886</sup> "*Jednom ne svane dok drugom ne smrkne*", in Serbian.

the worst hell on earth, as much as they are the greatest conceivable blessing to a mind dedicated to live for others, and this magical line that separates Eden from Inferno is so tiny that it could be crossed at any given moment of our lifetimes, somewhat similarly as the road of million miles running through eternal darkness in Ivan Karamazov's dream could be crossed in the blink of an eye and turned into an unforeseeable heavenly bliss. For, to pull a switch in our minds and substitute selfish thoughts aimed at glorifying oneself, the thoughts that turn our heart into a black hole of a kind, with brightly glowing thoughts of love and devotion that transform our whole being into a radiant sun of spirit and our mind into a radio-head that thence begins to emit waves of sheer spiritual pleasure and happiness that will begin to permeate and beautify the world, it takes no more than a fraction of a millisecond.

This viewpoint brings to mind the story about a person taken by the hand of an angel to have a glance at Heaven and Hell. Through the pitch darkness, the door is said to have opened, allowing him to catch a glimpse of a room full of malnourished and miserable people. He rubbed his eyes to make sure that he is seeing this correctly and noticed that all these people had long spoons tied to their arms. A rich and savory soup was on plates in front of them, and yet each one of them was struggling to pour it in the mouth. Their suffering seemed immense and our visitor realized that he must have had a peek at life in Hell. Then, the door shut and another door, opening the view of Heaven, opened. In it, surprisingly, these very same people dwelled, but this time they seemed cheerful, well-fed and jubilant. The same spoons were, however, tied to their arms. Confused, the man turned around and asked the angel what the difference between Heaven and Hell is then, to which the angel merely replied, "These people, you see, they learned how to feed each other". Similarly, a step that divides the hellish realms of our soul from the heavenly ones is miniscule and could indeed be made in a millionth segment of a second. This may be so, of course, because fearfully glimpsing the distressing infernal rooms in life is sometimes necessary to prompt our spirits to engage in flights into the heavenly reigns of angelic Love and Wonder, far beyond the clouds of visible appearances.

Sitting in prayer under the blood red skies and the sound of bomb-shedding airplanes, or shaking in view of impending natural catastrophes and judgment days in our head, is what instills in us the feeling of fear, which, as numerous Biblical verses remind us (Psalms 111:10; Proverbs 1:7 & 9:10), is oftentimes the most effective cure on our stagnating walks towards the peaks of wisdom. After all, not safety that tends to put our spirits to sleep, but adventurous circumstances where dangers lurk behind every corner is what spurred life to evolve into stages that it currently occupies. In that sense, walking over the edge, on one side of which flourishing paradises and oases of peace and love reside and on the other side of which deadly abysses are found, is necessary if we are to keep on evolving into something greater than what we are now. And what we are now will undoubtedly seem as primitive stages in the development of humanity from a sci-fi perspective of future inhabitants of the planet, those who will stand on far more advanced and elevated vistas on the evolutionary tree of knowledge and life, whose dwelling places will be filled with "limitless gleaming wide white freeways that will lead us off into infinity"<sup>887</sup> and who will float like ethereal angels through the air, infinitely distant and cocooned within a microcosm of music sounding within their souls and yet able to offer unexplainably touching moves, simple and yet unforgettable, as well as create white doves of melodies that fly from their lips and carry the listeners on their wings to the sweetest Heavens, all owing to their fascinating empathic intimacy with the surrounding spirits. Yet, to arrive at these blissful destinations, an edge from

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<sup>887</sup> With these words Douglas Coupland ended his *Polaroids from the Dead*, HarperCollins, New York, NY (1996), pp. 198.

which we could fall is to be located in our vicinity instead of safe harbors, and courageously stood on. For, as soon as we do so, our potential to evolve into something greater than what we are now will begin to magically rise. Walking on the cliffs of life is thus the key to our evolution, and by looking at the abyss while holding the hand of omnipresent God or any of Her angelic messengers, the very thought of whom melts our heart with love, is how we best annihilate the fear of staring at it. This is why as a response to the Little Bear's play, I first brought forth Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire* as a complementary angle, the one in which angels lament over their distantness from the human fate, which is, unlike the angels', fragile and evanescent, but which also makes it possible for humans to exist, give, create, act and beautify others and the whole world, none of which the angels residing in a transcendental state can do. Second, I brought forth the stance held by Martin Buber in his classic book, *I and Thou*. From it, just as the co-creational thesis has advised, one sees the world through the eyes of a constant dialogue between oneself and divine Nature, which hides itself behind the veil of immediate perceptions. Everything that we perceive and the entire reality in which we are immersed, irrespective of how inanimate it may seem, palpitates with flaps of angelic wings and divine guidance, only if we learn how to communicate with it well. Therefore, not only is Edgar, the legendary sentient computer from the 1984 movie *Electric Dreams*, which sparked my preteenage dreams of San Francisco, the city in which I write these words, permeated with threads of responsive liveliness, but so does every piece of matter hold the grains of divinity within itself, thanks to which it incessantly responds to the vibration of feeling and thought sent forth by the depths of our mind and heart with subtle signs that show us the way to the stars. As the main character of Disney's *Tron: Legacy* uploads a file from a dusty computer found in the basement of an old arcade, this process lasting a few seconds becomes metaphorically represented by the battle between light and darkness of a full-movie length when magnified down to the level of the finest electrical circuits in the computer, irresistibly resembling Gospels in its storyline and prompting us to realize that the cognitive essence of our beings, likewise, has the ability to give rise to delightful or disturbing dances of spirits within each material detail of the world. When we arrive at this enlightening realization and begin to live it with every step of our lives, we become metaphorically represented by Pascal Lamorisse, the boy whose best friend is a red balloon that acts as if having a mind of his own<sup>888</sup>, representing, in turn, Nature in her subtle and mysterious, yet infinitely intelligent, guidance of human spirits. The storyline of this minimalistic masterpiece in the cinematic realm is such that by the end of it the dizzied watcher does not know anymore if the boy is the metaphor of the Christ, attacked by the jealous youngsters because of his extraordinary ability to subdue the balloon to his will and make it follow him everywhere he'd go while evading hateful people's hands, and then taken to the sky with hundreds of balloons magically emerging out of nowhere when his befriended balloon becomes punctured by the angry crowd, or it is the balloon itself that epitomizes the ultimately beautiful human spirit in this world, dying its earthly self, like the Christ, and then miraculously giving rise to balloons popping out of city streets, lofts and balconies to follow its route to Heavens, being all collectively saved by this little red balloon from Parisian slums, taking the entire planet, the boy himself, on a safe and enticing ride to Paradise with them. For, when the world around us is seen from the perspective of a dialogue between intelligent likes, mind on one side and Nature on the other, the reversal of their roles and faces, as in Rubin's vase, takes place easier than it would have otherwise seemed doable. However, for as long as our awareness treats material reality around us as inanimate, spiritless and wholly inert rather than breathing with divine spiritual vibration and resonating with each

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<sup>888</sup> Reference is made to Albert Lamorisse's movie *The Red Balloon*, Lopert Pictures Corporation (1956).

feeling and thought emitted from the ethereal antennas of our heart and mind, our journey to the higher planes of being and consciousness will be prevented by the burdens born by this anthropomorphic overbalance. How paradoxical it is then that materialism bears sheer disregard of the sacred value found in material objects, while spiritualism, considering the spiritual as real and the corporeal as illusion, treats material objects with far greater appreciation and respect, I wonder, which at times makes me want to stand on a tallest rooftop and proclaim loudly, from the top of my lungs, that should I ever come across a materialist who'd approach material objects sacredly, with the same level of reverence as the average spiritualist does, thus tearing apart this paradox that is deeply embedded in the fabric of our social reality, I would convert to the given materialistic philosophy right away. This is so because I have always held that a Platonist philosophy *bona fide*, finding just about enough sources of divinity in every withering flower, in every wandering cloud and in every pair of careworn eyes passing us by to not bother to even consider anything divine beyond the realm of the visible and the palpable is far closer to being a ladder to God than a fiercest focus on the holy spirit that pervades it all, but which neglects the beauty of small things craving for our attention in our immediate proximity, dying of thirst, but being watered not by the geysers of love and care that could have been sprinkled all over them from the depths of our heart. And, as we see, the philosophy presented here under the name of the Way of Love manages to blend this authentic materialism and genuine spiritualism into one, forcing us to see ultimate purposefulness and life at its greatest in the most miniature pixels of reality. For, all through the ages, every object has resembled one of the toys from Disney's Toy Story, rejoicing when being touched and played with by some chaste hands and spirits of this world, although somehow disallowed by the natural laws to openly show to us its animated appreciation for the kind vibration emitted by our heart in its direction, the vibration that is destined to remain at all times as ethereal and elusive as the roar of tigers under Selena's window in Fuad Midžić Street in Sarajevo, which, as the legend says, is still heard as an echo, thirty five years after it had been immortalized in a poem<sup>889</sup>. Instead, it gracefully keeps our lives suspended in the state of mystery and thereby sustains the spin of the wheel of evolution by our incessant drive to reveal what stands behind this mysterious veil of the reality. When I think of the bliss with which I see the world during the moments of immaculate spiritual balance within myself, I see one such ability to penetrate through the immediate appearances of it and into the subtle light that stands at the invisible foundations of it all. For, "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (Corinthians II 4:18), as St. Paul the Apostle said, summing the focus of interest of all religions, sciences and philosophies of the world: not the visible, but the invisible; not the revealed, but the hidden; not the apparent, but that which is resting at the root of it all.

Each one of us is thus like a tree rooted in these invisible and impalpable qualities of life, which include our emotions, aspirations, intentions and other mental vibrations that fill our minds and hearts. Just as the vitality of a tree depends on how efficiently it draws these invisible and yet essential qualities in which it is rooted and distributes it all over its being, so is it with human creatures: our healthiness ultimately feeds on love, wonder and other ineffable cosmic streams that journey like rivers of starry energy through our beings. When a fortune cookie in the Little Bear's hands said, "If you keep the tree of your heart in lush, the birds of Paradise will alight on its branches", it served as a reminder of how beautiful thoughts and emotions churning within our being cannot fail but give rise to a rain of celestial brilliants of pearly happiness

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<sup>889</sup> Listen to Zabranjeno Pušenje's Selena, vrati se, Selena on Das ist Walter, Jugoton (1984).

falling off our eyes and soul and sowing the spiritual soil of the world around us, spontaneously, with seeds of sheer divinity. Moreover, just as a tree would choke itself had it refused to let droplets of water that run upwards through its stem reach the surface of its leaves, evaporate, and be sent freely into the air to form clouds that would bring rain to other thirsty trees of the world, so should humans know that without incessantly striving to give alms and treasures that they have forged deep inside them, the light of happiness that illuminates their insides would eventually go to sleep and extinguish itself. For, “he who buries a treasure buries himself with it”<sup>890</sup>, as Gaston Bachelard pointed out, while drawing on Rilke’s verses in which the poet praised the tree’s roundness through which it is meditatively withdrawn inside, but only so long as its arms reach out to heavens, incessantly striving to benevolently ornament the world with its fruity essence: “One day it will see God and so, to be sure, it develops its being in roundness and holds out ripe arms to Him”<sup>891</sup>. For this reason, in their book *Tree of Knowledge*, a creative duo composed of two Chilean cognitive scientists, Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, demonstrated that life, “a mixture of intimacy and foreignness... a tension between two simultaneous dimensions: embodied and decentred”<sup>892</sup>, is all about the balance between: a) operational closeness, whereby all segments of a biological whole are interconnected within closed cybernetic feedback loops, and b) autopoietic openness, whereby each living system, be it a macromolecule, a cell, an organ, an organism or an ecological niche, can sustain itself only if it selflessly works in the direction of outlining the paths of progress of entities around it. Ingeniously giving away the essence of our being is thus the only way to have it incessantly replenished, whereas tending after it by partially withdrawing our awareness away from the surface of the world and covering our views of it with a starry veil of sheer mysteriousness is the way to produce sparkles of starriness within us, which would be shed all over the eyes of the world with every act of ours, instilling twinkles of wonder and love therein, saving and preparing them for some marvelous flights to celestial heights of spirit.

Then, just as we know that sources of infinitely versatile insights are dormant in each detail of the world and the subject of our research, we should correspondingly be aware that tiny and unnoticeable physical movements can sometimes serve as acts able to enlighten the boundless bubbles of mental spaces that surround us, so long as they are infused with celestial love and wonder. Thereupon, although creatures of the world may fall into depression and become deprived of the drives to deliver the treasures of their spirits to others, shedding infinitely subtle signs with our gestures or words may be enough to ignite these extinguished flames of faith in their hearts, elevating their spirits thereby, all until they reach sublime creative heights once again. A single brush of a person’s forehead with lovingness radiating from our heart may thus be enough to heal and harmonize years of mental and emotional imbalance; for, each one of us is rooted in love and just like trees and bushes need to be watered to thrive, so do human beings require love to stand upright and reach clouds of silvery happiness in their thoughts and bring about compassionate rains of love that feed the soil of their heart. In that sense, when we hear the bells ringing with the ancient Biblical call, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33), we should recall that provisions of love and other divine qualities to the beings of the world should stand before any insistence on material wealth; for, feeding others with love is what truly makes the world go round and around and blossom and prosper and thrive. When our heart bursts with

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<sup>890</sup> See Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space*, Beacon Press, Boston, MA (1958), pp. 88.

<sup>891</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 240.

<sup>892</sup> See Francisco J. Varela’s *Intimate Distances*, *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 8 (5-7) 259 – 271 (2001).

love for the creatures of the world, sending shivers of grace and warming up our entire being, we become aware that there are millions and millions of the most miniature thinkable things that we could do, be it drawing a line in the sand, stretching our arms as if embracing the whole wide world in them, making a soft leap on a damp summer night, tossing a grain of sand at the young Moon, or randomly putting letters in a sequence in any communication medium that happens to be near us, that will enlighten the essence of the world, the ocean of divine spiritedness upon which the sailing ship of perceptual reality gently floats.

Hence, every now and again we come to the conclusion that only love, for the neighbor and for God alike, can help us tear this burdening bubble of spiritual treasures self-imposed on us apart and let it dissipate like the sanctifying stardust with the winds of the world. In such a way, we may become “poor in spirit” (Matthew 5:3), but gain the whole wide world in return. For, the more of these beautiful things that we keep inside us we are eager to share and the poorer we become in spirit thereby, the closer we get to the kingdom of God.

When Harriet Tubman, the famed liberator of slaves, heard that a church to which she donated land was charging visits of it, she disappointingly noticed that “they make a rule that nobody should come in without a hundred dollars”, and added how “I wanted to make a rule that nobody should come in unless they didn't have no money at all”. Likewise, only after we give all that we have will the doors to heavenly being in this world open to our knocking thereon. Only after the shine of our sun in such that it is entirely sent out so as to bless others with the light of our spirit can we avoid our gravitational collapse into a spiritual black hole that swallows all within its horizon and gives nothing in return. Only then would we have a chance to establish the balance described by the Way of Love, whereby the meditative pull inwards and the empathic shine outwards are precisely equilibrated, sustaining each other with ever greater introspective insights on one side and ever more wonderful creative outbursts on another, and become a star of spirit, decorating the splendid skies of the Universe for ages to come.

And yet, on the way there, it is vital to remember that only insofar as we step out of the balance can we glimpse it, sketch it and return to it. For, after all, the heart of the Philosophy of the Way beats with the ideal of alternately approaching and diverging from all things in life so as to sustain the best and the most fruitful interaction with them as possible. Hence, if you have gathered an impression that I am writing these words from a perfectly balanced state with respect to the Way of Love, you are wrong. For, had I constantly resided on it, it would have gradually faded away into a blind spot in my perception and, consequently, beautiful descriptions thereof would not have been made possible. In that sense, it could be said that exactly because I failed to reside on the Way of Love at all times and mostly remained distant from it, merely dreaming of beautifulness arising from resting on it, that I manage to verbalize the magnificent scope of its meaning and importance. Just as a painter needs to distance himself from the object of his drawing and temporarily enter a remote and relatively passive relationship with it, so is every other artist obliged to stay away from the object of his artistic representation and merely dream about the inspiring ways of living that it holds rather than to fully animate it and integrate within oneself in order to create powerful signs that lead others to these marvelous destinations. If scientists and thinkers never backed away from the objects of their studies to plunge into the introverted microcosms of their thoughts where they have been crafting some stellar descriptions thereof, steps that advance the kingdom of science and philosophy would never be made and the same can be undoubtedly said for every relationship in life: namely, the key on when to approach the side we interact with and when to retreat from it are never given; they could only be sensed by the divine eye of our heart. The same need to distance oneself from the subjects of our

attention in order to engage in a prolific relationship with them applies in every other domain of human creativity, including the art of living and our philosophical quests for knowledge too. Realizing this prompted Kahlil Gibran to notice that “many a doctrine is like a window pane; we see truth through it, but it divides us from truth”, a line of thought that outlines the necessity to always remain like the Way, knowledgably separate from another and yet connected to it in blissful ignorance, thus combining what seems not combinable even in our wildest dreams. If we were to represent things more picturesquely, we would say that our aim is to pose two diametrically opposite qualities parallel to each other and then ride the starry train of our being on these heavenward rails, fragile and wiggly, always appearing as they would diverge and derail us from them, though, in the end, providing for a most fantastic journey we could embark on in this life. This perspective from which the value of distantness from the creatures and objects endearing to our hearts is highlighted also flies us on a magic carpet straight to the following verses composed by the Serbian poetess, Desanka Maksimović: “No, do not approach me! More grace is in this sweet tremble, abide and fear. All is prettier while it is being sought, of which it is known through tremble only. No, do not approach me! Wherefore and why? From afar only all shines like a star; from afar only we marvel at it all. No, let these two eyes of yours approach me not”<sup>893</sup>. Since the Way of Love is all about the balance between moving to and from the objects of our loving attention, we should never cease to look for the right moment to step closer or distance away with respect to them, for in the balance between the two is the key to divine acting concealed. And given that the ultimate balance always lies in the balance between balance and imbalance, we should be sure that no recipe will ever be given as to when to step out of the beat of the Way of Love and when to return and keenly stick to it with all our hearts. Thereafter, in his poem Harlem, Langston Hughes asks the following: “What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore - and then run? Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over - like a syrupy sweet? Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. Or does it explode?”<sup>894</sup> In this context, these verses are here to remind us that sometimes keeping the treasures carefully crafted inside of us for a long, long time without freely dissipating them in the winds of the world eventually results in a delirious explosion of creative acts that transform us not into a constantly shining star on the sky of the world, but to a supernova that sends blasts of loving energy throughout the world and sows seeds of indescribably beautiful future lives, while it simultaneously disappears from the view, somewhat similar to what the Christ achieved by his abolishment of oneself and yielding thereby a whole new world, thus resembling the little seed of mustard which he used in one of his most striking metaphors (John 12:24-25), the little seed whose miniscule self has to die in order to give rise to fabulous new trees of knowledge and being.

After all, the ends of lives of the most fabulous and fruitful stars that ornament the cosmic dome proceed through a most fabulous imbalance one could think of. As they step from the equilibrium which they sustained throughout millions of years of their constant shine into a self-destructive disequilibrium, they transform into supernovae that selflessly scatter their essence everywhere and disappear from the face of the sky once and for all. While stars are all about maintaining their shine and a stable spot in the sky through the embodiment of balance and conservation laws, supernovae are about forgetting the balance that was intrinsic to them for such a long time, thus ceasing to exist here and starting to exist everywhere, annihilating oneself and dissipating one’s essence all over the place in the form of a shower of seeds from which new

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<sup>893</sup> See Desanka Maksimović’s poem Tremble (1919), available at <http://www.inter-caffe.com/lista-408.html>.

<sup>894</sup> See Howard Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States*, Harper Perennial, New York, NY (2003).

stars and planets, along with novel emanations of divine beauties on them, will spring into life. In that sense, supernovae are highly reminiscent of the ultimately ethical way of being whereby one eradicates one's own profession, ego and reputation in order to empower the surrounding souls craving for light. This was legendarily exemplified by the way in which Radiohead executed the finale of *Kid A*; namely, the band bravely opted for discarding their trademark sound demanded by the public and decided to dive towards pearly seafloors of sound of enchanting and heartrending low-fi simplicity, yielding an infinitely poignant cosmic symphony from the most homemade set of equipment imaginable and thus drawing a rarely powerful pop message that told people that everyone, literally everyone can produce creations with a potential to touch millions of souls in each corner of the world, without leaving one's bedroom for once. Another monumental example comes from the first release of *Star Wars* saga and the decisive battle in it, during which Luke Skywalker hears the voice of his guru and the guide, the Jedi Master Obi-Wan Kenobi, who instructs him to use Force. Upon hearing this, our superhero on a mission to save the world immediately opts for shutting off the computer, that very same instrument that had helped generate the entire movie in the first place, and use his human intuition, all but based on cold rails of sheer logicality, instead. The creators of this cult movie, in such a manner, seemingly bit the hand that fed them, but in a bigger frame provided a vision that spoke against people becoming desensitized automata alienated from divine forces in them, a vision that has the power to truly save the world as such. To kill the deterministic drives dormant inside us, feeding on the twisted dreams of Leibnitz, Laplace, Hilbert and Russell and sowing the seeds of tyrannically disciplined frames of mind with every metronomic beat of their hearts, and install in their place the intuitive eye for the moment, flourishing from the stem of thought of Plato and Poincare, is thus what we must do if we are to escape the clutches of a lifeless, computer mind and create the basis for the rise of starriness in us. The next immediate example comes from Ludwig Wittgenstein's famous tractate<sup>895</sup>, the only written work published in the course of his lifetime, at the end of which the Viennese philosopher singlehandedly killed the essence of words, the very same tool with which he had expressed himself, leaving both himself and us washed by the infinite beauty of wordless being, having turned himself against oneself and thereby pointed at a beauty greater than one's own. Indeed, for years after he put an end to his tractate, he truly renounced dwelling in the realm of words and juggling them in vain attempts to philosophize about the essence of being, most definitely in accordance with Rainer Maria Rilke's later idea that "most experiences are unsayable, they happen in a space that no word has ever entered"<sup>896</sup>, and went on to work as a gardener, an amateurish architect and an elementary school teacher in the small Austrian village of Trattenbach<sup>897</sup>. As a reward, he must

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<sup>895</sup> See Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Routledge, London, UK (1918).

<sup>896</sup> See Rainer Maria Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet*, Barnes & Noble, New York, NY (1934).

<sup>897</sup> Wittgenstein allegedly received two offers from elementary schools in remote Austrian villages, the first of which he turned down because the village had a park and a fountain and was, as such, more "cosmopolitan" than Trattenbach, which he chose to teach in. Before he took this post, Wittgenstein donated all his fortunes to his billionaire cousins; asked why he did not donate money to charities or give it directly to the poor, he said that the money corrupts and it better be given to those who are already corrupt. This quirky decision of his has stood as a reminder of why socialism develops human consciousness in a more benevolent direction than capitalism, especially in any of its libertarian forms. Namely, in socialism, a large portion of the monetary aspects of one's existence are shifted to the government, which, albeit getting corrupted in the process, allows the people of the state to live less focused on these inherently corruptive existential aspects and become, eventually, more enlightened. In contrast, in capitalism, people are obligated to prostitute themselves to the idolatry of money for the sake of surviving, becoming less genuine and more artificial, less spiritual and more materialistic, less divine and more demonic along the way. See Apostolos Doxiadis' and Christos H. Papadimitriou's *Logicomix: An Epic Search for Truth*,

have deemed, by shunning words one becomes installed everywhere, with no name or traces to fame left behind on this planet, but with “names written in heaven” (Luke 10:20), epitomizing the Biblical seed that dies in essence, but becomes a source of omnipresent beauty stretchable far, far ahead in time.

All in all, this is to say that swinging between balances and imbalances is what comprises the ultimate balance in life. For, without falling and being humanly fragile in this life we could never reach angelic heights of being and *vice versa*: with no sublime withdrawnness into the starry spaces of our soul we could never enclose the hearts of the dear ones in this world with inspiring and truly wondrous ways of being.



**“Does Heaven speak?”** The seasons four revolve, and all things multiply. Does Heaven speak?” asks Confucius in his Analects. Truly, while spinning, orbiting and journeying joyously across the behemothian cosmic vastnesses, the stars send out glimmers of light that fertilize and multiply the planetary worlds, as if seeding the Universe with their celestial essence and helping it continue to keep the light of the holy spirit that pervades it all alive in spite of its dying relentlessly, from one moment to the next. It is stars that have lit up the starry wonder in human eyes in their facing the eternal mystery of being that stars foreshadow in their twinkle. And the world around us, it gets ever more wonderful and inspiring over time, instigating us to find the signs of a miraculous creative power in each one of its tiny details. Or, as put in the words of Augustine of Hippo, the words which served as the opening to Gregory Bateson’s *Mind and Nature*, one of the philosophical classics of the modern times: “And so Plotinus the Platonist proves by means of the blossoms and leaves that from the Supreme God, whose beauty is invisible and ineffable, Providence reaches down to the things of earth here below. He points out that these frail and mortal objects could not be endowed with a beauty so immaculate and so exquisitely wrought, did they not issue from the Divinity which endlessly pervades with its invisible and unchanging beauty all things”<sup>898</sup>. These words distantly bring to mind the verse inscribed on Carl Gustav Jung’s tomb, epitomizing the message that stands at the entrance to the world of ethereal and eternal spiritual being: “*Vocatus Atque Non Vocatus Deus Aderit*”, or when translated to English, “Called or not called, God will be there”. For, everywhere is the sign of God. A divine meaning is inscribed in it all, while at the same time everything around us is being drawn vividly by the paintbrush of our consciousness, in such a manner that the face of Nature is always a partial reflection of the face of our spirit and *vice versa*. All of this is, of course, in accordance with the co-creational thesis, which tells us that both the essence of our spirit and the voice of God wave at us from each detail of our experiential worlds. Or, as exclaimed by the poet of the Psalms, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no

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Bloomsbury, New York, NY (2009), pp. 343. See also Spencer Robins’ Wittgenstein, Schoolteacher, *Paris Review* (March 5, 2015), retrieved from <http://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2015/03/05/wittgenstein-schoolteacher/>.

<sup>898</sup> See Gregory Bateson’s *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity*, Hampton Press, Cresskill, NJ (1979).

speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world” (Psalms 19:1-4)<sup>899</sup>.

On the other hand, on a sunny day in the inner landscape of his, Emerson noticed that “Nature always wears the colors of the spirit”<sup>900</sup>, reminding us, in turn, that recognizing signs of divinity in lilies that “do not labor or spin”, but, still, with their colorful waving shed a greater beauty than “Solomon in all his splendor” (Luke 12:27), is possible only insofar as we actively sprinkle them with the rays of celestial beauty emerging freely from the sunny sceneries of our mind and heart. For, as the co-creational thesis tells us over and over again, the world as we perceive it is the product of active, though mostly subconscious perceptual creativity of us as the cognitive subject and of Nature as the divine co-creator of all things existing. For this reason, it is us that are the guardians of our fate as much as we are voyaging down its streams with the missionary faith, the streams we may see in the moments of crystal clear clairvoyance as falling like waterfalls from the starry heights above our heads, the streams into which we should simply jump and journey, freely and gracefully, with no fears left to distract us on our ways, as spontaneously and naturally as it can get. “Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?” (Luke 12:26), the Christ’s words are then heard reverberating in the background, as we stand next to this magical waterfall and contemplate the geysers of beauty that would begin to pour out of our being once we start to go with its flow.

And so, even when I saw the message “V is for Victor who got squashed by the train” imprinted on a painting in Victoria’s apartment, I could not help seeing it as a good sign, telling me that I am on the right path. For, not only does squashing bring a lovely playful word to mind, but the train has stood as one of the most powerful symbols of my life on this planet. Not only is “the little train” the way Fido, myself and my parents would arrange ourselves on a bed at night, but “starry train” is the title I had given to my musical oeuvre, whereas it was by the edge of the railway tracks that I conceived and began to write my first philosophical pieces in English. Of course, symbols invoking enlightening impressions are special for each one of us, and each one of us should be wide awake and receptive to them in daily life. Those could be trains, sea splashes, cedar chests, little bears, gold coins, pinecones, celestial asterisms, mountain peaks, glistening snowflakes, or anything that triggers the inner feel that Nature has dropped before us signs that whisper with the way our mission in life should be. To faithfully follow them and use as compasses to navigate the ship of our being is how we become true spiritual adventurers in this life. That is also how Nature communicates with us: by sending metaphorical messages that produce unexplainably illuminating insights and which could be grasped by our intuitive powers more than by the threads of logic and reason. Therefore, what I urge all of us, including scientific scholars, to do is not only to rely on the analytical powers with which we process our perceptions, but to always have an eye opened to glimpse the signs of the power divine which sends its blissful flashes to blind our mind and eyesight whenever we find ourselves on the right path.

A million times or more it has happened to me to recognize striking signs of divinity strewn on my path and be stunned by their majesty, as if my mind has been hit by a lightning bolt of a kind. In those moments, I would feel as if celestial hands were mysteriously stretching towards me, so as to grasp my spirit and show me the right ways. Needless to add, the pillars of

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<sup>899</sup> Found while browsing through Francis Chan’s *Crazy Love*, David C. Cook, Colorado Springs, CO (2008) in a Borders bookstore on a spring day.

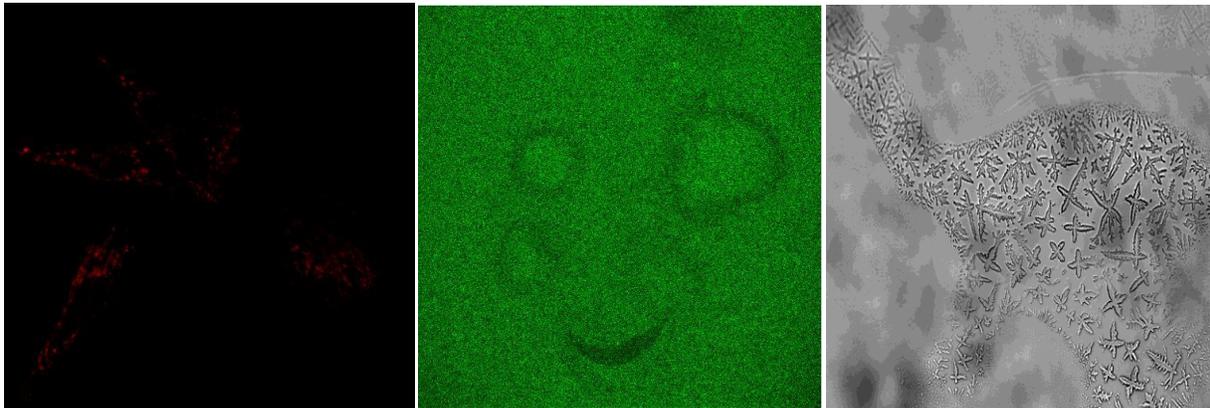
<sup>900</sup> See Ralph Waldo Emerson’s *Nature*, Chapter I, available at <http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/emerson/nature-contents.html> (1836).

faith in the co-creational nature of reality, in the most religious form thereof, the one wherein one feels as if involved in an incessant communication with the divine powers that stand behind the curtains of our immediate perceptions, which raise subtly and quietly only to those whose knocking on the doors of reality that they cover is immensely beautiful, is a necessary precondition for one's ability to notice these wonderful signs. Literally speaking, noticing them would be, of course, a misnomer, considering the objectivistic connotation of one such notion; instead, these signs that are present in every experiential detail of our world are always co-created using the powers of our wonder and love and other ineffable qualities of our being on one side of this marvelous dialogue and the guiding voice of Nature on the other. Moreover, the greater one's faith in the immanence of this theological dialogue between our spirit and the divine Nature in every detail of one's experiential world, the more fascinating and supernatural these signs appearing in one's eyes will be. Realizing the divine origins of such signs tends to initiate a starry train of impressions in one's head, leading to a dazzling flash of illuminating insights, and the perceptive sparkles that are interpreted as such signs are unique for each one of us. As we see, depending on the way in which one's being stands on the pedestal of faith and other essential cognitive qualities, from which one is involved in the co-creation of one's experience, these signs may spring forth from the most ordinary details and events, which one turns out to ascribe special meanings to by employing the powers of intuitive and imaginative reasoning via analogies, or may belong to some truly unusual and stellar occurrences. As for the latter, amongst innumerable such details that have touched the miraculous firmaments of my experience in their oddity, I am inscribing here the remembrances of a few only. As for the most recent one, it happened during a difficult period of my career, in the midst of which I was being terminated by my academic foes, the proponents of commodified education and the extinguishers of the flame of academic freedoms, who based their rule on the sheer power of authority, on bludgeon and boulder in their hands and not even an iota of knowledge, let alone love. As I, the relentless fighter for freedom stood up against this tyranny, their arrows and spears descended on me immediately and I sat squatted, wounded down to my heart, having no idea how to proceed except knowing that hatred is not the key. And then the message from high above came, in the form of a transmission electron micrograph, symbolically on a Good Friday, right before Easter, the day representative of the greatest phase transformation in the sphere of spirit one can imagine. It displayed a very rare and difficult-to-capture event of a direct contact between a nanoparticle that we investigated in my lab and a bacterial cell. It also presented a key evidence on our long quest of figuring out the mechanism of antibacterial action of these nanoparticles. Refuting other, more aggressive hypotheses that we flirted with, it showed a nanoparticle literally kissing a bacterial cell and with the suction of that kiss pulling the molecular components of the wall to itself, thus disintegrating first the cell wall and then the cell as a whole. It was a sign that in the act of the Christ in the story about the Grand Inquisitor<sup>901</sup>, giving the latter a kiss and saying no word nor making any other move before disappearing in the dark, does the key lie. On one hand, this reconfirmed my belief that we badly need a shift of the paradigm with which medical treatments are conceived, specifically from those perceiving the pathology as a thing that must be attacked and eliminated to those perceiving the pathology as a thing that should be, first and foremost, loved. Love enlightens – 'twas the sign that descended on me on that starless night, reiterating what I have both known and forgotten on broader, more spiritual planes: if we had every sensual pleasure and material wealth in the world, it would not bring as much fulfillment to the soul as a single glitter of love, illuminating the world from the

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<sup>901</sup> See Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, Prosveta, Belgrade, Serbia (1880).

bottom of our heart outwardly and turning us into a star in the eye of the Cosmos. And so did the great transformation proceed, from a black hole of down and depression to a star of eternal joy and happiness. As for the less recent case, it happened in late 2010, during my writing the first draft of this book, as I sat by a confocal microscope for the first time in my life, training myself how to analyze cells and particles tagged with fluorescent markers. As I decided to take a random image, a Take 1 in the realest sense of the word, merely for the sake of practice, not at all looking after finding an exciting segment of my sample to focus on and capture, a red-colored cytoskeletons of a cellular conglomerate spread in the shape of a star, similar to the one that stood at the entrance to the road that this work has been, magically popped up out of nowhere, reminding me once and for all that starry trainings of our spirits take place constantly, at any given time of our lives. For, examination of each detail of reality always comprises a dialogue between the deepest core of our spirit and the divine Nature that permeates it all with its celestial and omnipresent spirit, so that even playing with a single seashore pebble in our hands with love and wonder in our heart equals talking to God and journeying along the evolutionary rail, on the starry train of our being, towards becoming an everlasting star in the eyes of the Universe, each one of which glows with an angelic light that gives it all to save the world. Hence, whatever the question that arises in the deepest spheres of our consciousness, the angelic wings of Nature will begin to flap everywhere around us, silently sending hints to fly through the air and burst into millions of starry twinkles, each one of which opens up the road that leads to the answer.





On yet another lovely day, the first beam of light whose reflection from a wholly failed sample I captured with the digital camera was a sweet smile. I paste it here right next to this red star glowing faintly on the black background. This mysterious smile had quite the opposite features: in its case, the backdrop of informational nothingness supplied it with recognizable features, while the noisy green fluorescence, which would have otherwise yielded meaningful morphological outlines had the sample not been a flop, brought about a uniformly illuminated background, reminding me once and for all that things deprived of our attention, appearing to be a total failure, such as the sample that smiled at me on this memorable day, opening cracks in our consciousness which most people fear to look at, believing that they will swallow up their glow like black holes of a kind, oftentimes hide wonderful signals for the otherworldly antennas of our spirit. It is by incessantly keeping a special place for this insight on the pedestal of our consciousness that the suns of wondrous imagination begin to erupt from the depths of our being, illuminating the divine paths all around us and letting us ride on the wings of inspiring recognition of infinitely fanciful signs in the most depreciated details of our experiential reality, such as the friendly dinosaur all made of stars that I recognized in ordinary salt sediments when I came across them accidentally under an optical microscope. This dinosaur, like the star and the smile that it is pasted next to all stand forth as elusively miniscule and yet cosmically oracular in their significance. Finally, to top this string of microscopic visions with a petite crown, I place below these three images a composite one I created for kicks by substituting the starry sky on Van Gogh's *Starry Night* with a scanning electron micrograph of wavy collagen fibers interspersed with crystallized grains of a mineral salt, burning like aberrant stars on a turbulent

night sky, evoking madness and frenzy more than peace and quiet. As I wrote in its caption for the purposes of a presentation that never happened, in a gallery with gullies and gaggles, “The muses of science have created the sky and the muses of arts have made the land. And herein, they are one and the same. Now, whether the future will bring forth a more frequent usage of scientific imagery as the backbones of pieces of art we have yet to see. Hopefully the answer is a big and glossy Aye”<sup>902</sup>.

And when you see enthralling things in ordinary details of the world, lovely faces on rugged stones and pebbles and dancing figurines on trees, even though that may make you a subject of ridicule, know that this is how the celestial dreamers of the world are shaped - by seeing divine messages in every piece of the world that surrounds them. It is as if we are being spun in the midst of the starry beauty that is everywhere around us – below, beside and above. Or, as Paul Dirac, the originator of the principle according to which only what is beautiful can be shown as scientifically sound and important, pointed out, “Pick a flower on Earth and you move to the farthest star”, letting the words of Gaston Bachelard reverberate in distant harmony, “All flowers speak and sing, even those we draw, and it is impossible to remain unsociable when we draw a flower or a bird”<sup>903</sup>. “All that glitters is gold, don’t believe what you’ve been told”<sup>904</sup>, says Sam Herring in a song by Future Islands and I add that all that glitters not is gold too; magical doors they both are, opening before a wondrous viewer channels taking her heart straight into the center of the Universe. Hence, whether we recognize this or not, all things around us incessantly speak to the mystical eye of our mind, showering us with the stardust of lifesaving signs that originate straight from the heart of divinity that enfolds the entire Earth in its embrace. However, when we set this wondrous frame of mind that recognizes these divine communications that the worldly things make to us, we start to feel as if we are immersed in the splendor of stars twinkling with love and beauty at each and every moment of our existence. And it requires travelling inside in meditation to get in touch with these stars and their angelic signs that lie far away from the immediate sources of our perceptive stimuli. For, as the Way of Love has taught us, the deeper we travel inside, the further we stretch the boundaries of our being. If we want to stream for the stars, we need to learn the secrets lying at the depths of the ocean of our heart. And if we want to reach oneness and harmony with this majestic reign of the soul inside, we need to expand the arms of our creativity benevolently and in love towards others, like this red cellular star that miraculously emerged from the darkness of the microscopic world, appearing to be holding a precious sign from Nature in its heart, all until we embrace the whole wide world with the sunlight of our spirit. For, meditation without empathy equalizes us with a star that collapses under the force of its own inwardly pulling gravity, with no explosive shine of its insides to counteract it; thus we transform into a black hole in the spiritual domain. Only through meditation that confines us into a lustrous bubble while we simultaneously spread the shine of our spirit outwardly, connecting ourselves with the stardust of divine energy that surrounds us from all angles, do we get to enjoy full benefits of it. That is when we become an epitome of the Way, the ultimate symbol of simultaneous separateness and connectedness, the more of a Cosmos in our tiny self the more we journey inside, towards the center of our heart and mind, as if living up to the image of the crucified Christ, leaning the eye of our mind onto our heart with arms spread to the entire world and realizing that becoming one with our unique

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<sup>902</sup> The poster presentation was scheduled for the Fall meeting of the Materials Research Society in Boston in November/December 2014.

<sup>903</sup> See Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space*, Beacon Press, Boston, MA (1958), pp. 177.

<sup>904</sup> Listen to Future Islands’ *A Dream of You and Me on Singles*, 4AD (2014).

stellar self is helplessly tied with becoming one with the whole Universe, for the final destination of the road of perfect meditation and that of the path of utmost empathy merge into One.



Enchanted by the incessantly revolving stars and planets in the space of our mind and thinking about the evolutions their revolutions bring forth, we may be prompted to realize that **rebellious goings against the stream** are the key to progressive, evolutionary acting. To arrive at this conclusion we need not stray far from the basic laws of thermodynamics and the daily acts seen in their light. For example, every time we get off chair, we do so by investing some work and thus breaking the natural tendency of us as thermodynamic systems to simply float towards states of increased entropy by, say, lying down and dissipating away. In other words, every act aimed at increasing the order in the Universe is an act of rebellion against the second law of thermodynamics, which is a fundamental law of Nature. Hence, to evolve into higher states of consciousness and act so as to increase the level of order in the world implies breaking the second law of thermodynamics. If we suddenly descend now into the social realm from this cosmic panorama of thought, we would swiftly realize that friendships and romantic relationships around us are built on inappropriate questions that break into pieces the walls of shallow intimacy and *laissez faire* erected by common communicational standards. As we find ourselves conversing with a celestial creature, feeling all enchanted by the heartwarming excitement of the *tête-à-tête* we are engaged in, we could easily notice that the latter is pervaded with constant little surprises that clash with its predictable flow and tirelessly amaze us, producing glistening twinkles of wonder in our eyes. After all, as the very root of the word “conversation” implies, creative and fulfilling verbal communication should be all about ceaselessly reverting and contrasting our beliefs and expectations, spinning us in circles like a pirouetting ballerina and converting us into a new I with each and every second of its starry flow. Likewise, creative behavior that dazzles others with alluring stardust shed all around one is all about ceaselessly breaking habitual anticipations of those who surround us regarding what our next move will be as well as finding balance between following the stream of natural movements of our bodies and yet rebelliously going upstream with respect to the spontaneous, downstream flow of routine movements subconsciously conceived by our consciousness. It is no wonder then that J. R. R. Tolkien conceived the word Hobbit, used to describe the tediously composed and disinterested creatures whose day-to-day life resembles that of the fictional character locked in always the same, one and only Groundhog Day, as the one closest to the word “habit”. It is as if he was trying to secretly whisper to our ears that if we are to engage in the grandest adventure of our lifetimes, during which the entire world will magically become flooded with the stardust of celestial compasses and signs, streaming to be transformed into a spiritually fulfilled being, fully born out of the eggshell of our currently cocooned creative existence, we ought to resiliently break our habits, both conspicuous, daily ones and minute ones that pass unnoticed by the windows of our consciousness. The only vital thing to keep in mind here is the non-ideality of the stance – albeit probably unattainable in reality - of a person who would be breaking communicational rules with each and every heartbeat of his, incessantly, from one movement-yielding impulse to another. Two of these ultimately autistic creatures that adopted such a hypothetical stance would never be able to communicate with each other; rather, each and every expression of theirs would represent chaotic bouncing off the stream of common understanding.

Their differing expressions would continue to be made until every single droplet of thought comprising this stream along which two hearts in confluence could have flown has become dispersed in the air and nothing but an arid desert inhabited by two parched spirits has taken place of this stream generated by the little acts of loyalty, respect, and at their deepest, Love. After all, if we could magnify the atomic events happening all around us and condense those occurring on eco-systemic and planetary scales, we could easily recognize that the dynamic processes of which our realities are made, be they on the atomic or cosmic scales, follow the principle of “two steps in step, one step out of step”, so to say. For, without the natural entities following preset paths, while constantly figuring out the way how to escape the whirlpools of unimaginative being that these paths ultimately lead to, no stable grounds for the rising of the monument to the divine beauties of being that our physical reality is, stable and yet evolutionary, could have been made possible. Henceforth, what emanates as the ideal approach to creative expression from the perspective of the Way Love expounded across the pages of this book is anything springing from the balance between relentlessly going against the stream of the drowsing monotonousness of habit-driven actions on one side and yet unceasingly, via channels of empathy built inside of us, continuing to act in concert with the expectations implicitly set forth before us prior to every expression conceived and made. Still, what the world, locked in the states of exorbitant conformism and engrossed by the spirit of followers rather than groundbreaking innovators, in my humble opinion needs today is someone to shake off this intrinsic lethargy and spiritual somnambulism of its by urging it to revisit the devastating effect that our socially predisposed propensity to act in accordance with our habits has on the creativity of our being in this world. For, by giving in to our habits we walk towards becoming a preprogrammed robot displaying boringly predictable behavior and not a ballerina on the stage of life, ready to pull moves that stun with their gracefulness, ingenuity and the ability to animate human spirits in subtle, unpretentious and all but vulgarly explicit manners. These habits that channel our behavior along repetitive, monotonous and easily predictable streams thus act as none other but shackles for our limitless creative powers; whatever we do, as a result, will tend to leave the eyes surrounding us more dreary and drained of inspiration rather than uplifted and sent into starry orbits of joy and wonder. Constantin Stanislavski, who claimed that creative expression is conditioned by one’s tearing apart the “universal, generalized mannerisms cast in iron-clad permanent forms”<sup>905</sup> that ordinary people, thoroughly unaesthetic in their bodily expressions, are, thus conceived of the greatest acting, the one that is “not satisfied with merely visual and audible effects... but (with the life of a human spirit) leaves a lifelong mark on the spectator”<sup>906</sup>, as rebellion against “forced, conventional untruthfulness implicit in stage presentation”<sup>907</sup>. For, every communication, be it gestural, aural, sensual or verbal, has to rely on convention in order to convey its meanings, and yet the imperative posed in front of it is to break these very same rules of convention if it strives to be inspiring and creative. Concordantly, if we peek into the mental realm of our being, we would realize that every original idea that sprouts in our heads has formed as such by going against the stream of leisured thought. Hence, not only are quite reasonably the words “evolution” and “revolution” found to be lexically almost identical, since revolution of a kind stands at the root of every evolution in Nature, but we can also revert to the verses sung by Neil Tennant with his characteristic ballroom solemnity, “from

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<sup>905</sup> See Constantin Stanislavski’s *Building a Character*, Routledge, New York, NY (1936), pp. 21.

<sup>906</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 320.

<sup>907</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 319 – 320.

revolution to revelation”<sup>908</sup>; this is so because an upheaval in the mental realm, during which our world may seem transformed as much as Dorothy’s as she moves from the dim and overcast Kansas atmosphere to the golden and colorful ambiance of Oz, paves the yellow-brick way for our arrivals at wizardly original insights and ideas. For this reason, my advice to the question of how to approach any given creative process in life is the following: “Figure out what the most routine and expectable manner of doing things is and then do something else”. For, it does not take more than common reason to realize that if we wish to impress the worldly audiences with the fruits of our creative work, we need to offer something that differs from what they anticipate to receive. Henceforth, asked by the lawyer what he should do to inherit eternal life (Luke 10:25), the Christ, who carefully stuck to the latter ideal by regularly stunning his listeners with “his provocative speech in which conventional expectations are inverted”<sup>909</sup> and who was called by St. Paul the Apostle “the end of the law” (Romans 10:4), offered an analogy that pointed at the necessity of doing the impossible, of extinguishing the very law in order to sacrifice oneself for the wellbeing of another. The message of his could be summarized by saying that so long as we stick to laws, whatever they might be, it is guaranteed that we won’t make steps that will brighten up the heavenly eyes watching over us with joy and gladness. In the realm of organizational science, we could recall that innovation fosterage, all through the ages considered to be the healthiest of all business traits, is inherently based on the creative impulse to resist the allures of profiting through stagnation, that is, abide by the take-the-money-and-run rule that epitomizes economic shortsightedness and greed. Furthermore, when an entrepreneur spots a niche for his business ideas to thrive in, he essentially realizes how to act differently with respect to the competitors and rebel against the routine ways of managing things in the field<sup>910</sup>. Hence, once again we can put the sign of equality between the operations of conformity and regression. Consequently, we could infer that deviations from the roads of safety and comfort that entail denunciation of conformist tendencies in us and becoming at peace with stressful walking along the edges of abysses is the way that leads to progressive vistas of being in this life. It is for this reason also that the Freudian emphasis on elimination of physical and psychological stresses and tensions as the roots of happy dwelling in our bodies and minds can be criticized for its mediocrity-fostering ideals. For, leisurely going with the flow is fine unless we aim at becoming the leader in the evolution of our spirits, our minds and the fascinating world of technology in which we are immersed. If we desire to become one such leader, however, we have to learn how to deal with the stress, not by dissipating it, but by absorbing it and using it to transcend to higher levels of being. For, “stress is the salt of life”<sup>911</sup>, as the saying of my friend, Dejan Raković goes, encouraging us to think of the impossibility of elevating any natural system to higher organizational levels without its openness to constructive absorption of stressful influences. In a musical context, this can be evidenced by the fact that listening to new pieces and records, as much as getting acquainted with other types of pieces of art or human creativity that are new to us or with progressive social circumstances, is connected with mentally and emotionally exhausting experiences. This explains why Keith Haring wrote in his journal that “to come into contact with a truly wonderful ‘work of art’ causes a tremendous revolution to occur in you”<sup>912</sup>,

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<sup>908</sup> Listen to Pet Shop Boys’ My October Symphony on Behaviour, Parlophone (1990).

<sup>909</sup> See Wikipedia entry on the parable of the Good Samaritan, available at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parable\\_of\\_the\\_Good\\_Samaritan#cite\\_note-5GLuke-1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parable_of_the_Good_Samaritan#cite_note-5GLuke-1) (2012).

<sup>910</sup> See Paul B. Brown’s How to Spot an Opportunity, Forbes (March 8, 2013), available at <http://www.forbes.com/sites/actiontrumpseverything/2013/03/08/how-to-spot-an-opportunity/>.

<sup>911</sup> Dejan Raković’s Christmas Card, Personal Correspondence (December 30, 2012).

<sup>912</sup> See Keith Haring Journals, Penguin, London, UK (2010).

paraphrasing the thought of Robert Henri and reminding us that encounters of sensible, artistic minds and marvelous pieces of human and natural creativeness, being akin to one's going against the stream rather than along with it, induce more of the impressions of emotional earthshaking and intellectual shattering to pieces rather than smooth, pleasant and leisured experiences. In other words, just as each type of progressive steps in Nature requires investment of some work, these artistic encounters that eventually result in spiritual and intellectual ennoblement of the subject are likewise entailed by an energy expense of a kind. Only after we become familiar with these artistic pieces can we use them as boosters of our spiritual integrity. It is as if knowing them requires climbing up an energy hill, from the top of which we will be able to clearly see them in their entirety, enjoy the gorgeous views and slide down in joy and satisfaction when needed. In life, alike, it is wonderful mountains and hills that we ought to climb at while making precious spiritual steps on the account of alternately building and constructively absorbing stress and moving against our tendency to drop lifeless at the mountain base. However, once at these tops, realizing the magnificent seascape stretching in front of us, we can jump down from these cliffs of Love straight into the sea anytime we would like to, bringing gifts of happiness to the world of ours time and again. To put it simply, to reach the sublime heights of Love in this life, we need to be brave and determined to walk where no one has walked before, to act against the social expectations of ours and break the boundaries of normality and ordinariness with every breath of ours.

What this perspective also means is that once we find a grain of disagreement on the pebbly road of knowledge on which we walk and inspect it in our hands, then figure out that something may be wrong with it and send our inquisitive glances towards the starry skies, it is as if the ET spaceships are appearing in front of us and sending down the neon elevators to help us ascend towards higher levels of knowledge. One of such rare sayings from the Gospels that I may not agree with, despite attempting to metaphorically understand it from various different angles, is Luke 6:40: "The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master". For, how could the world evolve had it not been for those lovingly devoted to others, for those who sacrificed their own egotistic reputation and integrity to elevate the little ones of the world all the way above the skies of their sublime minds? Had the teachers of this world refused to raise the greatness of their children and disciples over those that they themselves have achieved, this world would have turned itself into a greedy land of gate-guardians who prefer to breed generations of faithful and obedient followers rather than those of tireless questioners and seekers who subject everything to endless inquiry and scrutiny, thereby avoiding the blind spots into which human creatures inevitably fall during their journeys from cradle to grave. Every person is a bottomless well of creativity and the teachers' presumed unsurpassable greatness with respect to their disciples unavoidably leads to despotic insistence on passive obedience of authoritative commands, which is a perfect way to deplete the person of its creative waters; fostering the mysterious underground streams to flush its walls with forest freshness and keep it constantly replenished, on the other hand, falls in the subtle domain of spiritual motivation, as all the masterful teachers can attest to. Besides, to have the disciples strive strongly to surpass their teachers is the greatest testament to the teachers' influence over their intellectual progeny and the sign that the latter are paying credit to this invaluable influence, wherefrom even Leonardo da Vinci's point of view that "it is a wretched pupil who does not surpass his master"<sup>913</sup> can be seen dually: either as a benevolent call for the disciples' ascending to greater heights than the teachers alone have been to or as a self-loving call for the disciples to

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<sup>913</sup> See E. H. Gombrich's *The Story of Art*, Fifteenth Edition, Phaidon Press, London, UK (1989), pp. 362.

not forget their teachers and leave them behind, but to use this knowledge bestowed upon them as stepping stones for their progress and thus pay homage to their teachers, be it explicitly, in the eyes of humanity, or implicitly, in the all-seeing eye of the Universe. Hence the favorableness of the anarchistic stances which clash with the essence of the given saying from the scriptures and which I have always been in cordial support of, alongside their attitude of ascribing the attributes of relevance to every person's opinion, regardless of how low he or she may rank on the hierarchical ladder of a given organization, and striving to reach the ideal of inclusion of each member of the latter in the decision-making process instead of building stiffened authority-subsidary relationships that are to no one's benefit, for with every new day they make the authorities more feared and less loved as well as in charge of a less innovative and productive whole, and the subordinates less intellectually stimulated and more robotically inert and dependent on the commands coming from above. This is why the academic advices that I have been subjected to for a long, long time now, trying to make me find value in striving to erect my stature and stance in the spirit of a strong authority before the students because, allegedly, that is what motivates most people, sheepishly obedient, as it were, always in search of a leader, lest they get disoriented and dissipate on the sides of the road<sup>914</sup>, are met each time with a mile-wide roll of my starry eyes and an internal pledge that all that I will do as a teacher and an inspirer in the classroom and beyond is to spread subversion and instill the awareness that creativity, that single peak of Bloom's taxonomy to which most of the instructors at contemporary academic institutions pay their daily lip service, is attainable only through epistemic dissent, *i.e.*, through a thought process that clashes with the conventional and the paradigmatic and that breathlessly seeks the ways to differ, albeit lovingly, in empathic acceptance of it all. Freedom and freedom only are what I have vowed to teach and based my pedagogic method on, remembering the words of Cane the Party Breaker, "My wish is for people come to the concert to satisfy their spiritual needs... and therefore we never insist on things"<sup>915</sup>, and knowing that, given my goal to take the students by the hand to the peaks of the abovementioned taxonomy and inspire the divinest depths of their souls, every last trace of authority insisting on any mental operation to be performed, including learning *per se*, must be exorcised from my classroom. For, when the goal is to inspire the students and grow wings on their frail bodies instead of to chop them with various rules and regulations, then discipline and all its accompaniments must be scattered in the wind and authorities, like Philistine columns in Samson's hands, let topple and crumble to the sound of thunder. Hence, not only are students in my classroom allowed to chat till dawn or cows come home, use their cell phones nonstop lest the penultimate goal of connecting them with the whole wide world ascribed to my teaching efforts be discarded as hypocritical, read newspapers all day long, slalom around tables on scooters, do cartwheels over them and, in fact, disobey any behavioral precept insisted on by the academic autocrats, but, even more importantly, they are encouraged to clash with every single semantic rule drifting through the air, including that demanding the conformation to the rationales and ideas proponed by the

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<sup>914</sup> "Walk loftily, glance over the answers they wrote on the cards placed on their desks, make a gesture or two so that they know that you care and so that they can be motivated to work hard to impress *you*"; such and similar were the advices given to me by Rebecca Kammer, an education specialist at Chapman University, Orange, CA (September 2016). My response was logical: "But I do not want them to want to impress me. I do not want them to want to impress any human authority figure. I want them to think with their own heads and mistrust the authority, including myself".

<sup>915</sup> See the interview with Zoran Kostić Cane: Poruke su iste, ali si zahvalniji kako stariš, B92 News (March 22, 2019), retrieved from [https://www.b92.net/kultura/vesti.php?nav\\_category=271&yyyy=2019&mm=03&dd=22&nav\\_id=1520793](https://www.b92.net/kultura/vesti.php?nav_category=271&yyyy=2019&mm=03&dd=22&nav_id=1520793).

instructor. Of course, once a poetic spirit, such as myself, dropped in the turbulent academic waters, realized that authority is feared, but not loved, he began to reject that concept of the authority and embrace the anarchistic philosophy, vowing to breed freedoms and freedoms only everywhere around him. To one such spirit, of course, no explicit reasons formalized here matter at the end of the day and all that he cares for is the feeling, which in this case unmistakably divorces him from the idea of controlling people crudely by insisting that all should be as he is. He, as I, myself, did, would undoubtedly hear from the institutional leaders in academia that learning is all that matters as far as performing well as a teacher is concerned, but the verb “learning”, itself, would be left undefined. Usually, however, it implies helping students reach some of the lowest levels of Bloom’s taxonomy of learning objectives, where success ranges from the reproduction of the facts imparted to them by the teacher to the reproduction of the thought process, a.k.a. understanding, streamed in the teacher’s heads, but rarely ever is success tied to going beyond the teacher’s worldview with respect to the subject taught, and yet this and this only is what constitutes the most elementary aspect of the most sublime learning process conceivable. In today’s academic climate, though, where the professors request the obedience to their authority and the students demand a strong shepherd’s hand to guide their sheepish selves toward semantic mountain peaks, one who, like myself, propones in the classroom the idea that “learning” should be, first and foremost, about learning how to think for oneself, liberated from any ideologies, is destined for the grandiose fall and for expulsion from the obsoletely authoritarian system that academia is, the fate that has been, proudly, mine. And now, however, despite occupying higher moral grounds amidst being shoved into a ditch, from these social gutters which I share with outlaws, crosiers, druggies and other social rejects I watch with despair the perpetuation of humanity’s oblivion to the subliminal metamessages intrinsic to every communication, including academic lectures and mentoring sessions where, as Gregory Bateson noticed, “Professor X gets up at the blackboard and lectures about the higher mathematics to his students, and what he is saying all the time is ‘dominance, dominance, dominance’, and Professor Y stands up and covers the same material, and what he is saying is ‘nurturance, nurturance’ or maybe even ‘dependency, dependency’, as he coaxes the students to follow his argument”<sup>916</sup>. It is thus that, sadly, generations of people who would demand the same obedience to authority as that which was demanded from them are being crafted, without their normally being aware of these demands because they are being emitted and absorbed by the subconscious spheres of their psyches.

In such a way, the traditional tendency of people to try hard to be accepted by the society, which, by the way, can be seen as the greatest cause of stiff, stressed and uninspiring behavior that turns independent souls into wily prostitutes and that hangs over the modern age like a satanic sickle, is naturally fostered through education that complies with this evangelical norm. Neglecting dissention as the driving force of progress and fostering conformity instead, such education, which appears to have emerged from the darkest visions of the Grand Inquisitor, can be argued to provide more disservice than service to the society. For, a hypothetical world pervaded with little Hitlers, little autocrats and tyrants, I have always thought, might eventually balance itself out and, given the change in personalities that such clashes of egos would bring about, might even drive itself in progressive directions, whereas a world pervaded with little Goebbelses, the cunning and obedient followers, would be a much more dangerous place, having a high chance of pushing itself into darker and even crueler chasms. While the tyrannical leaders

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<sup>916</sup> See Gregory Bateson and Mary Catherine Bateson’s *Angels Fear: Towards an Epistemology of the Sacred*, Bantam Books, New York, NY (1987), pp. 33-34.

sooner or later become castigated for their sins, these Goebbelses often end up freed to wash their hands and get morally cleansed by transferring all the responsibility for any wrongdoings to their authorities and then, devoid of any remorse, go back into the world to recommit their sins. Concordantly, the 19<sup>th</sup> Century French diplomat, Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord admitted once that he was “more afraid of an army of a hundred sheep led by a lion than of an army of a hundred lions led by a sheep”<sup>917</sup>. For, “Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord” (Jeremiah 17:5). Hence, should we live in accordance with the drives to be accepted by our social milieu and comply with other people’s expectations, be it stiff head-nodding in the professional realm, taking on the standards of “cool” communication at parties or abiding by any other socially set rules, our fall from grace would be inevitable. Not only that we lose our sane contact with the core of the Sun of our spirit, from which our aspirations originate and travel in rays to the surface of our being and from there on to the surrounding world, by being overly attentive to what other people will think of our words and acts, but trying hard to be accepted by others is also a sign of inherent weakness of our spirit. Consequently, this weakness results in our letting other people reshape and mold our appearance in this world based on how they would like to see it, and since most of them would, unfortunately, prefer to see us disempowered and tied up, we, ourselves, normally thus end up watching the world from the cognitive cage of a kind, in which the wings of our spirit cannot be fully spread and make us start flying across the skies of the world while living up to the fullest of our dreams and aspirations. Although this would make most people sheepishly smile with satisfaction in this world in which disempowering others is considered as victory of a kind, the real friends of our spirit, those who truly wish to see us launched to the stars, farther than they, themselves, have ever traveled, will look sad at this state of our being. A conclusion that this short array of thoughts leads to is nothing but deeply eye-opening. It is that a true teacher, the one who truly wants to raise his disciples to stars, fosters them to break the rules which the very schooling of his insists on, including keeping them under the limits to which their own creative being in this world has reached and guarding the gate that leads to their penetration through these limits. Teaching that is aware that the most essential learning steps are made upon breaking the rules conveyed by that very teaching is thus the only true and beautiful teaching in this world.

Although many may have an impression that calling off the adherent’s attitude in life implies hostile confrontations of one kind or another, this is not necessarily so. Hence, if we imagine an auditorium full of people enchantingly gazing at the leader in its center, one could realize that the closer one stands to the leader, the more striking the moment of one’s looking away from the focus of everyone’s attention and lovingly starting to stare at one of the members of this sheepish audience, breaking the passive and drowsy state and producing an awakening incitement for all. For this reason, those who climb up the hierarchical ladder of any human organization we could think of, and only then start to release voices that speak against the peaks of this tower turn out to reverberate in the world with the greatest intensity. Positioning ourselves at the end of this imaginary congregation, on the other hand, may make us one of the last ones who are, however, predestined to be the first ones (Matthew 20:16), as the Christ’s allegory reminds us. Whether we are to quietly walk out of processions of blind followers and into more inspiring interactive domains wherein we would act in harmony with the Family Stone’s mantra,

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<sup>917</sup> Watch Waldemar Januszczak’s documentary titled *Vanity & Legacy: When Famous Leaders Meet Famous Sculptors*, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLYT71te6Yg&t=36s> (2020).

“Thank you for letting me be myself”<sup>918</sup>, unlocking other people’s creative potentials, which the original word of the word *educare* literally meant, rather than teaching them how to reflect our own worldviews, blindly and unquestioningly, or producing agitations that will sow seeds of genuine sympathy and slowly and imperceptibly reverse the direction of the spin of the imaginative compasses within people’s minds towards more of the independent thinking, an infinite number of imaginative choices in confronting the authority, saving us from exhibiting prickly animosities and letting us emanate with godly kindness, lies ahead of us. For, as on the surface of Tai-Chi-Tu souvenirs, genuine rebelliousness, the drive to differ, lies at the center of truly inspiring emanations of empathy and adherence, of the drive to be one and the same, and *vice versa*, which all rings well in accord with the propositions of the Way of Love.

As we stand on the vista of this viewpoint, there is one wonderful conclusion that we could discern shimmering on the horizon. It is the one telling us that only loving our disciples as much as we could love our children, and treating them equally, with infinite unconditional love and devotion, can let us be a great teacher in life. As such, we would incessantly strive to make the kids break the ceilings of the towers of our own teachings, to fly beyond the highest clouds of our most sublime knowledge and soar into the endless starry skies, while we stay and watch them from the Earth with rays of gleefulness radiating from our heart. On the other hand, for as long as the self-loving force of ego is what drives our teaching efforts, we would spontaneously oppress our students, suffocating their creative engines and placing blocks on the paths of their progress with every subtle sign shed by our words, our body language or the decisions we make, without often realizing the devastating extent of the effects of our actions. Yet, if we remember the way in which William Blake concluded one of his fruitful dialectical conversations with an angel, with the saying “opposition is true friendship”<sup>919</sup>, we could be sure that invigorating the spirits of the little ones all until they freely oppose our knowledge and enter a clash of opinions therewith, as if being driven by the guiding lines of Bhagavad-Gita, “Stand up and fight! Do thou fight for the sake of fighting, without considering happiness or distress, loss or gain, victory or defeat - and by so doing you shall never incur sin” (Gita 2:37-38), knowing that only if we fall and become superseded by our disciples can the world truly keep on evolving, is what constitutes the most marvelous and altruistic teaching approach that we could envisage. Therefore, every call for unquestioning obedience, such as that ornamenting one of the final verses of the Bible, “If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life” (Revelation 22:19), I counteract with a call for its warm and compassionate wreckage, which, in this case, could be a verse penned by Ibn Arabi: “I am the Holy Book and the seven oft-repeated (15:87), and the spirit of the spirit – there is no spirit I am not”<sup>920</sup>. For, the most admirable approach to teaching is not the one that explicitly demands or quietly rejoices over head-nodding submissiveness, but the one that cordially welcomes conflicts of opinions and selflessly sees them as moments when the teacher, himself, will become a sacrificial stepping stone over which his disciples will ascend to higher and more advanced levels of being.

Yet, the desire to autocratically govern, which in the most benevolent form sprouts from a seed of ignorant beliefs that one knows best what is best for others and relentlessly imposes certain ideologies onto one’s surrounding, while in the most obnoxious form results from a

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<sup>918</sup> Listen to Sly and the Family Stone’s Thank You for Talkin’ to me Africa on There’s a Riot Goin’ On, Record Plant (1971).

<sup>919</sup> See Portable Blake, Selected and Arranged by Alfred Kazin, Viking Press, New York, NY (1946).

<sup>920</sup> See William C. Chittick’s Sufism: A Beginner’s Guide, Oneworld, Oxford, UK (2000), pp. 104.

solipsistic insensitivity for things that pulsate with life around one and an inability to empathize with one's environment, could be seen as deeply engrained in the fabric of the social consciousness. Moreover, as the classical Freudian framework of thought could remind us, all sadistic, dictatorial personality traits arise from submissiveness and slavery to specific fragments of experiential reality, and *vice versa*. In that sense, the web of life could be seen as composed of lively entwined drives to lead and to follow, whereby the former always reveal the latter in their hearts when looked at from a precise angle, and *vice versa*. For, human nature has ever since been inclined to adopt either submissive or autocratic stances in relations with fellow beings, even though both of these present deviations from the balance of the Way of Love which is all about finding a line of equality and positioning our and other people's hearts leveled with respect to it. The infamous 1971 Stanford prison experiment in which the roles of guards and prisoners were randomly assigned to the student participants of the study resulted in promotion and intensification of the despotic and oppressive acting of the former and passive and subservient behavior of the latter, far beyond control<sup>921</sup>. This outcome, of course, came about as all but surprising to anyone familiar with the less cruel conformity experiments carried out by Solomon Asch at Swarthmore two decades earlier, wherein the participants given relatively simple cognitive tasks tended to guess the answers wrong when the room was occupied by other people who gave the wrong answers beforehand, which proved that there is a profound tendency of people to conform to the opinions of their social groups and depersonalize themselves and their intellects thereby. This insight would later be reiterated in Latané and Darley's smoke experiments<sup>922</sup>, which showed that there is a significantly higher probability that people would seek help when they sit alone in a room filling with smoke than when the room is occupied by a number of people, which is the basis of what is today known as the "bystander effect", namely an inverse proportionality between the proclivity to stand against an unfair act witnessed and the number of people present at the scene. However, what came out as a precious insight from the Stanford prison experiments aside from the fact that social, situational contexts act as determinants of behavior as powerful as inherent personality traits, especially when fueled by the institutionally supported obedience to an ideology, was the spiritually corruptive effect that assuming the roles of authoritative leaders or unquestioningly and unresistingly submissive followers produces in people's hearts and minds. To say that disciples will never become comparable to their teachers (Luke 6:40) is thus not only placing stumbling stones on the road to progress of the human civilization, but is also inherently toxic to the human spirit, as it implicitly calls for becoming either (a) a sheepish servant of other people's credos and a craver for reaping manmade rewards while intentionally suppressing and stomping over any sounds of the divine missionary music of angelic messengers within one's heart, or (b) one of the guardians of the gate, who "shut up the kingdom of heaven against men", who "neither go in, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matthew 23:13), who stand on the soaring path of others statuesquely, with arms crossed, signifying blockades posed, letting only those who are willing to worship one like a king to pass through. Yet, only those who bravely stand up and try to rupture the chains imposed on freedom and equality by the authorities of the world on one side

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<sup>921</sup> The experiment demonstrated people's ignorance of what lies behind the wall, on the other, dark side of their actions and it can be used to deduce the ultimate goal of education, which, stripped down to the bone, can be said to be the illumination of this dark side lying behind the walls of our experience, regardless of what it refers to - the cause of our perceptions or the consequences of our actions.

<sup>922</sup> See B, Latané, J. Darley – "Group inhibition of bystander intervention in emergencies", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 10, 215 – 221 (1968).

and those who try their best to lift the little ones of this world high up in the air and carry them on their shoulders on the other, selflessly diminishing their own value in order to elevate that of others, deserve the epithet of spiritual giants in the eyes of the divine Cosmos. In the eyes of the world, however, they will remain like congenial sloppy bears, tiny timorous piglets, Little Tramps and golden gamins, Mickey mousey creatures or other little heroes, humble, swimming in the pearly sea of poverty, but before whose steps the gates leading to the Kingdom of God miraculously open for the astonished others to gapingly gaze at. Although ever smaller in the eyes of humanity, these sages will be viewed as ever more beautiful and gorgeous by the divine eye that oversees it all. For, the more these wise teachers lower themselves, sacrificially and selflessly, before the feet of their disciples, trying their best to lift them up, higher and higher, and turn them into birds of paradise, the greater their spirits become. It is thus that they distance themselves, unwillingly but naturally, from their students, always a step ahead of them, predestined to everlastingly occupy a higher stance on the pyramid of spiritual progress. For, “the last shall be first, and the first last” (Matthew 20:16), as the Christ pointed out, and this is exactly how we may have suddenly glimpsed the authenticity of the claim that “the disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master” (Luke 6:40).

The validity of the given saying could be tentatively justified from another angle using the following argumentation. Namely, interacting with our pupils in a territorial manner would make them recognize that sooner or later, which would eventually lead not to preservation of our powers, but, quite contrary, to toppling down of our authority and to our not being celebrated, but smashed and turned into dust as our disciples march over ourselves as they hold ever greater dreams for beautification of humanity in the crystal balls in their hands. The starry trainees inevitably become greater than their starry trainers in the course of evolution, but if the former recognize that they are being guided by a selfless authority, the one that does not look after preserving one’s power and constantly elevating one’s ego in their eyes, but the one that sacrifices oneself so as to raise the little ones straight to the stars, they will never stomp over their teachers, but will always humbly position themselves below and behind. As they do so, a magical pyramid is formed whereon each one tries one’s best to elevate another rather than oneself. Autopoietic networks ingrained in the cellular machinery are exactly such: therein, each cell component, be it a macromolecule, an organelle or the segments of genetic code have a single aim, which is to rejuvenate and recreate all the other components. From the miracle of one such selfless web of interactions life was born and on its bases only can life evolve into ever greater emanations of the beauty divine. In the domain of mentoring, with teachers raising the disciples on the sacred pedestals of the world, while the disciples are aware that they are standing on the shoulders of giants and they, themselves, thence strive to become like seas that lie between everyone else, a pyramid with teachers always preserved on top, surrounded by their followers, all gazing up and ascending altogether towards stars, as in a Masonic imagery of a kind, is formed. Then, these impeccable teachers of the world turn out to be neatly describable by the following Lao-Tzu’s verses: “If Heaven and Earth last long, it is because they do not live for themselves. This is why they last forever. Hence, by placing himself at the last place the sacred man finds himself at the first place. His body he considers accidental, yet his body stays protected. Doesn’t he realize himself exactly because he does not live for himself?” (Tao-Te-Xing VII) Still, this is not to say that those who come after us will not find the most progressive current ideas and ways of thinking outdated and read even these words with invoking a sense of obsolescence. However, the most wonderful teachers would see this not as a failure of their endeavors right here, right now, but, quite opposite, as an immaculate success.

Despite this, the academic environment of the modern day is overcrowded with teachers who prefer those who hypocritically nod their heads to every word their teachers proclaim and blow Judas' kisses in the air with their dewy-eyed pretense compared to those who honestly question everything, whose spirits flicker with genuine wonder and who do not selfishly place their career and individual merits in front of a selfless and passionate quest for finding answers to the greatest mysteries of Nature for the benefit of all humankind. The extent to which this Mephistophelean spirit of pretense, on the waxy wings of which one is constantly redirected away from the path of truth, is damaging for one's spiritual integrity and wellbeing is neatly illustrated by the folk saying "You can't wake up a person who is pretending to sleep"; for, it is akin to bastions swiftly raised in mere view of the chaste eyes of heavenly explorers of Nature that melt hearts with the rays of honesty radiating from their centers that swirl like galaxies on the wheels of otherworldly Wonder and Love for all that is. Together with the psychological ingeniousness that these sacred wonderers are equipped with comes, however, obedience of the inner mission outlined by the divine voices within their soul and not of the norms and directives proposed by terrestrial authority figures, which has been all through the ages intensely disliked by the latter. Valuing flocks of followers gathered around one's feet rather than independent thinkers who are brave enough to stand up for their own opinions in scientific confrontations, though, serves as a proof of the inexorable egotistic nature of these false teachers that often assume the role of leviathans within the contemporary academic circles. Like those sea monsters that guarded the entrance to hell, learning by the example that they, themselves, are setting leads one to hellish reigns of pharisaic and monstrously narcissistic acting in the academic arenas. Unlike them, the guardians of the gates of Heavens are such that they let every single creature pass through it, liberating each and every one from the shackles of ego and preparing them for the free and unconstrained flights of spirit. Yet, the genuine teachers of the world, having elaborated the thesis that progress always entails breaking the laws of ordinariness and paradigmatic reasoning as well as that the ultimate success in teaching consists in raising generations of thinkers who will surpass the very teachers and prove the teachers' obsolescence with their acts, are intrinsically glad whenever they face intellectual troublemakers who would readily oppose their opinions. One such utterly progressive teacher, who long ago surpassed the narrow confines of his ego and extended the boundaries of the self all until it encompassed the whole universe as he had known it, would thus encourage his tutees to seek "a way of being loyal to him in being disloyal"<sup>923</sup> and be aware that their triumph lies not in becoming a faithful copy of his, but in learning to hear and speak out the infinitely creative voice of divinity, one and only, that quietly overflows their insides. Also, long time ago, they have learned that those who need most help in the classroom and life alike are not those who would readily accept us as helping hands but those that would radiate a signal that appears as if beeping with the following message: "I don't need your help. Go away and don't come too close". Quite often, those who nod their heads to every word we proclaim rather shallowly absorb the messages we strew in the air, while those who appear as if hatefully refusing to grasp anything we have to offer are those who would truly become enriched with the guiding lights of our advices. Yet, mediocre teachers are easily tricked by looking at the surface only, thinking that the former, overly obedient disciples are those whom they should be proud with, while rejecting the latter, dejected and unruly ones as lost causes. Wise teachers, however, know that the truth is quite opposite: namely,

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<sup>923</sup> This is how the musicologist Rose Rosengard Subotnick described his understanding of the teaching of Theodor Adorno, according to James Koehne's *The Flight from Banality*, In: *Bad Music: The Music We Love to Hate*, edited by Christopher Washburne and Maiken Derno, Routledge, New York, NY (2004), pp. 165.

the seeds of wisdom handed to those who do not give out signs of acceptance are, in fact, most efficiently absorbed. Like a fertile soil, they would hide these seeds within and let them die, but only to yield fruit in some distant futures, quite unlike dry or sandy soils which would swiftly repeat all our advices by showing off these seeds on their surface, but would fail to deeply absorb them and let them grow into wonderful trees of knowledge.

The reasons for this state of affairs are twosome. Firstly, the most valuable knowledge is not the one that simply confirms what we have already known and makes us simply nod our heads upon encountering it. Rather, it is the one that shakes the entire tree of knowledge of our being from its roots, sometimes even turning our worldviews upside down, making us spin in pirouettes like a ballerina, all until we become dizzy in joy and ecstasy amidst a starry sky of eternally wondrous and delightful insights. Truly valuable examination of edifices of our knowledge is practically always producing a mind-blowing feeling that the ground is shaking below our feet; as such, it is akin to how Martin Heidegger experienced his encounters with Friedrich Nietzsche's thought, that is, as "shaking of the foundations"<sup>924</sup> which does not collapse the structure of our knowledge, but strengthens it and infuses it with a sense of profound stability. In this insight lies hidden the core of Jacques Derrida's philosophy of deconstruction, of subjecting the contextual skies and metaphysical bases to rigorous scrutiny all until the systems enfolded by them start to crack and crumble under the focus of our critical thought, and then to recompose them into something more genuine and beautiful, or, as Mark Wigley pointed out, to "identify structural flaws, cracks in the construction that have been systematically disguised, not to collapse those structures but, on the contrary, to demonstrate the extent to which the structures depend on both these flaws and the way they are disguised"<sup>925</sup>, so that "structure becomes 'erected by its very ruin, held up by what never stops eating away at its foundations'"<sup>926</sup>, as Derrida himself would partly note. To ruin the object of our interpretation thus becomes seen as a necessary precondition for our becoming enriched by its semantic treasures, bearing resemblance to the pots of gold inserted within its structure, which could be arrived at only by smashing the bricks and walls enclosing them into pieces. What is more, since "if we make books happen, they make us happen as well"<sup>927</sup>, the ruination of the subject involved in this interpretational activity becomes equally necessary, lest the road to this semantic enrichment and exchange of precious cognitive goods become barricaded and made impassable. In other words, any time we grab a book to read, sit down to watch a natural landscape or face some starry eyes in communication with a fellow being, we ought to be prepared to undergo this ruination of the self. For, only by enduring the process of change of our most intimate cognitive constellations while encountering the existential essence of the surrounding creatures can we maintain touch with the eternal, unchanging self of ours, the center of the unstopably spinning wheel of our creative being. Or, as Lynne Sharon Schwartz beautifully pointed out, "If no girl was ever ruined by a book, none was ever saved by one either"<sup>928</sup>, wishing to tell us that "here is the essence of true reading: learning to live in another's voice, to speak another's language"<sup>929</sup>, that only if the mind engaged in reading "pirouettes, leaps for the ball, embraces and trembles"<sup>930</sup> in its openness

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<sup>924</sup> See Martin Heidegger's Nietzsche, HarperOne, New York, NY (1937).

<sup>925</sup> See Mark Wigley's The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida's Haunt, The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA (1995), pp. 44.

<sup>926</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45.

<sup>927</sup> See Lynne Sharon Schwartz's Ruined by Reading, Beacon Press, Boston, MA (1996), pp. 118.

<sup>928</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114.

<sup>929</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 111.

<sup>930</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 116.

to empathize with the words coming from the lips of another can it return home with precious goods in its hands. The alternative is none but to turn into an ideologically obsessive fanatic that frantically scans the lines of text in search of confirmation of what he has already known, the process during which he narrows the sunrays of knowledge radiating from his cognitive core instead of dispersing them in all directions like the Sun that warms up the worldly skies, and rigidifies, not mellows, the heart and soul of his, preparing it for ideological battles rather than for eruptions of love that heals and sanctifies all on whom its divine waters fall. Of course, one such constructive deconstruction that entails every creative semantic encounter with the emanations of life “begins, as it were, from a refusal of the authority or determining power of every ‘is’, or simply from a refusal of authority in general”<sup>931</sup>, as Lucy Niall noticed. For, even the ideals and idioms that rest on the pedestal of appreciation in our mental universe are authorities of a kind, which stiffen and limit our views of the world to a large, but most of the time unnoticeable, extent. The liberation of the intellect and the unleashing of its unimaginably immense creative powers suppressed under the heavy weight of axiomatic presuppositions thus coincide with the fulfillment of the “no ideal” ideal Federico Fellini had in mind when he said the following: “The ideals, the ideals in general are myths that must be destroyed. I think that the ideal, the idealized life, idealized concepts can be extremely dangerous for our mental health”<sup>932</sup>. Imposing any ideals or doctrines upon ourselves or others thus amounts to a massive deviation from the route of genuine anarchism, whose first and the last point is Love for all, as simple and unassuming as it can be. In that sense as well, to open the doors for an overarching advancement of science and human knowledge in general the teachers ought to be obliged to nourish an anti-authoritarian, dissentient spirit in the classroom. The greatness of any approach in life, including this one, can be estimated by the amount of sacrifices that one is prepared to bear by implementing it in reality. A complete eclipse and extinguishment of one’s ego for the sake of accomplishing one’s altruistic ideals is, in this respect, the most sublime system one could put into practice. To roll out the carpets on which the disciples will stomp over us on their runs to reach the stars, to encourage them to freely question the teachers’ knowledge more than anything else, is thus the most supreme teaching method I could envisage. That is, to teach them the art of questioning everything, including, most critically, the most critical premises proponed by myself as their teacher, to such an extent that they abolish my authority along the way, prompting me to utter a cry similar to Mr. Dynamite’s “Engineer, I’ve got to go – fade it out”<sup>933</sup>, before turning into a vapor and transforming them, themselves, into sole governors of their experience; this has been the self-annihilating act of magic I have pulled over and over again in the classroom. For, the goal I have always imposed upon myself, regardless of the domain of expression, is to draw a beautiful self on the board or in the air of abstraction, but then somewhere in this self-reflective act begin to obliterate oneself, then disappear and finally leave the spectators in the midst of a silent awe, impelled to pursue their own paths, independently of any authoritative guidance. Like Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec liberating the line and making it fully vanish toward the edges of his painting Ballet de Papa Chrysanthème in order to depict the erasure of a holy dancer’s ego and awareness of the self that must precede her dropping moves that enlighten the viewer, so does a perfect pedagogic instruction in my universe of thought contain the element of self-denial, which is best exhibited by making oneself vulnerable to the students’ questions and allowing them to

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<sup>931</sup> See Lucy Niall’s *A Derrida Dictionary*, Blackwell, Oxford, UK (2004).

<sup>932</sup> See Charles B. Ketcham’s *Federico Fellini: The Search for a New Mythology*, Paulist Press, New York, NY (1976), pp. 21.

<sup>933</sup> Listen to James Brown’s *Get It Together (Part 2)*, King (1967).

topple the towers of any paradigms that we may hold on to in our pursuit of knowledge and truth. Besides, as the French painter noticed after being confined to a sanatorium in Neuilly, outside Paris, in 1899, five years after painting his abovementioned masterpiece, “I am confined and all confined things die”<sup>934</sup>, and the human intellect is by no means an exception to this rule, given that its withering is undeniable whenever it begins to rely on fixed ideas, dogmatic answers and thought processes set in stone. Science, after all, is based on questioning it all and, as such, it requires an inherently rebellious and antiauthoritarian nature, even in relation to one’s own deepest beliefs, to be instilled in scientific minds before they could be made genuinely productive. In that sense, being shocked, disoriented and surprised, as if being spun in the midst of Van Gogh’s starry sky, is the response we should be happy to recognize in those whose hearts we seed with the wordy stardust of wonder. “I shock people to free them”, Satan Panonski, a freak show performer by occupation and a punk by nationality, said once<sup>935</sup>, suggesting that no liberation of human spirits, be it through an artistic experience, emotional awakening or the absorption of scientific or any other knowledge, is possible without passing through the intermediary states of befuddlement and disorientation, the responses that we ought to be always glad to recognize in those to whom our messages are directed. In contrast, lukewarm appreciation by the recipients of our messages should make us wonder not whether, but where we have strayed from the divine path, along which we should have walked and spontaneously inspired the world with starry spiritedness shining forth from our mind and heart. Secondly, as already insinuated, those who are in greatest need of guidance will rarely reflect thankfulness or respect upon receiving a sign from us. If we were to depend on their quiet and subtle praise of our benevolent reaching out to them, we would very quickly lose any eagerness, enthusiasm and motivation to express ourselves by means of such blasts of creative generosity. Besides, it is a fact that the prefects and the triumvirs, the very same people that the Christ disparaged in his sermons, were more or less indifferent when the Christ was brought on a trial to their feet, and that common people, after being given a vote, those very same souls that the Christ brought salvation to and lived for the sake of saving, sentenced the Christ to Golgotha, and if this fact is to instruct the classroom instructors about anything, it is that those who will receive the most inspirational message of them all will be, as a rule, those appreciating and recognizing the blessing nature of this message the least. In that sense, naturally, it is none other but the Christ’s words that we ought to be incessantly reminded of: “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:43-48). With these words in mind, we would let the flights of our imagination and empathy soar us high, without ever being affected by the frozen spiritedness of the cold, cold world around us. To the swine and to the angels our pearls shall be dropped with an equal enthusiasm. And if we ever

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<sup>934</sup> Watch the documentary series *The Impressionists* with Tim Marlow, Episode 5: Toulouse-Lautrec, MagellanTV (1999).

<sup>935</sup> See Zoran Jaćimović’s *Satan Panonski – nezaboravan i 26 godina nakon smrti*, Glas Slavonije (January 27, 2018), retrieved from <http://www.glas-slavonije.hr/354404/9/Satan-Panonski---Nezaboravan-i-26-godina-nakon-smrti>.

start to feel as if every time we open our heart, a new arrow lands in its center, sent out by those whom we wish to embrace and illuminate, prompting us to question the worth of dropping pearls before those who would obviously stomp over them, all we need is think of the Sun; if it ever felt aggravated after seeing the animal called man indulge in wars and belligerencies using the energy of the light it diligently shed over the face of the Earth, it would stop shining and all life's beauties would come to an end, the reason for which it withdraws itself into a meditative state and shines with the same intensity onto everyone, regardless of whether the absorbers of this light appreciate it or not. Even those who emit flashes of anger and hostility toward us are, therefore, to be accepted with as much as love and devotion as those who tend to respond like meek sheep to our advices and commands in the class. Once we understand that authority - which we are bound to be seen as in the students' eyes, even though we may anarchically crush our seat on its throne with each and every of our words and moves - is usually obeyed and respected, but rarely ever loved, we would stop seeking it to be returned to us and begin to fully and unhesitatingly live in concert with the Christ's guidance: "For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? For sinners also love those that love them" (Luke 6:32). Crucified by the students, like the Christ, the epitome of an authority who anarchically dissolved his authority by coming down to earth as the son of God and mingled with the earthlings so as to bestow the divinest gift of them all upon them, that of Love, we would not despair and compare ourselves out loudly with Buñuel's *Viridiana*, the saintly spirit raped and abused by the very same ones that she wished to dress, warm up and feed and that her heart was wholly given to; rather, we'd find some new Via Appias that would take us again, anarchically, to the proximity of the simple men and women of this world, which most people in our position would mercilessly subdue to the bludgeon and the leash of the power of authority. And over and over again would our open heart be pierced and the accusatory fingers of those whom we wished to save pointed at us, yet as it was with the Christ, who inspired not everyone, not the masses, but a few chosen ones, may it be with us too; after all, for the chain reaction of elevation of the world toward more sublime states of being to be initiated, the transmission of the divine impulse to but one or two or a handful of students at most is all that is needed, especially so on this stage of our evolution as the human race whereat unequivocal praise is always equivalent to mediocrity that brings about not new avenues and alleyways on our evolutionary strivings for starriness, but impasses and dead ends. So, love for those who love us back and even more love for those who are blinded by aversion and hatred: that is the key to enlightening education in my universe of being and thought. Oh, how diametrically different this attitude is from that shared by the American professor who prided himself on earning the kid who was "always disruptive"<sup>936</sup> the epithet of "farty" by farting every time he walked next to him in the class, causing avalanches of approval

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<sup>936</sup> The following is the whole post by funsizedsamurai posted on a Reddit thread titled "Teachers/Professors of Reddit: how did you secretly get back at 'that kid'?" and earning the largest number of upvotes: "I taught English at a ritzy private school in South Korea. We weren't allowed to discipline the kids for any reason, no matter what, because the school was making money from the tuition. For the most part the kids (grade 5-6) were pretty good but there was this one kid. He was a little shit about everything, always disruptive, bullying the other kids, throwing pencils, writing swear words in Korean on the white board before class, never listening, etc. I started eating a lot of kimchi on the days I taught that specific class, which gave me wicked indigestion. When I walked by the kid I would let out these horrible silent creeping hot farts. No one ever blames the teacher and after a couple weeks he became known as the farty kid. He was still a little shit, but it made me feel better knowing that he was knocked down a few pegs". Retrieved from [https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/49cso7/teachers\\_professors\\_of\\_reddit\\_how\\_did\\_you/](https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/49cso7/teachers_professors_of_reddit_how_did_you/) (March 7, 2016).

from the internet community, and how foreign and moronic it is bound to appear in this wicked, revengeful world that we live in, the world that relinquishes angelical beauty and forgiveness a bit more with every spin of the Earth around the Sun. Yet, likened unto this sun we must be, withdrawn, though shining uninterruptedly, with the same intensity to everyone, onto those who wish to disrupt and throw us out of balance with their constant releases of venomous, negative energy and those who bow before our feet in adoration and awe. With the shine forged in the depths of our mind being unchanged depending on the worldly circumstances, whether students are able to glimpse and recognize it or not, whether their hearts become warmed by it or come to feel as if it has gone from the firmament for good will depend on how thick and stormy the clouds of preconceptions gathered on the skies of their minds are and what exactly the orbit they take as they receive our silent blessings looks like. Regardless of whether the world turns into an angelical abode or a crumbling Temple of Dagon, the Sun never ceases to shine, shedding its light on the sinners and the saints alike, which is the exact unbiased, unshaken stand we must take before our students too, be they haters or wonderers, be they grateful or disdainful. For, if taking on the role of a teacher is analogous to being a parent, then unconditional love for the students and their protection even at their most contemptuous and even at the cost of the detriment to our own being must be the foremost imperative. If this is coupled to the request of hard work during the course, impelling the students to reach enlightenment through blood, sweat and tears, then the role of the teacher truly becomes one step closer to that of a god who closes the gates of Eden to those who must grow from ashes to angels, but who, most of all, loves his children (John I 3:1), a kind of god that a truly good parent is supposed to represent to his children. And just like “mother hides a murderer”<sup>937</sup>, so have I hidden innumerable students from the inquisitive university headlights searching for the academic delinquents, including those who’d go on, nevertheless, to write outrageously negative reviews of my class, who’d cheat, who’d lie, who’d shoot arrows into my heart devoid of shields and opened widely by the wish to give them all its treasures, all that it has, including the last twinkles of its glow, and whose every glance would say how much they despise me, justifying this choice of mine with exactly one such analogy between the teacher and a loving parent. After all, we should know that just like babies learn to coordinate their movements by tearing toys, tossing them across the room and smashing them against the walls, the most prospective novices in the atrium of human knowledge make their first steps by disrespectfully hammering order to pieces, long before they grasp the merits of laying bricks of constructive ideas and actions onto the epistemic towers raised around them to prevent them from falling. And with an eye focused on the big picture, whereon ruination, antithetic to the preexisting order of things, is seen as vital for the process of advancement of our knowledge, the reasons to equally sympathize with them all, the paradigm builders, the paradigm shifters and the paradigm uprooters alike, dawn on the illuminated minds of the most brilliant teachers in this world. Love for all, unquestionable and unconditional, in the eyes of these genuine teachers, presents the foundations of their teaching approach, standing on which the seeds of wonder are let freely strew into the air so as to give rise to wonderful twinkles of wonder and incessantly spinning starry wheels of evolution in the disciples’ hearts and eyes. Hence, if you have begun to wonder by now what is the magical key that helps teachers that follow the mentoring approach idealized on these very pages avoid slipping into pure carelessness while unpretentiously leveling themselves with respect to their disciples and refusing to accept the role of any authority, it is the grandest cosmic force of them all, the one that Dante Alighieri described as the centerpiece of the cosmic clockwork around which all the

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<sup>937</sup> Listen to Kate Bush’s Mother Stands for Comfort on Hounds of Love, EMI (1985).

planets, stars, objects and creatures of the Universe revolve in the final verses that document his journey through Paradise: Love.

Mentor, in fact, was a mythological person who had the spirit of Athena, the goddess of wisdom, art, inspiration and a sundry of other skills, instilled into him and who, guided by this divine inner drive, inspired Telemachus, Odysseus' son, to set out on a search for his father who had gone to the Trojan War. This is why the argument is as strong and solid as cyclopean masonry in favor of the fact that adventurous curiosity and lifesaving aspirations, that is, Wonder and Love, respectively, must be the first and foremost qualities that all good and genuine mentors shall embody. The excellence in mentoring students on the podia of science is thus based on the same flowery essence that the immaculate approach to parenting is rooted in: unconditional love for our sons, daughters, mentees and followers and a blasting desire to divert them from the frivolous and faded path and launch them beyond the farthest stars of ideas and creativity that our very beings have grasped. Just as parents who always measure themselves against their children and subconsciously make sure to stand in the way of their development when they are about to transcend the accomplishments of the parents will never become stellar and spiritual guides for the little ones, the same can be said for scientific mentors whose primary aim is not to let any of their mentees step on their territory and approach them too closely in the brilliancy of their knowledge. Sadly, in today's culture, where selfishness is the norm and altruism the trait mocked by the mainstreamers, such mentors who keep their mentees at a safe distance from them, facilitating their transition to independent scientists only insofar as they, the mentors, have a vested interest in it, as through building a network that would support their own ascent to stardom, are more of a rule than the exception. However, the only way to open the paths of true happiness and salvation for others in life is to sacrifice oneself for the benefit of another, which the Christ and many other sages exemplified with their lives. This is to say that the only mentors worth being considered as epitomes of the ancient eponymy of this term are those who allow their mentees to occupy their own seats of power, while they, themselves, retreat into the shadow, with an ethereal smile illuminating their insides, like a sun that never ceases to shine. After all, it seems to be deeply ingrained in human nature that physically growing old corresponds to the growth of our spirits; the latter refocuses our priorities from ensuring our own bare survival and rise to stars to sustaining and edifying creatures around us on the account of deliberately giving away the treasures of our spirit so as to endow others with. This process promotes the annihilation of our ego and the death of our tiny self wherefrom the magical moment of becoming born to the world naturally ensues, as already allegorically presented in the story about the Christ's life. At the same time, increasingly living for others as we grow older, when proceeding in harmony with the flourishing of the divine spirit instilled in us, implies that teachers' hearts naturally tend to turn into steps for their disciples to climb on during their ascents to greater spiritual heights. Hence, notwithstanding that the world has never become a more selfish place and that the elderly have never been as infantile and immaturely self-interested than they are today, only if we go against our own nature would we find ourselves jealously and egoistically placing stumbling stones onto the paths of progress of the little ones, irrespective of how self-centered and unthankful for our creative inputs they would turn out to be.

What these words outline is a cordial anarchistic critique of practically any teaching method based on the authoritative insistence on adherents' obedience of principles and rules created by the very authorities instead of calling for ingenious smashing thereof and invention of new, more advanced ways of being and perceiving reality. When the Bengalese lyricist,

Rabindranath Tagore points his poetic finger at master/teacher as the one responsible for shackling an imaginary prisoner in the cell of life<sup>938</sup>, he concordantly denotes none other but the spiritual sin that disregarding the inner voice of one's heart on the account of unquestioningly conforming to the principles set forth by the worldly authorities implies. From the other, teachers' perspective, highlighted is the need to accept the natural process of evolution that necessitates students' going beyond the lines of progress at which the very teachers have stopped and ceased to advance forward. The teaching approach that is being celebrated hereby is thus similar to what can be agreed upon to constitute the most moving parenting approach, and that is not keeping children next to the harbors of close parental protection, but letting them sail into the open seas so as to serve the true purpose of all great ships: exploring and connecting distant lands and continents. Yet, invisible threads of love, which will offer sign-shedding hands whenever the children ask in the silence of their being for their guidance, will be maintained fresh and new in the hearts of the parents, who will remain untouched by the sense of separation. Likewise, rather than tying down their disciples who are about to launch themselves to stellar careers and eventually surpass their teachers, the great teachers of the world wisely look after ways to selflessly and altruistically propel them to even more supersonic speeds, while still giving their disciples a sense of being watched over should something go wrong with their spaceships.

Playing with the stellar children of the world can be thus said to bring forth wonderful insights for our ascent to summits of supreme teaching skills on the podium of science and life in general. When one succeeds in excelling this superb parenting approach, one no longer demands to be loved, openly revered and nodded head at; instead, one sends sunshine of love and grace towards others irrespective of whether they show signs of respect for one's efforts or sheer boredom, negligence and ignorance. In fact, one of the first things that a good parent learns in nurturing an infant is to never let the child's expression of lack of appreciation for his efforts to beautify the child's views of the world drag him down. A child young enough and not used yet to clichéd social norms of behavior thus often runs or crawls away while we are fancifully cruising around it with the ships of our attention. Yet, a wise parent never lets such childish acts hurt his pride; instead, he continues to shed pearly acts that induce genuine giftedness in the child's heart to arise like a beautiful tree of knowledge, independently of the child's response. For, an ultimate parental love, a motherly cosmic one is always unconditional, shining with an equal intensity, like the Sun, with no regard as to whether such shine induces thankfulness for it in those who are blessedly illuminated with it or not. Likewise, a brilliant teacher is aware that gestures and words of stellar silhouettes that comprise the audience in one's dreamy, pet-sounded perception thereof should be incessantly glimpsed with a whole lot of mindfulness since only in active relation thereto can our acts reach truly enlightening nuance, and yet he never lets them taint the sun of beautiful aspirations to illuminate the faces in the audience should they happen to be wary, cagey or plainly vile. Many are lecturers whose enthusiasm during performance depends on the extent to which they will feel appreciated and liked; in a typical lecturing setting where the audience seems mostly distant, unexpressive and thus inherently unsympathetic, they thus often start off with a whole lot of moving energy, but only to gradually begin to feel deprived of the drive to passionately enlighten another and eventually drown in muddy waters of dullness, indifference and monotony. A truly masterful teacher, on the other hand, does not let silence and a sense of seeming distantness in the audience drive him down; rather, he makes his lectures resemble the

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<sup>938</sup> See Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali* No. 30, translated by David. S. Pijade, Doca, Belgrade, Serbia (1910), pp. 34.

speech given by Charlie Chaplin in front of the hundreds of thousands of soundless Nazi followers in the finale of *The Great Dictator*, starting slowly and insecurely, like the Sun that little by little eclipses the morning stars with its shine, but gradually turning into a dazzlingly enlightening glow, fireworks of beauty that enchant each and every one. Such a manner of acting, whereby one dances upon the sunrays of loving attention or in the midst of flying arrows of hellish hate and bleak waters of arrogance with an equal vigor, while resisting to plunge deep into one's inner realms of consciousness and thus disregard the fabulousness of the outer world, but always holding on to the balance of the Way of Love, being attentively outside and meditatively inside at the same time, is undoubtedly something that every star of spirit that will release the shine of its divine inner lights on this planet has to learn.

Rather than posing shields of self-defensiveness at the first signs of insecurity in our knowledge and an egotistic fear that one's towers of pretentiousness and phony omniscience are shaking and are about to crumble down, with one such approach that welcomes all into the house of one's heart, each and every one's relevancy in finding solutions to grand puzzles of life can be pointed at. For, after all, the reason why we are on the trail of the great lineage of scientific exploration of reality and beautifying the world and human spirit through an incessant scientific wonder of ours is because there are things mysterious, occurrences the origins of which we do not have answers to, phenomena that are tickling our curiosity and inviting us to explore them. Just as Nature is partly mysterious and partly blunt and openly honest, the same is with all inspiring mindsets in this world, which is what the philosophy of the Way of Love attempts to reiterate. Also, for a true scientist and presenter on the stage, the moment when he is cornered with questions which he has no good answers to is the best one for that is when instead of posing shields of egotism that redirect the arrows of confronting opinions in the opposite direction and launch a futile war on war of one ego against the other, one has a chance to use one's ignorance to pass the ball to the audience, to his disciples and make them glimpse their infinite relevance in terms of the ability to seek and find answers to these questions that they have posed in the first place. As one of the most moving voices of the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century sang, that of the Welsh singer, Cerys Matthews, "If all you've got to prove today is your innocence, you're as guilty as can be"<sup>939</sup>, reminding us of our karmic falling into traps of conscious avoidance of imperfections whenever we set our heart on the mission to avoid them. At another place, she huskily whispers to our ears that "victory is empty, there are lessons in defeat"<sup>940</sup>, distantly echoing the words of Milan Mladenović, the front man of the Belgrade band, EKV, now imprinted on countless walls across former Yugoslavia, serving as an evidence of how artists with their incessant strivings to give all their treasures away for the purpose of enkindling the shine of spirits around them in the end conquer all the territories that mischievous generals and greedy politicians loose with their possessive outreach: "In every defeat I have seen a portion of freedom, and when it is over, for me, you know, it has just begun"<sup>941</sup>. I have always been tempted to believe that the fact that Milan and all other key members of the EKV lineup, the band that lasted from early 1980s to Milan's death in 1994, were dead by 2002, was due to him recognizing where their status was heading with the arrival of the new pop song formats and styles and the death of their classical rock 'n' roll counterparts, consisting of extensive guitar solos and an intensely auteur spirit of creation and play, which Milan mastered and was loyal to. His legendary trip to Brazil in 1994 and the ensuing collaboration on *Angel's Breath* with the Serbian record producer, Milan Subotić

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<sup>939</sup> Listen to Catatonia's *Road Rage* on *International Velvet*, Blanco y Negro (1998).

<sup>940</sup> Listen to Catatonia's *Dead from the Waist Down* on *Equally Cursed and Blessed*, Blanco y Negro (1999).

<sup>941</sup> Listen to Ekatarina Velika's *Zemlja/Earth* on *Ljubav/Love*, PGP RTB (1987).

Suba in São Paulo has often been quoted in colloquial conversations as the one whereon Milan contracted a deadly disease, but in my head this was always a trip on which he came face to face with the future of the musical genre he proponed, in which repetitive phrases would take place of solo guitar progressions, smoother electro sounds would take place of rhythmical jerkiness and *ad hoc* screaming into the mic, and polished production associative of sci-fi cleanliness and vacuity, like that Suba created in his own music and embedded in the records he produced, would take place of raw energies of the moment that EKV were proficient at. At this point in time, Milan might have seen himself in the mirror of destiny as an old rocker with a greasy hair drilling the same worn-out guitar phrases over and over again in a smoky bar and going down in history as a man of the past. At the same moment, he might have realized that death could be the route to deathlessness, that ultimate aim of countless artists who have approached their arts with the same zeal and otherworldly dedication before and after him, and the path of his life projected before his consciousness from this instant on led him to this Valhalla of heroism and immortality and to the confirmation of the veracity of the aforementioned adage of his on defeats as routes to triumphs and on endings as *de facto* beginnings with his own life. Death, in a way, became “a wise career move”<sup>942</sup>, if we were to evoke the phrase Gore Vidal used to describe the premature departure of Truman Capote, the departure that, when timely chosen, can be the route to enabling one to “live well past the time when the last person who knew him is gone”<sup>943</sup>. In that sense, the deliberately chosen early departure becomes yet another tactical trick in a battle waged against the same old windmills, evoking the thought of the Serbian criminal a.k.a. Giška, who deemed that as dead, he would suddenly be “not only worthy and okay, but also feared even more”<sup>944</sup>. Now, that defeats are often the uttermost blessings in life, while triumphs tend to be cursed if not approached with humbleness of the heart could emanate from merely a little bit of common reasoning, if not subjection of historical outlooks to scrutiny: namely, whereas winners are inherently not invited to revisit their own attitudes and improve, which leads to rigidity and evolutionary stagnations, something that rarely, if ever, does not threaten the natural system’s sustainability, the potential of losers to change and progress is far more immense, and we all know that change is a natural prerequisite for sustaining practically anything in this life, from superb social systems to breathtaking civilizations to the awe-inspiring beauty of being given rise to by the artists on the stage of life. Hence, to stumble and fall in all our naturalness, like an infant learning to walk, is how we advance towards lifting ourselves up into heavenly heights of being and setting our head amongst the most sublime clouds of thought under the sun. In other words, only when we accept our humane fragilities and let the towers of ego crumble down like castles made of sand on the shores of our selfless and sunshiny spirit, dwelling in oneness with the universe as we know it, do we get a chance to truly touch human hearts around us with our lives. To wave in the wake of a beautiful question rather than to stand stiffly and eventually break under its gusty winds is thus the way to become a stellar performer on the stages of science, art and the very life alike. Hence, as ever in the world of science, we should know that questions enkindled by genuine and selfless sense of wonder rather than answers fortified by the gates of ego are those that open the most brilliant paths of knowledge in front of us. It was on top of one such glorification of inquisitive minds and the admittance of holy ignorance

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<sup>942</sup> See Jay Parini’s *Empire of Self: A Life of Gore Vidal*, Knopf Doubleday, New York, NY (2015), pp. 262.

<sup>943</sup> See Ande Parks’ and Chris Samnee’s *Capote in Kansas*, Oni Press, Portland, OR (2005), pp. 113.

<sup>944</sup> See Duška Jovanić’s *Najveći nacionalni razbojnici* (3), Đorđe Božović Giška: *Nasmejao se kada je video smrt*, Ekspres (May 31, 2017), retrieved from <https://www.ekspres.net/brejking/kriminal/najveci-nacionalni-razbojnici-3-dorde-bozovic-giska-nasmejao-se-kad-je-video-smrt>.

underlying them that Socrates realized that with the right series of questions, even the most brutish slaves could be made to understand the axioms of geometry<sup>945</sup>, an insight that may mean a million to today's academia, where didactics has gained a derogatory connotation and where its limitless powers have been degraded to clichéd interruptions of monotonous lectures to wake the students up from the sluggish states of inattentive drowsiness. Moreover, as it can be concluded from these lines, atop one such infinite faith in questions, we lay ourselves down, under all that there is, as humbly as the authentic scientific mindset ought to be, and become a bridge for students to cross the dangerous rivers and seas and emerge on some glorious coasts of knowledge, as opposed to acting effectively as walls and gates that block and frustrate them had we turned ourselves and the ideas we drop before them into mere sums of answers.

Besides, with one such approach to education, which opens limitless skies of knowledge and being to be flown to and explored by the little space boys and girls, a true respect of the tradition that teaches them to be as they are and beyond is built. To that end, it is worth adding that a bipolar spirit rising from the combination of extreme demandingness and a total anarchistic freedom is being crafted in my classroom, aiming at perplexing the students and implicitly demonstrating to them that one such standing on crossroads, crucified, is the starting point for the exhibitions of the greatest creativities conceivable. For one, I have had too much respect for all the souls who have dedicated their lives to create and discover the sacred knowledge that is being presented to and discoursed on before the students not to demand from them to rise to it, fueled by the motivational energy that my role, as a teacher, an inspirer, is to instill in them, rather than to degrade this marvelous science by lowering it down to within the students' initial reach<sup>946</sup>. After all, an ascent into sublime spheres of thought rather than continued swimming in muddy puddles ought to be the purpose of education. On the other hand, I am aware that no living thing could be forced to do anything and that every lasting and profound growth in life stems from freedom, the reason for which I have explicitly renounced the role of instructor, in the true sense of the word, and embraced the role of a teacher, with all the emphasis on wisdom, morality and aesthetics, not sheer practicality, that it connotes. It is this role, built on the foundations of love, that greatest of all cosmic feelings, that spurs the students to rise into the stellar spheres of thought lying far above and beyond those through which the teacher's spirit has flown in his lifetime. After all, the disciples indubitably recognize when their teachers secretly

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<sup>945</sup> See Alan Gowans' *The Restless Art: A History of Painters and Painting, 1760 – 1960*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, PA (1966), pp. 9.

<sup>946</sup> Note that this way of thinking constitutes an extreme rarity in this modern academic world of inflated grades and deflated quality of education, all because of that thing which Einstein said science is to eradicate: ego. For, driven by the wish to secure their prestigious and permanent seat in academia, untenured professors simplify the curriculum and minimize the demands so as to be liked by the students and receive good ratings from them, whereas the tenured faculty continue the trend because of being too indolent to change things around and because of wanting to make sure that the enrollment, paying their salaries, continues. Over time, every university subjected to these trends turns into a Mickey Mouse college (as if most American – and now European - universities have not already turned into these superficial collages of gnosis in the continued attempts to allure the students as customers into their commercialized offices and “keep the business going”). For reference, the direct link between the professors' rating of students and the students' ratings of professors has been shown before; namely, “professors who do more than teach the basic bare-bones knowledge and are in some sense more rigorous tend to get poorer student evaluations”, while “the less rigorous professors even get good performances out of their students in the courses taught but those students subsequently, in follow up courses, do poorer than the more rigorous professors who do more than teach to the standardized test” (See Richard Vedder's *Student Evaluations, Grade Inflation, and Declining Student Effort*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education Innovations* (June 19, 2010), retrieved from <https://www.chronicle.com/blogs/innovations/student-evaluations-grade-inflationdeclining-student-effort/24926>).

aim at closing the gate to the inflow of new knowledge and block their progress beyond that which they, themselves, have achieved, and ultimately take that as a mistrustful and dishonest way of teaching. Sadly but truly, in the academic universe wherein nurture of the sense of cosmic ethics has been wholly ignored, producing a breed of profoundly ethically infantile scientists of the modern day, ambitiousness smelled in one's vicinity naturally provokes territorial instincts to kick in, impelling one to push down these skyward streaming creatures and propel oneself up rather than to offer them a hand and lift them up to stellar realms, far beyond those inhabited by the teacher himself, as would have been in the spirit of Taoist and most other sublime ethical lessons that embellish the pantheon of wisdom of our civilization. Of course, such a state of affairs wherein tops of the pyramids of any given human organizations, academia included, are, sadly, dominated by monstrously narcissistic gate-guardians who push down those that try to climb up instead of giving them a hand has changed over time only in terms of subtlety of suppressive methods in usage. "Remember, no one can make you feel inferior without your consent"<sup>947</sup>, Eleanor Roosevelt is known to have proclaimed once, and yet the pervasiveness of leaders who try their best to make those who occupy hierarchically lower stances inferior, as if imposing on them an impression that they, their leaders, are to be looked at helplessly from below as guardians and protectors of a kind, does not seem to abate in the world around us. Rather, those who abide by the Serbian poet, Duško Radović's aphoristic advice to "start beating your children as soon as you recognize that they have started to resemble you" are as rare as opals in the sawdust in today's academia and other social spheres based on the hierarchies of authority. And here, as ever, there is a powerful feedback loop at work, resembling a vortex that feeds on selfishness and other unholy traits so as to spit out ever more of them. For example, since it is known that those who become renowned and influential by emerging from an oppressive milieu where they were belittled and made feel inferior usually turn out to have frightening egos<sup>948</sup>, the top-down authoritarian oppression integral to the academic hierarchy naturally serves to perpetuate the trend of overblown egos that plagues today's academic world, causing toxic deluges to stream all through the hallways, offices and lectures of its institutions. Therefore, once a pantheon of wisdom, academia allowed its sublime intellectual essence to degrade over the years, reaching its current state where egocentric cunningness is measured in tons and genuine wisdom in teaspoons, a state that breeds monstrous characters across its campuses, characters who are smart like serpents, but whose fountainheads of wisdom have parched and crumbled into dust. Through such spiritual deserts I have roamed for years and years, searching for the oases of wisdom, albeit in vain, for all I have come across were congregations of souls seeking benefit for themselves solely and embodying in their character and spirit a single object that the curse of academia has revolved around ever since its inception: a wall. The recipe for success in this corrupt realm of mediocritized intellect, as I have come to conclude over those years, is to heartlessly exploit another as a tool for the elevation of the self into the limelight of eminence. And yet, it is by living life for another, not oneself, and by selflessly instructing the disciples how to fly farther than their teachers have ever been that the little ones become infused with true respect and love, which, as we may know, serves as a rocket fuel for their enthusiastic and creative flies across the skies of science. Upon receiving the Nobel Prize in medicine in 1977, Rosalyn Yalow said that "if we are to have faith that mankind will

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<sup>947</sup> See Tim Field's *Bully in Sight: How to Predict, Resist, Challenge and Combat Workplace Bullying*, Success Unlimited, Oxfordshire, UK (1996), pp. 213.

<sup>948</sup> Watch the interview with Sylvester Stallone, *Acapulco, Mexico* (2018), titled *Sylvester Stallone Talks about His Ego when He Became a Star* and retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDNntDI2eUk>.

survive and thrive on the face of the earth, we must believe that each succeeding generation will be wiser than its progenitors”, and what these words implicitly convey is an awareness that sooner or later we will need to accept our own obsolescence as we selflessly and altruistically raise the upcoming generations far above the intellectual vistas that we, ourselves, have occupied if we are to sustain the trend of progress of our civilization. And, as we see, nothing serves as a motivational propellant for the disciples’ ascent into spheres of stellar creativeness as visibly selfless sacrifices that their teachers are ready to make to enable these flights. In the animated movie about Little Bear<sup>949</sup>, the bear goes deep into the forest to help his new friend, a wild cub, finds parents he had lost in a storm, but in the process loses himself in the forest and relies on a friendly bird to fly over the forest and back to tell his own parents how to find him; similarly, dedicated instructors and mentors must travel deep into the heart of the enchanted forest, sacrifice the comfort of a confident mind and get lost in a forest of perplexities if they wish to save their students from slumps into the darkness of an insipid, uncreative mind, explaining why sacrifice is a necessary step for salvation, of anything and anyone in this life. And only when these instructors, be they professors at school, parents or older and more experienced friends, sacrificially elevate their proteges and launch them to stars do the pupils become fully aware of how great and worth of respect the pedestal of tradition of human reasoning and working upon which they stand is. Nothing around them becomes taken for granted then; instead, each manmade object is seen as a monument to human sacrifices, to devotion to another and to benevolent hardships. Although they are implicitly taught that rebelliously going against the stream is the key to creative acting, they are thus also reminded that failing to watch the world through the eyes of our tradition, through the eyes of those whom we know and who are so immaculately dear to us as well as those whom we have never seen but who have opened ways for the existence of our being at this very place, right here, right now, equals to an ethical suicide and an irrational jump off the cliff from the high spiritual ground on which we sit like my slender and long-necked muse, moving with the grace of a shadow, all washed in the moonlight, overlooking the Earth from “the window that looks out on Corcovado”<sup>950</sup>. It is as if the heavenly voice of Elizabeth Fraser singing the ending verse of Cocteau Twins’ Half-Gifts, “I have my face = my family, I have my self instead of me” is now heard echoing in the distance, altogether with her glossolalic and gobbledygookish glissandos (a.k.a. non-lexical vocal swooping) signifying mysterious shifts between (a) pronouncing intelligibly resonating words that symbolize our identifying with the human tradition, a family of a kind, that has partly shaped who we are at this very moment and a hearty homage to which every second of our lives ought to be, and (b) uttering incomprehensible phonemes suggestive of our identifying with the divine and celestial self, untouched by any worldly expectations or other peer pressures that pile up around us. The same balance between attachment and nonattachment, making our heart alternately emerge on the coasts of ineffable, otherworldly bliss and intelligible conventionalism as we bath like a dolphin in the ocean of human knowledge, is distantly echoed in the dual message of the Christ who on one hand argued that “every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life” (Matthew 19:29), plunging our mind deep into the voice divine that rings around the fancifully wallpapered walls of our soul, while on the other hand claiming that love for all, the neighbor and the enemy alike (Matthew 5:43-44), is what parachutes our spirit into ethereal realms of being, aiming to crucify his faithful followers between the poles of

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<sup>949</sup> Watch The Little Bear Movie directed by Raymond Jafelice (2001).

<sup>950</sup> Listen to Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars (Corcovado) on Getz/Gilberto, Verve (1964).

devotion to God, not mammon and manly courts, on one side and passionate devotion to every single human creature on the other, thus transforming our earthly and evanescent selves into strings on which the divine music of being could be heard softly resonating, and the whole Earth into a thrilling cosmic symphony of being one day. Yet, the key as to how to sustain this highly dynamic balance between loving conformism and wondrous living in harmony with the music of the spheres of our cosmic self, where in the blink of an eye one could realize that one has wandered off from the balanced state, is not given thereto. For, some things ought to be left secret and hidden, like the roots of a tree, in order to remain alive and continuously feed us with prolific intellectual and emotional drives.

One thing is certain though: through such a delicate balance between sacrificially living for our adherents and spurring their sense of independence and self-responsibility, we walk on the glistening path of the Way of Love. For, this ideal projected onto the educational domain gives rise to awareness that neither carrying out all the tasks posed in front of our students by ourselves nor distantly sitting aside and expecting all to be accomplished by them, with no giving them a hand or a hint, is the way to raising generations of creatures endowed with crowns of brilliant creativeness. Hence, when young parents ask me whether walking a long way to bring a jumper to their kid who feels cold or fostering their independence by watching them freeze and thus building in them awareness that they ought to reach out for objects that satisfy their cravings by themselves instead of passively waiting for princes on white horses to deliver whatever their hearts long for straight into their lap, I, envisioning the famous pediatrician from my Mom's bedtime stories, who had spent a lifetime convincing parents to let their children cry themselves to sleep and then changed his mind, having realized that Love is the simple recipe to it all, the upbringing of beautiful souls included, say, "Bring them the sweater". As for myself, in spite of all the warnings of psychotherapists<sup>951</sup> that the child would turn into a spoiled-rotten brat, selfish, impulsive, violent, unsympathetic, egocentric, narcissistic, antisocial, unable to control emotions, spiteful and seditious when his wishes become dashed, and so forth, like the aforementioned Zen master who found his disciple napping on the floor of the shrine he was supposed to guard and, instead of bashing him right away, quietly jumped over him, whispering "sleep, child, sleep", I, forever a believer in the power of love and love only, smiling to the helicopters nesting over my head to the sound of "every breath you take, every move you make"<sup>952</sup>, would bring one jumper to a freezing kid every second, from now until the end of time. By instructing the parents to do the same, I do gladly clash with the proponents of cold and unaffectionate westernized nurture that wholly lives up to the premises of the morale of the story *If You Give Mouse a Cookie*<sup>953</sup> anytime the cookie takes the shape of a book, a blanket, a bear hug or a blueberry puff. For, my extensive experience as a parent and even more so as a child has led me to believe that children cannot be pampered into whiny brats so long as the spirit of thankfulness is instilled in their hearts, from which a sense of responsibility will be born later in life, preventing their subsequent slips into the reigns of sheer neglectfulness, of carelessly sucking the sweet nectars that their beelike spirits will come to sense around them, without ever asking themselves in return what creative and beautiful things *they* could do to pay the due for the immense love that their

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<sup>951</sup> See Zoran Milivojević's Permissive Nurture/Permisivno vaspitanje, *Politika* (December 27, 2014), pp. 18.

<sup>952</sup> Listen to the Police's Every Breath You Take on Synchronicity, A&M (1983).

<sup>953</sup> The story written by Laura Numeroff and illustrated by Felicia Bond (Barnes & Noble, New York, NY, 1985.) is about a boy who becomes caught in the endless web of satisfying one demand of his mousey friend after another after giving him a cookie, all until another cookie is being requested in the end and the infinite circle closed. The title of this story I first saw on a panel in the backyard of a church in the Lakeview neighborhood of Chicago, indicating the title of a sermon that was to be given in it on Sunday, May 18, 2014.

guardians have invested in them. Recipe on how to endow the little ones with this gift of gratefulness that soothes and softens their hearts, preparing the soils of their spirits for the rise of gorgeous poplars of wisdom, is, however, none, save the belief that transforming our hearts into eruptive geysers of Love, whose streams and spatters will water their thirsty spirits, must be it, in which case, though, the recipe on how and where to find and switch this geysers on is none. Thus, although I am aware that independence is to be fostered at all costs and that a mama bear neither drops a caught salmon in front of her cubs' feet nor greedily eats it by herself, but stands near them with the fish in her mouth, teaching the little bears how to jump to it and fight for their stake of the fish, Love always comes first and foremost. And although my heart concurs with the guardians who hold that not giving children what they want all of the time and letting them cry it out, while strongly empathizing with them in the course of these meltdowns, ideally through a comforting embrace, is the way to teach them that having a loving human being by their side, who puts his life at stake for the sake of their own wellbeing, is more important than having one's wishes fulfilled, a most essential lesson to be learned in each and every one's lifetime, I am still all for dissolving any calculative traces of thought from the backs of our minds and becoming a slave that selflessly sacrifices oneself to satisfy the yearlings' yens, rolling oneself into a carpet across which their little feet will walk and turning thereby into that Nietzschean wheel that is all about Yes and Yes only, into the living emanation of Molly Bloom's ecstasy and the glorious resolution of the Biblical Revelation, lurching glisteningly for as long as the Sun, the astral body that washes the Earth with its light irrespective of whether the earthlings are grateful for it or curse it from the bottoms of their hearts, shines. And so, while never ceasing to believe in the merits of the balance between meditative remoteness and compassionate intimacy, of individualism and collectivism enwrapped around each other, in the spirit of true systemic thinkers I deliberately drift away from this balanced state, knowing all the way that balance between balance and imbalance is the ultimate balance in life. To break the law at the right moment is vital in ensuring that the evolution of our world towards ever more enchanting horizons of knowledge and being proceeds uninterrupted, lest we descend into ever staler ways of being if we only resist to do so. When the counsel of Peter the Aviator in Powell and Pressburger's *Stairway to Heaven* points out triumphantly that "nothing is stronger than the law in the universe, but on Earth nothing is stronger than love", he implicitly suggests that to bear love in life and keep the wheels of the evolutionary train turning, laws from all walks of life and the domains of existence need to be broken incessantly. Hence, although I am fully aware that the Way of Love bears equilibrated sacrificial love for the little ones and fosterage of their independent judgments and behavior, so that doing all we could instead of them may make them apathetically pampered and creatively crippled, while refusing to do anything for them would place blinds on eyes that were meant to be dazzled and inspired by the shiny sacrifices that we have invested in raising them, I hereby place Love on the pedestal of the most awesome education we could hand out in this life. For, it is none other but Love that stands behind the pillars of Wonder rising from our profound eyes as much as attentive sparkles of Wonder are needed to sustain the flame of Love burning in our eyes. For, just like ecstatic freedom of expression with no compassion tearing one's heart to pieces yields behavior that is not pleasing at all to godly eyes that watch over us, the same can be said for Love that is blindly directed towards others, as if following a never questioned command sprung from one's mental realm. Only when we let our love for others be pervaded by the glisters of Wonder that make us cruise all around the objects we strew with the sunrays of our attention do we get to embody celestial, otherworldly Love within a dusty, fragile and clownish earthling as we are, making the angels

hidden behind the edges of our experience cease to frown and begin to smile like the glistening Moon that surfs above our heads. If we are always aware of this, all that we do will secretly emit and sow seeds of the balance between independent thinking and a sense of empathic unison with the whole world and with the generations of human beings whose strivings to beautify the planet preceded us, so that “the great circle of life”, if I were to use the phrase popularized by the Lion King, can be continued.

With one such elevation of disciples to the stars rather than tying them down to earth and uprooting their proclivity to independent thinking, as most insecure and self-defensive teachers of the world do, a great sense of respect for the tradition arises in the hearts of the disciples. They then begin to direct silent prayers to this tradition, hoping that through their own efforts they will edify and ornament it with some precious bricks of knowledge and beauty. Disciples then stop living only to sustain their own being in the world, seeing it through thoroughly self-centered and narrow perspectives. Instead, their understanding of what they are and what the world is expands all until their very being merges with that of the world and all that has ever existed and been created by human hands. All the products of one’s work are then enlighteningly seen as created by and for entire humanity, which breathes a perfect sense of happiness and satisfaction in every deed of one in this world. Eventually, the seed of the desire to transmit the great insights with which one has been endowed during one’s arduous explorations of the reality to others will sprout inside of one, instilling a powerful urge to disseminate knowledge and produce intellectual progenies of the great trajectory of the ascent of human spirits to stars, bearing irresistible resemblance to the desire to be a parent that emerges in the life of man. History, furthermore, is then seen as converging to a point in time that led to the birth of the self, and yet the awareness of this does not serve the purpose of solipsistic inflation of one’s ego, but of sublime and solemn elevation of the importance of one’s creative potentials in the world. “All history up to this point has been spent preparing the world for my presence”<sup>954</sup>, says Calvin, and this point of view is, believe it or not, vital for centering the creative powers within oneself. It is equivalent to one’s placing anchors of attention into the center of one’s being, sanely following rivers and streams of thoughts and emotions arising therein. For, only in such a way could utterly authentic and original ways of being be given rise to, comprising prerequisites for living up to the divine potentials dormant in each and every one of us. Paralleled with one’s spreading arms to the tradition that stands behind our back, driven by love and empathy for creatures that has comprised it, the channels are opened to direct the rays of creative energy straight from the center of one’s being to wash the world therewith. Looking at the world from the eyes of another has been mentioned as the essence of empathy and love, and by looking at the world through the eyes of our tradition, of our parents, brothers, sisters and millions of loved ones while being deeply rooted at the depths of our consciousness, we reach the ideal of the Way of Love, of simultaneous dwelling deep inside of our being where the creative aspirations and impressions are being sorted out and fused into creative sunshine, which is through channels of love and respect radiated to the world around us.

Although the goal of the teaching method proponed on these pages is to eliminate the spirit of autocracy and authoritativeness among the teachers and spur confidence and individuality among the disciples, reversing the roles of the two rather than reinforcing them and thus predisposing to stagnation, this does not mean that we ought to forget that we are inextricably bound to our social tradition with the threads of respect and responsibility. Quite

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<sup>954</sup> See Bill Watterson’s *The Indispensable Calvin & Hobbes*, Andrews and McMeel, Kansas City, MO (1992), pp. 155.

contrarily, if successful, this teaching method would instill a drive in the students to, perhaps unknowingly, “work from within the tradition, against the tradition, but, in fact, for the tradition”<sup>955</sup>, as Martin Heidegger put it, a way of being emanating naturally from the dialectical pull both ways: toward being the obedient continuer of the tradition of immense dedication and effort planted behind our backs and toward diverging from it, clashing with it and entering the stellar spheres of originality like the world has never seen. After all, if the fact that ceaseless alternations between discovery and publication constitute the academic career implies something, it is that the constant drive to tread the uncharted territories of human reason and be unprecedentedly original in our endeavors, that is, to mistrust the peers and authorities, to doubt the truthfulness and significance of their claims and clash with the mainstream beliefs and paradigms presents one side of the coin of a prolific scientific mind, while its other side dazzlingly reflects the empathic drives to share all the treasures that we have collected along our exploratory ways with others: in other words, anarchic Wonder that leans onto no authorities of this world and egoless Love, expanding the limits of our identity all until it ceases to be a tiny individual isolated from the rest of the world and becomes the Universe as a whole, ought to hold hands as they march in togetherness across the landscapes of our imagination. The Way of Love is consequently all about balancing a sublime and sacred sense of being a son of the stars, a superman of a kind, on one side of our consciousness and a social animal, sensual and natural, one and the same with everyone around us on the other. While the former provides a precious pull inside, into the meditative core of our being wherein gorgeous ideas, emotions and other drives of our creative acts are forged, the latter releases these inward tensions via its down-to-earth openness and unpretentious intimacy. John of Ruysbroeck was only one among a plethora of mystics and practical philosophers who greatly valued the balance between contemplativeness and charitableness, claiming that “God comes to us incessantly, both with means and without means; and He demands of us both action and fruition, in such a way that the action never hinders the fruition, nor fruition the action, but they strengthen one another. And this is why the interior man lives his life according to these two ways; that is to say, in rest and in work... Thus this man is just, and he goes *towards* God by inward love, in eternal work, and he goes *in* God by his fruitive inclination in eternal rest. And he dwells in God; and yet he goes towards all creatures, in a spirit of love towards all things, in virtue and in works of righteousness. *And this is the supreme summit of the inner life*”<sup>956</sup>. The same principle according to which shedding inspiring and lifesaving signs in our empathically driven acting and expanding the cosmic consciousness of ours in meditation enkindle each other’s flames is inscribed in the very heart of the Way of Love. In such a way, maintained is the equilibrium of oppositely directed forces, such as that present in shining stars that gravitationally implode, fusing light elements and creating immense amounts of creative energy and yet energetically explode into the outer space, feeding the surrounding planets with their inner light. Although one side of our mind thus appears to be a remote island onto itself, the other one stretches its arms benevolently everywhere around one, knowing that “no man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main”, as John Donne would have stressed out. After all, no matter how hard we try to free ourselves from the influence of the society, these attempts of ours will always be in vain. For, to learn by imitation is so deeply engrained in our nature that we are predestined to co-evolve with, neither more nor less, but the entire humankind. “The only given

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<sup>955</sup> See Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, Harper Perennial, New York, NY (1927). See also Werner Marx’s *Heidegger and the Tradition*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, IL (1971), pp. xx.

<sup>956</sup> See Evelyn Underhill’s *Mysticism*, Methuen & Co., Ltd., London, UK (1911), pp. 435-436.

is the way of taking”<sup>957</sup>, Roland Barthes might have reminded us at this point, and a simple comparison of the behavioral traits of any of the feral children known to humanity with any given human creature near us would lead us to the conclusion that our very self is socially predetermined at least as much as it is individually shaped from the inside. Although many people around us may openly condemn those that behave in clichéd, readymade manners, chances are that even they, themselves, are equally helpless slaves to socially imposed behavioral standards of a different or, as it quite often appears to be the case, the very same kind. Thus I bring to mind a myriad of anti-ideological ideologists who are equal slaves to their doctrine-annihilating doctrines as indoctrinated people of any other kind that they so intensely abhor. By holding on to the belief that every ideology, regardless of how humanitarian and altruistic it may seem, is inherently toxic because it excludes the right to existence of ideas and worldviews that are finitely valuable and lifesaving, these postmodern anti-ideologists distribute a brilliant message, but the downside of their standpoints is that, albeit anti-ideological, they are rooted in an ideology. For, living in a rule-free universe does not mean that all rules imposable on us ought to be categorically rejected, but, as a matter of fact, that any rule that we come across could be obeyed at any given time. Therefore, a genuine anti-ideologist finds oneself in a state of unresolvable paradox; for, only if he breaches his anti-ideological beliefs with the freedom to embrace any ideology out there as worth sympathizing and pursuing, at least for a while, can he claim the status of a true anti-ideologist, which, in doing so, clearly he is not. After all, just as Wittgenstein pointed out that the idea about the existence of perfect doubt is nonsensical because any meaningful question must be based on a presupposed answer<sup>958</sup>, usually in form of one of its many premises, so would be the making of any daily decision impossible without a subconscious obedience to authority, which may take the form of a presupposed principle, belief, relationship or ideology. Besides, though a self-declared antiauthoritarian anarchist I have been, anyone who succeeds in writing four or five books like these in a decade, without receiving any compensation for it, must believe strongly in an ideal authoritatively (self)-imposed on one, in which sense this anarchist who prophesies disobedience to any rules and regulations must be a somewhat hypocritical one. Therefore, all this talk about the need to do away with any inclination to adhere to rules in life is not meant to make us unquestionably resistant to them, but rather endowed with the freedom to defy them or conform to them and, more than anything, to seek their value when we decide to disobey them and question their utility when we decide to obey them. And if anything is required for one to follow the Way of Love by constantly switching back and forth between its meditatively introspective and empathically expressive poles, it is just about enough rule-obeying devotion as rule-breaking flexibility. Without this ability to constantly fluctuate between the states of obedience and disobedience, neither would we be able to alternate between the temporary shunning of one pole and embracement of another with an utmost focus and devotion, and the dream of walking on the Way of Love would dissipate in our plain sight. Whatever the case, it is the balance between (a) a sense of distant individuality and stellar uniqueness arising from understanding that evolution away from bloodthirsty animalism and toward a world populated by angelical animas is possible only insofar as individuals move beyond the tradition, and (b) a sense of communality arising from firmly grasping that “human being is a human being only with another human being”, as Heinz von Foerster drew on the

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<sup>957</sup> This is the quote with which Ernst von Glasersfeld opened his landmark treatise, *Radical Constructivism: A Way of Knowing and Learning*, RoutledgeFalmer, London, UK (1995).

<sup>958</sup> See Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *On Certainty*; Translated by G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, Wiley-Blackwell, New York, NY (1951), pp. 18.

thought of Martin Buber, as well as that “had there not been another, there would not be me either”, as Chuang-Tzu pointed out millennia ago, that ought to be spurred amongst the disciples of any science in this world, for they are all, even the most fundamental ones, social, pragmatic and humanistic in their roots. In Paul Tillich’s universe of thought, for example, built on the belief that “ontological principles have a polar character according to the basic polar structure of being, that of self and world, with the first polar elements being individualization and participation”<sup>959</sup>, present is the accordant need to incessantly balance individualization manifested as the courage to be as oneself and participation manifested as the courage to subdue ego to a greater whole and be as its part, lest we become either like the philosophy teacher from Sartre’s *Age of Reason*, in whom the mountainous passion to be oneself sublimated into rejection of every commitment<sup>960</sup> and, thus, to a sense of emptiness, dispiritedness and despair, or like the conformist collagen fibers in cirrhotic scars, all aligned in one direction, militaristically or even fascistically, as some may say, but wholly directionless and dysfunctional in their beating to the drum of the authority of the neighbor. And yet, it is as if humanity, at least at its economically and culturally most progressive spots, zoomed too quickly from the tenets of authoritative conformism, which culminated with the rise of totalitarian political philosophies of fascism, communism and Hobbesian, “posture of war” reactionism in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, to today’s lame and lukewarm generations often called Maybe, Snowflake or Z, where commitment is an exception and flakiness the rule, generations epitomized in the older son, Frank’s retrieval of the hand from that of his father lying ill in the hospital in the final scenes of Noah Baumbach’s *The Squid and the Whale*, so as to head over to a New York museum to see the squid and the whale exhibition to which his mother, whom he equally resented, had taken him as a child, holding his hand to console him in view of the frightening seascape, which remained his dearest memory to date. With this small but monumental act, this representative of the worldviews at today’s cultural frontier demonstrated favoring dreaming of beautiful acts over performing them in real world, leaving us with a grain of hope that by being analogous to the Little Prince’s leaving the rose he had looked after on his planet behind to roam around the cosmos and find it “beautiful because of a rose one cannot see”<sup>961</sup>, the world, at least, may look more beautiful than ever in the history of humanity from the eyes of these hunchbacked spirits whose listless postures indeed resemble that of the letter Z, regardless of their incapacity to be holy doers beside being wistful dreamers, with the truth always awaiting the holders of both of these stances, as with favorers of individuality and communality, innovation and conservation, or freedom and love, somewhere in the middle, the middle whose conquering may be the privilege of the next generation, generation A, which is to be born only with the flipping over to the beginning of the alphabet and starting it all anew. Hence, we could argue that the tendencies to be compliant and submissive account for the greatest threats that drag human spirits down in their dreams of rising to stars and shedding the divine lights all over the face of the Earth, as much as that solipsistic and autistic confinements into bubbles of one’s feelings and thought, unable to break through and connect freely with others, account for the greatest threats that prevent the divine seeds found in the core of our caged selves to fall onto the ground, die therein in love and empathy and yield a plethora of divine fruits for all to enjoy in the world around us. All in all, thence, we could conclude that it is the close alchemistic circle of the Way of Love, wherein the snake of inner withdrawnness and quietude bites the tail of the dragon of blazing,

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<sup>959</sup> See Paul Tillich’s *The Courage to Be*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CN (1952), pp. 86.

<sup>960</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 144.

<sup>961</sup> See Antoine de Saint-Exupery’s *The Little Prince*, Mladost, Zagreb, Croatia (1943).

passionate and fiery outward expressiveness and *vice versa*, that holds the key to truly fulfilling being in this life.

Had the teachers of the world truly trusted the given saying (Luke 6:40), they would have also neglected the need to constantly learn and evolve through teaching, which has been one of the crucial traits of the world's greatest educators. With our onstage lecturing turned into a one-way communication, during which we become thoroughly insensitive to the feedback response to our words and gestures from those whom we instruct, our acting automatically becomes lackluster and uninspiring. The same happens to a parental education that becomes dominated by one-way streams of influence from parents to their kids; namely, control freaks and micromanagers on one side and passive and pampered personalities on the other thus get to be shaped on most occasions. Realizing this makes us happily proclaim that "the child is father of the man"<sup>962</sup>, and Velázquez's memorable painting *Las Meninas*, with its compositional wittiness, showing the king and the queen reduced by the painter who paints them to faint reflections in the mirror, where their egos can savor their supposed greatness, and a little princess placed instead at the forefront of the attention of suns and other stars, nods in affirmation from a dimly lit Prado wall to those who can see. Besides, a simple observation of infantile and self-centered grownups becoming altruistic, caring and all-inspiring individuals after they are given a chance to become parents tells us how children exert a subtle and imperceptible, but vital influence on their parents. Wordlessly, by mere purity of their spirits they manage to change their parents and the world for better, acting as a monumental example of how the shininess of our spirits, not the logical craftiness and sophistication of our thoughts, is what softens up and enlightens human hearts and prevents them from turning stony with the old age. Every time these little guardians of our spirits softly blink while we talk to them, lightly dropping a sparkle or two from their eyes dewed by starry wonder, they change the world for better while laying the path for the restoration of naturalness, unaffectedness and graciousness before our feet. For this reason, I have always had the impression that by reading sententious stories to children, as they listen with their whole beings and articulate but a tremble here and wide eyes there, we do not educate them, but it is rather the other way around, as crazily as it seems<sup>963</sup>: they educate us, teaching us how to rediscover fulfillment in simplicity, in compassionate openness to all things and in unpretentious embracement of it all straight into the home of our heart, all the things that we have forgotten as we have grown. Standing face to face with Theo, with a thin thread drawn between our hearts, trembling gently with messages reverberating all the way to the most distant galaxies and stars, oh so many times I vowed never to see him as an object to be coldly crafted and manipulated

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<sup>962</sup> This saying is from William Wordsworth's poem *Rainbow*, also known as *My Heart Leaps Up* (1802), available at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My\\_Heart\\_Leaps\\_Up](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My_Heart_Leaps_Up).

<sup>963</sup> This is why I have always claimed that children books are, in fact, written, first and foremost, for grownups. A very obvious example in favor of this claim is Sam McBratney's popular bedtime story known under the name of *Guess How Much I Love You* (Candlewick Press, Somerville, MA, 1994). In it, two rabbits, a child known as Little Nutbrown Hare, and his parent, Big Nutbrown Hare playfully measure their love for each other. And so, when Little Nutbrown Hare says that he loves Big Nutbrown Hare as much as his arm span is, Big Nutbrown Hare extends his even longer arms and says the same. When Little Nutbrown Hare says that he loves Big Nutbrown Hare as high as he can reach, Big Nutbrown Hare also reaches upwards, though to much greater heights. And so this silly competition continues, all until Little Nutbrown Hare says that he loves Big Nutbrown Hare right up to the moon and, at that moment, falls asleep. Even though the bedtime story *per se* might have come to an end at that point, the story continues and it has yet to arrive to its touching apex. As we are on the brink of it, Big Nutbrown Hare settles Little Nutbrown Hare in a bed of leaves and kisses him goodnight. And then, the crux of the story comes when Big Nutbrown Hare lays next to Little Nutbrown Hare and softly whispers, with a smile, how he loves Little Nutbrown Hare right up to the moon – and back.

with and always as God, as a path lain before my feet to follow with all my heart, a path leading back to the Garden of Eden that once lived inside of me. Therefore, having found myself seated in one of the front pews of the St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco, at a seminar whose topic was how to discipline an emotionally intelligent, intrinsically rebellious and disobedient kid<sup>964</sup>, amongst dozens of stiff individuals, all "dead from the waist down, like in California"<sup>965</sup>, as a fairy named Cerys would have characterized them, looking more like desensitized rocks than embodiments of eruptive energies concealed in our celestial cores, I had a feeling that the world is badly in need of revolutionary spirits who would turn it upside down, as the following train of thought swooshed through my head: "What if we are all wrong? What if by disciplining children we do not tame their carnal natures, but we suffocate the innate sources of their creativity and put their stellar spirits behind the bars that are the punishable threats of error, to be imprisoned in the cages of fear and unimaginativeness for as long as they live? What if the erroneousness that they so lightly and freely indulge in is the driving force of our evolutions, corporeal and spiritual alike, holding the explanation for the rapidity of their growth? What if this erroneousness embraced by their whole beings provides for a training in forgiveness, a key to the doors of Paradise, whereas the race for immaculateness that adults are busily engaged in makes us become ever more judgmental and vindictive as the race goes on and, thus, ever remoter from the heavenly fields of reality and ever more apart from the angel in us? What if the four emotional seasons that we try to hinder and that they go through in a matter of seconds, traversing the interstellar distances from unrestrained happiness to steaming rage to soul-piercing sadness to eye-twinkling wonder and back in the blink of an eye are the keys to the briskness with which they develop? What if they are given to us by gods at the moment of our lives when we have accumulated an unbearable pile of the sins of fearful and lukewarm expressions as crucial signs on our ways that would divert us from abysses and redirect us to paradisiacal horizons of being from which we have strayed? What if by disciplining them and enforcing the very same sins of robotically constrained and deadening behavior, we act as true custodians from Hell? What if the reason why there is so much hellishness blended with heavenliness in our worlds lies in our systematically stealing the hearts of gold from the little ones born to them? What if they are alive and we are dead, like all the characters in the last story from James Joyce's *Dubliners*, all except Michael Furey, the only truly living soul that does not anymore count among the living who are, in fact, dead? What if they are supposed to be our teachers and we their disciples rather than *vice versa*? Viva anarchism, viva antiauthoritarianism, so I say! Down with the goliaths and let the flipping over of the world begin, all until its tops are brought back to the bottoms and its foundations are lifted high in the air, for all to celebrate the triumph of the small!" With children placed on the podia of our consciousness as the Way to be followed, there also comes the following stream of thought by Robert MacCammon as a reminder of the need to incessantly go back and never lose touch with a child in us, as spontaneous, loving, dreamy and honest as it ultimately is: "We all start knowing magic. We are born with whirlwinds, forest fires and comets inside of us. We are all born able to sing to birds and read the clouds, and see our destiny in grains of sand. But then we get the magic educated right out of our souls. We get it churchied out, spanked out, washed out, and combed out. We get put on the straight and narrow and told to be responsible. Told to act our age. Told to grow up, for God's sake. And you know why we were told that? Because the people doing the telling were afraid of our youth and because the magic

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<sup>964</sup> Noelle Cochran's and Lele Diamond's Lecture on Emotional Intellect Discipline at the St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco, CA (November 4, 2013).

<sup>965</sup> Listen to Catatonia's Dead from the Waist Down on Equally Cursed and Blessed, Blanco y Negro (1999).

we knew made them ashamed and sad about what they had allowed to wither in themselves”<sup>966</sup>. Indeed, as I watched little Theo flipping and flapping in the bath, waving his arms so violently, like an angel, which he may have indeed been on a more transcendental and heavenlier plane of reality before emerging on ours, preparing to soar oneself high into the air, then rotating his head sideways, striking a crazy pose and resting his gaze on an Yves Klein blue bottle of shampoo for a couple of seconds, every night with no exception, finding it as attractive as the sacred tekhelet on the tapestries of the Tabernacle or on the veil of Solomon’s Temple, I wondered how come a child with expressions infinitely natural, shedding starry trails of beauty in their wake, innocently, without even knowing anything about them, become cast in the mold of the adult world wherein one could spend a lifetime seeking an expression that is not artificial and affected to some extent, being as rare as a diamond in the dust. Moreover, once one finds it, chance is that one would realize that the individual who made it had been long ago labeled as an autistic lunatic and rejected as a social outcast. And then, like Archimedes hopping out of the bath and running out ecstatically to the streets of Syracuse after he arrived at the concept of buoyancy in his head, an enlightening insight dawned on me as I watched Theo watch this ultramarine bottle of shampoo from his tiny bathtub and I leaped high into the air, exclaiming a thunderously loud Eureka, just like the Greek philosopher did, and concluding cheerfully that society is the spoiling agent of the infinitely pure human minds upon their birth. The miniscule tissue I spent years doing research on, tooth enamel, is, symbolically, both the strongest and the most brittle one in our bodies, which, as I probed its secrets, always served as a reminder that things that provide us with the greatest source of happiness are also usually the vilest and the most saddening as well. Thus, sweet little human creatures, the love of and for whom is an unavoidable stairway to the stars, are also the very same ones who put us into shackles of mundane, lukewarm, uninspiring, robotized and, thus, intrinsically sinful earthliness. More specifically, though, it is the egocentric request to be loved that stands behind the classroom calls to sit down, be quiet, listen and act in submissive, wholly predictable manners, the calls used to tame these infinitely imaginative little spirits who rely on starry surprises in spontaneously shedding pure magic all around them and convert them into something disgustingly dull and bleak, a sheer shadow of the shiny spirits that they used to be, the calls on whose obedience our relationships with others will be conditioned one gloomy day if they be accepted and the compromise with the devil be made, the reason for which at the entrance to my classroom and a university office a sign used to stand, warning the students and academic fellows that they step into an anarchistic and antiimperialist, authority-free zone, wherein the teacher and the taught ones blend into one. And if magic is being taken away from these infinitely pure souls upon their forced and graceless transitioning into arid adulthood, then the resurrection of the sense of magic of it all through, as it were, the acts of magic, which, as ever, start with passionately loving another human soul and watching the world through her eyes, must be the key and is indeed the most foundational precept I apply in my anarchistic classroom<sup>967</sup>. This flies me on the magic carpet of my memory for a second or so to the message embedded in the storyline of Ingmar Bergman’s final film, *Fanny and Alexander*, where the children escape the oppressive authoritarianism by the act of magic and find solace and a path to restored childhood in the words and moods of a magician, who most notably

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<sup>966</sup> The quote is taken from James G. Clawson and Douglas S. Newburg – “The Motivator’s Dilemma”, In: *The Future of Human Resource Management*, edited by Mike Losey, Sue Meisinger and Dave Ulrich, John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ (2005), pp.17.

<sup>967</sup> Vuk Uskoković – “Flipping the Flipped: The Co-Creational Classroom“, *Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning* 13:11 (2018).

instructs them to get immersed inside that transcendental cloud wherein “the despair, the hope, the dream of deliverance and all the cries, all the tears of man gathered over thousands and thousands of years are condensed”, the cloud wherefrom “rain flows down the mountain, forming the streams and rivers that flow through the great forests where one can quench the thirst” around the mouth, the throat and the lips “pressed together around curses and harsh words”<sup>968</sup>. Therefore, *en route* to reproducing paradise in the classroom and restoring Eden of the infinitely innocent and imaginative childhood inside the students’ hearts I combine graveness and playfulness, but follow no method, for method *per se* represents a form of oppression, a bird of freedom caged and confined into manacles, and instead rely on free improvisation, a methodless method that sometimes succeeds and sometimes falls flat on its face, the outcome to which I pay no heed, knowing that very often “there’s no success like failure”<sup>969</sup> and that success, when being measured not by reproduction of information, but by the awakened inspiration, motivation, aesthetic insights, food for future thought and, more than anything, love, is as immeasurable as the ending of the chain reaction initiated by a good deed. Children, of course, naturally confront these grownups’ aspirations to have them uniformly molded by walking away in the middle of a lecture or blowing bubbles into the face of their caregivers when they try to have words with them, as if they, in turn, wish to teach the teachers how to love not only those who obey them and love them back, but, most importantly, those who ignore them and wholeheartedly choose not to respond to their calls, the task of number one importance for the project of the growth of angel’s wings, the wings that would fly our souls onto more sublime planes of being in the endless karmic journey that this tireless hopping from one planet to another across the endless Cosmos is. Having known all of this, the Little Bear and I spoke no nonsense when we chose the name Theo for our little baby; for, by seeing in him a godly guidance for our corrupt adult ways back into the realms of golden infancy, we wished to revert the paradigm that we, the grownups, are the sole trainers and tamers of the fresh new spirits that arrive from some great heights onto this purgatorial plane of reality whereon the most sublime and the most horrid that the universe has to offer stand puzzlingly united. In fact, as the Christ hinted on upon his visit of the house of Lazarus and his two sisters, Martha and Mary of Bethany, when he reprimanded hardworking Martha for criticizing her sister for sitting quietly in the corner of the room and watching in adoration and awe the celestial creature that the Christ was, saying, “Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:41-42), practical accomplishments, sophisticated verbosity and conventionality of behavior should not be the criteria by which we judge someone’s excellence; rather, even children, untainted by the social norms, having no developed concepts of practicality, oratory and behavioral reliability are to be taken as infinitely rich sources of signs from which we ought to learn just about as much as they are to learn from us, their teachers, as the phenomenal fable of life continues to unwind itself. For, the point is not to make children more rigid, awkward and insincere than they are as they mature via a one-way learning path, but to find a middle ground between teaching them the beauty of being and acting just like another, in sympathy and respect, and allowing them to teach us, the pitiful grownups, how to restore the childlikeness in us and maintain its paradisiacal gardens in lush for the rest of our lives. And in order to keep these starry fields of magic and eternal inspiration within our hearts and minds fresh as we grow old, forever and ever to guide us towards digging pure wizardry out of the well of impulses and

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<sup>968</sup> Watch *Fanny and Alexander*: Episode 4 directed by Ingmar Bergman (1982).

<sup>969</sup> Listen to Bob Dylan’s *Love Minus Zero/No Limit on Bringing It All Back Home*, Columbia (1965).

incentives that guide our actions in the world, so as to enchant and amaze with every moment of our lives, we should make sure that two-way learning, which always comprises simultaneous giving and absorbing by all sides in communication, from teachers to disciples and *vice versa*, is the way to go. Aware of the multiple benefits of mutual teaching in the classroom, from restoring a sense of creative involvement of each and every one to vanishing of a sense of an untouchable and utmost human authority hanging over the children's heads, leaving only the inner missionary music of the voice divine to flow on and listen to, Rudolf Steiner was one of the passionate propagators of the ideal of co-education, which, he believed, would change the approach to academic insemination of knowledge for good. The Moravian educational reformer, John Amos Comenius coined the phrase "As we create, we are created"<sup>970</sup> to depict the same: the necessity of being changed from the inside that comes together with the process of changing another and, therefore, the need for the educator to simultaneously educate oneself as he educates others. After all, if creativity, that unteachable, ineffable and elusive force that pervades the Universe, inevitably but unperceivably sprouts from the seed of love, then only through communication on the wings of love can we land on top of the pyramid that Bloom's taxonomy, the ultimate destination of the art of teaching is, and only via looking through the eyes of another may we teach and learn in the most effective way conceivable. "Love and do what you will"<sup>971</sup>, St. Augustine of Hippo prophesied, and although the Bloom taxonomy is standardly portrayed as a pyramid, the creative top of which is thought to be reachable only stepwise, by climbing from its bottom upwards and passing through the successive stages of remembering, comprehending, applying, analyzing and evaluating, love can teach students how to fly, and if they fly, they can reach this peak whereat creativity lies by bypassing the regular route. If anyone holds that this is impossible, direct them to children, those epitomes of creative thought, of unending streaks of discovery and infinite wonder and, thus, the beauty of being: they know not how to assess, they have barely any fundamental knowledge, they remember little and judge even less, yet they are utterly creative. And since I, as a teacher, am interested in nothing but the peak of this pyramid, I see my first and foremost goal in the classroom and beyond to inspire and open the mysterious mental channels leading thereto before the listeners, passing through which they would become likened unto children and reenter the paradise lost long ago as fast as the interstellar traveler from Ivan Karamazov's dream arrived at his millions of light years remote destination: in the blink of an eye. Hence, to cordially love another is to help one attain these apices of scholarly growth through an act of magic, whereby love, remember, always, is about listening, in the spirit of Mary of Bethany from the gospels and Momo from Michael Ende's eponymous novel, as much as it is about erupting quietly with invisible light that blesses and beautifies, like a burning star of the night sky. Teachers who have taught in harmony with one such mutual learning scheme would smile in sympathy if they were to be present when a UCSF nurse pointed at my newborn son and said, "You will learn from him more than you will ever teach him". Likewise, a few days after this comment was whispered to my ears, I received a greeting from Kevin Kriescher, a dreamer of the delicate threads that connect music and math, in which he boldly congratulated "Theo, the little one who has agreed to become your next teacher"<sup>972</sup>. A

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<sup>970</sup> See Jon-Roar Bjørkvold's *The Muse Within: Creativity and Communication, Song and Play from Childhood through Maturity*, Harper Collins, New York, NY (1989), pp. 25.

<sup>971</sup> Paraphrased in E. Mersch's *The Whole Christ: The Historical Development of the Doctrine of the Mystical Body in Scripture and Tradition*. Part 3. *The Doctrine of the Mystical Body in Western Tradition*. Chapter 4. *Augustine's Sermons to the People*, Dennis Dobson, London, UK (1938), pp. 438.

<sup>972</sup> Kevin Kriescher, email entitled "I must have blinked", Personal Correspondence (March 8, 2013).

musicologist with a long-term interest in learning theory, Jon-Roar Bjørkvold consequently came up with the following maxim as a principle that underlies all successful educational efforts: “Learn from children – and children will learn from you”<sup>973</sup>. This simple adage, echoing Seneca’s legendary remark to Lucilius, *Decendo discimus*, meaning “by teaching, we learn”<sup>974</sup>, has been expanded to the new school of active learning wherein classrooms are often flipped, in the words of one of its pioneers and prominent protégés, Eric Mazur, allowing the students to take on the teaching role and the teachers to shimmer like a sunlit sea, watching in love and wonder the world from the humble and unpretentious base of the pyramid of human knowing, using all the while the same strategy Tai-Chi martial artists employ to topple their opponent, i.e., its own strength and momentum. Hence, how unsurprising that in a Grantland cartoon, a young professor, asked about the mentoring program he has taught, answers with the following witty words, which hide a key to successive and inspiring lecturing: “Great! I got a lot of insights, I developed new skills, and I think the person I was mentoring learned something too”. At a biomedical conference held in Taipei in 2014, the Nobel Laureate, Ferid Murad confessed concordantly, “I learn from my students as much as I teach them”, urging students thereby, implicitly and later explicitly<sup>975</sup>, to freely challenge their professors’ ideas and beliefs instead of blindly following their advices, all until that fabulous balance between revering the tradition and clashing with it is found. James Scott, the professor of political science and anthropology at Yale University, hinted at the same mutual relationship between teaching and learning when he wrote the following introductory words to his book on the beneficent subtleties of the philosophy of anarchism: “I taught a large undergraduate lecture course on anarchism in an effort to educate myself and perhaps work out my relationship to anarchism”<sup>976</sup>. These words echo the same sentiment as the musings of another innovative educator, Paulo Friere: “The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. In this process, arguments based on ‘authority’ are no longer valid; in order to function authority must be on the side of freedom, not against it. Here, no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. People teach each other, mediated by the world”<sup>977</sup>. In the same spirit, Sarah Kay, standing on the stage and delivering her streams of heartwarming poetry, notices the following: “There are plenty of things I have trouble understanding. So I write poems to figure things out. Sometimes the only way I know how to work through something is by writing a poem. And sometimes I get to the end of the poem and look back and go, ‘Oh, that’s what this is all about’, and sometimes I get to the end of the poem and haven’t solved anything, but at least I have a new poem out of it... And I wondered whether I’d get to the end of this talk and finally have figured it all out, or not”<sup>978</sup>. For her and for many other performers on the stage of life gifted with the talent to find strikingly relevant and touching words in the split of a second, never repeating themselves and falling back into the same routine that earns them a secure applause,

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<sup>973</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 131.

<sup>974</sup> See Seneca’s Letters to Lucilius, Book I, Letter 7, Section 8: *Homines dum docent discunt* (65), retrieved from [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Moral\\_letters\\_to\\_Lucilius](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Moral_letters_to_Lucilius).

<sup>975</sup> The lecture I attended in Cheintan Youth Activity Center in Taipei on November 4, 2014, entitled Application of Nitric Oxide Research to Drug Development, was a part of the 7<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Preventive & Regenerative Medicine.

<sup>976</sup> See James C. Scott’s *Two Cheers for Anarchism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (2012).

<sup>977</sup> See Paulo Friere’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Chapter II, Continuum Books, New York, NY (1993).

<sup>978</sup> Watch Sarah Kay’s TED talk: *If I Should Have a Daughter...*, available at [http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah\\_kay\\_if\\_i\\_should\\_have\\_a\\_daughter.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah_kay_if_i_should_have_a_daughter.html) (March 2011).

the act of giving parallels the act of seeking, of being on the road and searching for answers that bug one's soul. To be open to receive thus seems to be a prerequisite for the channels for the outward shine of our spirit to be open too, for these two could be as naturally tied to each other as breathing in and out are. Lest we transform gradually into a wretched epitome of "the leader who listens not and who is thus bound to become surrounded by those who have nothing to say"<sup>979</sup>, we must learn to listen and receive in synchrony with talking and sending out the illuminative information. Indeed, whoever had a chance to teach, be it in a classroom full of people or tête-à-tête in a quiet room, could have noticed how the most productive teaching moments are always followed by incredible insights arrived at by the teacher himself. Let alone, of course, the sea of brilliant insights that washes over us as we step from one communication angle to another, from being a passive listener to being an onstage performer, for example, owing to a plethora of blind spots that we erase from the field of our mental perception thereby. Closing the gates for the inflow of these surprising realizations to the space of one's mind would thus imply essentially futile words and expressions to come out of one's mouth. On the other hand, arrivals at these unexpected discoveries seem to be conditioned by our desire to selflessly transmit the knowledge of value while never repeating ourselves and always believing that the divine eye for the moment will help us bear the right words for others to be inspired with. It is as if a law of action and reaction of a kind is valid in this context, implying that something has to be given away in order for an insight to be reached and grasped and *vice versa*. The same, undoubtedly, goes for every evolution in life: the moment we stop yearning for progress and pining to reach out to the most sublime stars in the sky of our mind and bring them down to Earth, the doors to our advancement become suddenly shut. But should we always strive to move forward, to spin the wheel of evolution that resides in the core of our heart and make it a carousel of wonder and love that will launch us to the farthest and the most magnificent stars of thought, the chances for inspiring others and surprising ourselves with the conclusions arrived on the way would be high.

This dazzling panorama of thought has opened a view from which we can clearly see that the starry constellations of Wonder enlightening our heart and mind are a vital precondition for awakening the same in creatures that we strive to inspire. The best teaching is teaching with an example, Leo Tolstoy noticed once, as if reminding us that a crook in one's heart can never successfully preach honesty, whereas a man honest and wonderful in his heart can teach only open-minded wondrousness and sincerity and nothing else, irrespective of the meanings that become obvious by grazing the surface of his words and actions. To be a wolf with the soft heart of a sheep is thus better, as I have claimed, than being like "false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15), which is however so very common in the hypocritical, sanctimonious and inherently insincere world that we live in. Hence, only if we, ourselves, are journeying along the sacred road of questioning the purpose and the divine origins of great and little things of the world alike can we lead others to the similar roads and let them travel thereupon towards rainbows of beautiful insights and new, unforeseen horizons of knowledge and being. "Doubt those who have found the truth, but trust those who are on the quest for it"<sup>980</sup>, André Gide said once, and indeed, numerous fair and

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<sup>979</sup> The saying is attributed to Andy Stanley, the pastor of the North Point Community Church, a megachurch in Alpharetta, GA. See Andy Stanley's *Next Generation Leader*, Multnomah, Colorado Springs, CO (2006).

<sup>980</sup> See André Gide's *The Prisoner of Poitiers* (1931). Cited in Vincent Can's *Film View*, *New York Times* (September 14, 1975), retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1975/09/14/archives/film-view-truffauts-cleareyed-quest.html>.

ameliorating effects of our actions in the world naturally derive from adopting the stance of an eternal wonderer, as opposed to that of an omniscient judger. Not only does the courage to be ignorant make us flexible and eventually more creative, as we are then able to look at the same old things from multiple novel angles and enrich our knowledge of these systems swiftly thereby, but it also makes us succeed in directing others towards similar ways of searching and questioning, instead of blindly following rules, like soldiers, robots or puppets of a kind, without ever wondering why. Also, whenever we are about to exert any opinion at all, with wonder in our heart we would deeply ponder about the right choice and would eventually come up with weighing both pro and con features of the analyzed directions of thought or being, thereby acting in the most ethical and balanced way we could think of. Rather than standing in favor of unilateral perspectives and single poles in life, we would acknowledge balances and Middle Ways and in such a way exhibit traits of a true peacemaker. This, of course, brings us close to the words whispered by Richard Feynman: “Western civilization, it seems to me, stands by two great heritages. One is the scientific spirit of adventure - the adventure into the unknown, an unknown that must be recognized as unknown in order to be explored... To summarize it: humility of the intellect. The other great heritage is Christian ethics - the basis of action on love, the brotherhood of all men, the value of the individual, the humility of the spirit... I feel a responsibility as a scientist who knows the great value of a satisfactory philosophy of ignorance, and the progress made possible by such a philosophy, progress which is the fruit of freedom of thought. I feel a responsibility to proclaim the value of this freedom and to teach that doubt is not to be feared, but that it is to be welcomed as the possibility of a new potential for human beings. If you know that you are not sure, you have a chance to improve the situation. I want to demand this freedom for future generations”<sup>981</sup>. In these words, love is mentioned as complementary to wonder, and these two, indeed, are the magic blend for the alchemical pot of the most creative spirits we could envisage. For, Love is the key that unbolts the steeliest gates in the Universe, and when we wash our hearts therewith, it is as if a sunshiny kernel is placed in our chests, enlightening and beautifying every detail of the world around us, spontaneously and imperceptibly, without our even trying to do so. Hence, Wonder and Love could be seen as the foundations of truly profound education. Once set at the bases of the educational towers erecting and aiming to tear the sublime clouds of human thought, nothing could go wrong. All the advices and signs that we give and place on our disciples’ paths will not be handed accusatorily, derisively or arrogantly, while pointing at their flaws and our own superiority, implicitly celebrating our ego and establishing unnecessary hierarchies, but will be gracefully strewn into the air, as if we caress others therewith, thus promoting their senses of self-responsibility and respect on one side and of lively, self-gratifying inquiry about it all on the other. For, to avoid Cain’s sin epitomized in the Biblical words, “Am I my brother’s keeper” (Genesis 4:9), we need to incessantly spur the sacred sense of self-responsibility and keep the core philosophy of Fyodor Dostoyevsky, according to which our spiritual progress could be measured by the extent to which we feel responsible for all and even the most seemingly remote worldly events, close to our hearts. But on the other hand, cultivating a healthy anti-authoritarian stance is essential in supporting independent thinking and preventing us from passively floating with the streams of mostly ordinary and lame expectations and worldviews of the majority. In the room of our disciples’ minds, rebellious and honest curiosity that poses endlessly beautiful questions about it all then becomes placed side by side with the sense of responsibility and respect for all around them, in

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<sup>981</sup> Richard P. Feynman – “The Meaning of It All: Thoughts of a Citizen Scientist”, Helix Books/Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA (1998).

what is one of the most wondrous encounters of seeming opposites that we could imagine. For, rebelliousness symbolized by Eve's plucking a fruit from the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden in spite of God's prohibiting her and Adam from tasting it, coupled not with a sense of comradeship, but with the one of selfish rejection of responsibility - as apparent from the fact that when God asked for the reason behind their act Adam blamed Eve whereas she blamed the snake (Genesis 3:9-13) and "thus they in mutual accusation spent the fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning"<sup>982</sup>, the shifting of guilt whose awkwardness was nicely portrayed in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century panel of engravings on the bronze Bernward Doors of the Hildesheim Cathedral - is what leads to our expulsion from Paradise. On the other hand, if there is rebelliousness in us, we should know that only love and respect for all that is around us can provide stable grounds for its flags of liberty to bravely wave on the winds of the world. As I watched Victoria, my little bear, driving on a sunny California day, with wind in her hair, I thought how I could not tell apart what is more beautiful: the little rebel in her, the relentless fighter for justice in this world, "as generous as a Russian tundra", as the saying goes, or "the little Tito's pioneer", as we, Yugoslavs, the most authentic among whom are made of one such mix of the seemingly immiscible, (a) marching like one towards sunrises of brotherly loyalty and an overarching obedience to one another, like the North Korean kids on a parade, and (b) walking in the footsteps of courageous revolutionaries that our forefathers were, dauntlessly, one against many, like to name those who becharm and dazzle with their immaculate senses of responsibility and cloud-piercingly sublime levels of conscientiousness. It is as if the dragonish powerfulness of a Joan of Arc has been incessantly twining around the petite cuteness of her tiny and timid nature, as they both climbed up along the tree of her spirit, like two serpents embracing each other. Many nights have I spent dizzily trying to untangle where the caring and sympathetic her begins and the mutinous and defiant her ends, as if a comical Winnie-the-Pooh-meets-Paddington-Bear with butterflies flying around her dreamy head and a sturdy insurgent with a cause à la the rabbit samurai, Usagi Yojimbo, or a Brutal Bluto Bear, as I have lightheartedly called this dragonish side of the moon of her psyche, coalesced within her cartoonish personality. After all, only when we start raising generations that will be driven by eternal longings to explore and yearnings to topple down the old and the obsolete, but also passionately kneel by the footsteps of their tradition in their dreams, vowing to carefully follow its sacred steps, thus giving birth to the alchemical blend of Wonder and Love within them and living up to the balance of the Way of Love, of independence and communion at the same time, the modern education will reach its peaks. The fancy waving of ours visible from the windows of these towers will thence only inspire and beautify the world, as opposed to the stiff and rigid insistence on obedience and blind, unquestioning repetition of old and muddled methods and visions that a teaching attitude based on presumed possession of the best and final answers to it all naturally spurs. In that sense, teaching the disciples to freely stand against their teachers with their opinions rather than to nod their heads even when their beliefs and judgments are not compatible with those of their teachers is one of the essential elements of the teaching approach of the greatest teachers of this world. After all, had it not been for novelties that stood discrepant and at odds with respect to the existing modes of being and paradigms of thought, the evolutions of our being and knowledge could not have been imagined at all.

This is why getting students lost, I thought on this sunny day, as if they are being spun in circles, like dancing dervishes, and made to see stars, bedazzled to the core, not knowing how in the world they got to the point where their assumptions about reality match it almost nowhere at

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<sup>982</sup> See John Milton's *Paradise Lost*: Book IX, Signet Classic, New York, NY (1671), pp. 267.

all, must be one of the vital aspects of my teaching method. Every course or a lecture that I teach is thus given the task to mimic life in all of its aspects, including its run from the crystal clarity and chastity of the pure and innocent beginnings to the perplexing muddles of its midpoints to the resolution and the gentle sloping into the sea of oneness of its straightened ends. From that angle, the sense of being lost in a forest, turning ‘round and around and facing only grinning trees and their eerie branches around us, is a must in the classroom whose walls echo with the guiding voices released from my heart and through my lungs into the outside world. This confusion, from which a sense of wonder is to be born, a goddess whose children will be dainty discoveries bestowed upon the world by the soulful seedlings that the students gathered around my feet are, is produced on oh so many levels, from the open curriculum to jumping from one star of thought to another, spanning the whole universe of human knowledge in a single lecture, to the spectrum of gestures that covers every single emotion known to humanity to the fact that teaching to the test is never ever being done, not even in the slightest of extents. As Fernando Flores said to me once, “the most important things in life we get to do only once”, and such is undoubtedly the case with tests in my class, given that no hint of them is ever given to the students beforehand. If they ask me for “some study tips or ways to best prepare for these exams”<sup>983</sup>, I might either respond with a silent and mysterious gesture, whose semantics would be impossible to decode, or by asking them the following question: “If you were to ask life how its game could be excelled in and mission accomplished, what answer would you get”? For, the classroom experience, the way I have conceived it, must be a veritable reflection of life and a strong analogy must be drawable between the discovery and creation of knowledge in both. This necessitates not only silence when questions about the class objectives or test contents are being aired, but a range of other actions, including, for example, being symptomatically late to class, which is to indicate that no thing in life comes when expected or wanted, but also expand the ties between the breakage of the law and creativity to temporal dimensions. Now, by never ever answering questions regarding the test form or content but by a nonverbal, inevitably ambiguous expression, the students are kept in limbo, never knowing what to expect, with sensitivity maximized and hearts trembling with every word sent into the air. On one hand, through one such approach that elicits angelical uncertainties from the bottoms of their hearts, students are being taught to be always “ready to shake the scheme of things”<sup>984</sup>, as David Bowie pointed out in one of his most passionately sung songs, for only on the wings of insecurity can wonder propel us to the findings previously unseen by the human eyes, the art that all children in the world display with every frail move and dewy glance of theirs. Although many students come to the test expecting that if they studied well, they would answer all the questions correctly, such is, of course, never the case; for, in the end, how can one learn the whole wide world? If in the classroom I do strive to create that magical “microcosm of human experience assembled for you to query and examine and ponder”<sup>985</sup>, a whole world confined in a single arc of darkened space, so to speak, then how could anyone come to the test with the expectation that all the questions would be answered correctly? When life tests one, it is always a selection of perceptions that one must absorb and process into an answer, if there is a definite one, and the same must apply to these tests as reflections of life as a whole. Life is more of a mystery than a decoded reality and so must tests aspiring to be the reflection of life be, the reason for which the grading scheme in

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<sup>983</sup> Mark Hillstrom, a student in my BioE 460 class in the fall semester of 2015, is quoted here. Personal correspondence (November 23, 2015).

<sup>984</sup> Listen to David Bowie’s *Word on a Wing on Station to Station*, RCA (1976).

<sup>985</sup> See Tom Wayman’s *Did I Miss Anything?*, Harbour, Madeira Park, BC (1993).

my class is an antipode of the inflated one existing in typical classrooms of the modern day, where all the passing grades, from A to D, are sometimes packed in the 80 – 100 % range. Rather, even the best of students in my class, ending up with the highest grade, A, are not expected nor made able to answer all the questions on a test correctly. For, I have known that the closer the failed score is to 100 %, the simpler and the more predictable the content of the class must be, as opposed to the opposite case which emphasizes mysteries, unknowns and wonder, motivating the students to engage on a sacred search for knowledge rather than expect that life can be lived creatively by always having ready the right answer to its problems. Ideally, of course, each question on a perfect test would be unanswerable and realistically worth only a partial credit at best. This is, first of all, in concert with the fundamental nature of the physical reality, wherein digital logic is replaced by quantum logic and wherein 0s and 1s cede place to states describable as combinations of multiple states and as probabilities having maxima always somewhere between 0 and 1. It is also in concert with the inherently fuzzy logical nature of our knowledge, according to which no answer to, as we could argue, any question conceivable could be a definite Yes or No; rather, it is always a fluctuant, constantly changeable middle ground between these two extremes, varying in time, in space, in observation angle and stance, depending wildly on premises postulated by the observer and on a complete history of his observations and reflections. Frustrations displayed by the students and their anger directed toward me, as well as the admonishments by the academic authorities fearing that the learning process is impeded if the students cannot bluntly repeat all that was said in the class, concerned me not, as I made them bounce off the wall of beliefs that designing tests unanswerable in their entirety leaves the students aware that everything, truly everything around them is unanswered, that it is a concoction of infinitely different possibilities for explanation, that knowledge is an ongoing adventure of the mind where being cognizant of questions and performing research in attempts to answer them is what truly moves science and technology forward. Now, although all these effects heighten anxiety in the students' tender hearts, in doing so they also produce a more natural and creative state of mind than the state of absolute, robotic and lifeless certainty; as such, theirs is the ultimate aim of liberating the students from, not overwhelming with, the fear of the test. For, with the most essential aspect of my teaching needing to be inspirational in nature in this digital age in which most things I lecture about could be made available to the students with a single click of a button in a cozy room, miles away from the stuffy amphitheater, the ultimate purpose of my teaching is to inspire the students so deeply, up to the point at which the fear of failing the test becomes wholly abolished by their having fallen in love with literally everything and being bedazzled by a ride on the magic carpet of the sense of wonder. Just as in the game of life, whose winning we come close to the moment we begin to look at our own inevitable fall with peace and joy, so would the students, should this mission of mine become fulfilled, awaken a sun of radiant happiness in place of worried stands while looking at the abysses opening before their feet, the abysses that failing the test or perhaps the whole class represents in their juvenile heads, which is yet another point at which life and the conception of my class converge. "How can I care about my little, pitiful self and the meaningless grade I would get on a test when this whole universe, with all its beauties and wonders, has just become opened before myself, absorbing my ego fully into it": this is what the train of thought I wish to have evoked inside my students' heads may sound like. To make tests one of those Rilkean things that "frighten us, but are, in their deepest essence, something helpless craving our love"<sup>986</sup>, and thus give an implicit example as to how all fears are to be dealt with in life, all until they all

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<sup>986</sup> See Rainer Maria Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, NY (1903).

become conquered by the power of love and vanish in the air, can thus be said to stand for one of the essential aims I pose before myself prior to beginning to teach any class. On the other hand, using fear of the test as a motivational tool in the classroom is analogous to the use of law to make sure people behave ethically, though, as authentic anarchists of this world may tell us, both of these approaches are destined to fail in reality. For, just like laws speak to the body, not the spirit, forcing us to behave in specific manners, while not contributing at all to the spiritual learning of what is right and what is wrong, so do tests enforce discipline, but impoverish the spirit. And when I remember that the most interesting kids in my classes, those I would enjoy to chat about life with most, have been<sup>987</sup>, as a rule, regularly scoring B's or C's, but rarely ever A's on the exams, I come to conclusion that on the path toward attaining wisdom and creativity, the two ultimate goals of educational efforts, failing these superficial tests must be one level above performing on them immaculately, the idea that irresistibly echoes the witty apothegm coined by the sci-fi novelist, Ian McDonald: "Any A.I. smart enough to pass a Turing test is smart enough to know to fail it"<sup>988</sup>. Besides, to come at odds with the law, before breaking it in the effort to prove its obsolescence and help it evolve into something more advanced, is the key element of creative action and thought and the same must apply to the encounter of a creative student with exams or any other forms of academic assessment. To that end, as I have always claimed, to reconcile the role of a grader, a judge, with that of a guru, a teacher of wisdom, of all things that truly matter in life is but an impossible task. For, having less in common with its Greek etymological roots, *assessus*, meaning "to sit beside", not against another, and implying coaching, not confronting, and more in common with the act of assassination, assessment of students stands for an intrinsically arrogant act in my universe of thought, crippling the students' creative potentials by drawing authoritative blinds between their heads and the infinite skies above them, the very same skies over which Immanuel Kant wondered as the mysterious source of starriness and divine morality. The only way to cross the divide of fear and mistrust built between the teachers' and the students' hearts through the concept of assessment and restore this creative spirit inside the students is to anarchically shatter this concept before their eyes and convince them in its flaws, stomping over one's own authority thereby and acting in an utmost anti-professorial manner. Specifically, students must be made aware of implicit lessons that they are being taught by an educational system that enforces learning by means of grades; for, whatever the communication in question, the most significant information transmitted by it is not tied to its explicit and capturable content, but emanates from its implicit and ineffable elements. In this case, students are being quietly instructed that only what is graded can be considered important and since what is instilled in human heads and hearts quietly and unnoticeably becomes rooted inside them most firmly, no one should be surprised when the products of this system leave the academia with diplomas in their hands and the perception that only what is monetizable is valuable, ignoring the common wisdom that holds that the most valuable things in life come priceless, immeasurable, as it were. Banally speaking, if they glimpse a blind grandma needing help to cross the street, but decline this conscientious call by concluding that if no

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<sup>987</sup> At no time, I remember, did this idea that exams are a terrible means to learning and that they ought to be ideally abolished hit me in the head as hard, like a bottle smashing against my mind into millions of pieces, as when I, having already witnessed by then that the most interesting students to talk to are those at the lower end of the grading sheet spectrum, realized that the student who wrote the most beautiful essay in the entire class of seventy-five students, a task whose purpose was imaginative and poetic in nature, ended at the very bottom of the class in terms of grades scored on all of the exams combined. The class was on materials in biomedical engineering and it was held in fall 2015, while the student was Nandish Desai and his essay was titled A Heart of Glass.

<sup>988</sup> See Ian McDonald's *River of Gods*, Pyr, Amherst, NY (2006).

reward comes out of their being a helping hand, then it must be not worth helping her, one may justifiably blame everything judgmental in the current educational system for this tragic state of affairs. Nowhere less importantly, the students passing through it are being taught to approach problem-solving by waiting for explicit instructions, like robots, rather than feel internally motivated to probe systems with their own curiosity, implying that the excessive reliance on grading raises sheepish conformists and law-abiders before whom the secrets of creativity will never be fully unlocked. Of course, the addictive pleasures that the imposition of authoritative control onto another gives to instructors should never be neglected as a driver of these delicate assessment strategies. Deep down, however, the obsession to grade is but a crude way of disseminating top-down fear and fostering conformity and social control using classical stick-and-carrot conditioning and has devastating social consequences in the long run. It is a method that lies a million miles away from the stance grasped onto by the psychologist, Carl Rogers, when he compared students to sunsets: “People are just as wonderful as sunsets if I let them be. When I look at a sunset, I don’t find myself saying, ‘Soften the orange a bit on the right hand corner’. I don’t try to control a sunset. I watch it with awe as it unfolds”<sup>989</sup>. What is more, in active learning frameworks, this obedience achieved through excessive grading is often gamified to increase the student satisfaction and appeal to the videogame generation, resembling the recent attempts of some Orwellian governments to create a points-reward credit system for monitoring and assessing online social network participation and offering/denying social services correspondingly<sup>990</sup>. Still, regardless of the form it takes, assessment in the classroom disseminates the false premise that the ascent from the base to the apex of the Bloom taxonomy pyramid is somehow ratable, when in reality the higher we ascend, the greater is the impossibility of measuring the success of one’s effort to ascend, as if it gets foggier and foggier and the visibility is progressively reduced the higher we ascend. In reality, however, not unless the peak of the Bloom taxonomy to which western educators pay their lip service as an ideal worth leading students by their hands to changes its inscription from “creativity” to “diligent conformity” will it become reachable in a grade-intense educational system, as I have repeatedly claimed. Simply, when knowledge is formulated in such a way that it is testable and gradable, it is not the most sublime knowledge that can be conveyed from an expert in the field to his/her students. Conversely, as my own experience as a teacher has taught me, when tests are eliminated from a class, students perform immeasurably better in terms of critical and creative thinking because no longer is their success measured by the ability to pass the test. Instead, their heads become tuned to higher levels of thinking wherefrom creative expression, the peak of higher education, emanates. Not only is the idea of quantitative assessment illogical and intrinsically flawed because of a million reasons, including the fact that knowledge and creativity cannot be converted to numbers and the fact that assessment rests on an erroneous assumption that everybody in this race for the grade and the rank starts from the same point of origin, when in reality every person comes with a unique history and cannot be graded the same way as any other person, but it is also obviously morally misleading for the exam takers. When one adds on top of all of this the fact that *learning* in my classroom and in the classroom of the most superb educators, in addition to many other educational elements, from the inspirational to the moral, presents only one side of the coin, the other side of which is *unlearning*, in the sense of

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<sup>989</sup> See Carl Rogers’ *A Way of Being*, Houghton Mifflin, New York, NY (1995). Cited in Robert McNeer’s *Listening at the Threshold: Perceptive Play with Voice, Word and Body*, *Scenario* 16, 149 – 155 (2022).

<sup>990</sup> See Rachel Botsman’s *Who Can You Trust? How Technology Brought Us Together and Why It Might Drive Us Apart*, Penguin Portfolio, London, UK (2017).

questioning and subjecting to rigorous scrutiny all that has been learned so far in preparation to become a critical thinker and an opposite of a bigoted, robotic performer of SOPs<sup>991</sup>, a dynamic state of acquisition and erasure of knowledge is arrived at, neither quantifiable nor gradable even in one's wildest dreams. In view of that, two paths open before the university professors forced to grade their students: a) to give up their academic posts, or b) to immerse their students in impressions of such an ethical and aesthetic splendor that the students would no longer care about the way any judges in life, from casual passersby to fellow partygoers to their peers and authorities, whoever they may be, would grade them. Therefore, when it comes to grading, had I not convinced students in futility of the use of tests as the grading tool and at the same time created an ethical spell of such powerfulness that students alone would pick an appropriate grade for themselves at the end of the course, without my intervention, it would be a failure that I could ascribe to myself only. Which brings me over to another part of the answer to the question why in the classroom setting I never teach to the test: namely, in my universe, the sublime purpose of education is to make students so unattached to grades that all destinations evaporate from their heads and they become immersed in the Way of being, open to the glimpsing of everlasting beauties in the present moment, right here, right now. For the same reason I renounce any mentioning of learning objectives at the beginning of the class, thus countering the first and the foremost norm in today's lecturing, and I do it not only because the classroom experience in my universe strives to be a microcosmic reflection of life, life at the onset of which no one tells one what the objectives and the purpose will be, but also because explicating them would kill a key drive in the autonomous quest for discovery, similarly to the way saying out loud the end of a movie plot would spoil the movie-watching experience to the hearer. This is especially so in the active learning process during which students and teachers coevolve in an improv manner toward unexpected insights that are invariably unique and differ from one class to another and, in fact, in any scenario where the development of critical thinking skills is favored over the simple regurgitation of facts and principles and where education is approached as alive and ever-changing. Setting forth learning objectives, especially in the highly specific form which they are being requested to possess in today's academia, is usually followed by conceiving a path set in stone that would lead to them, signifying the excessive structuring of educational efforts and, in reality, imposing principles, paths and ideas onto students instead of fostering their own independent arrivals thereat. One could say that this inordinate structuring also discourages the liberal, free-spirited thought, the driver of the scientific and cultural progress for millennia now, and promotes epistemic fascism by disseminating dogmatic absorption of opinions, by promoting obedience to authority and by inconspicuously teaching kids to be just like the authority that they once obeyed: autocratic rather than anarchistic, always telling others what is right and what is wrong and what paths ought to be followed while ignoring the toxic influence of such a preachifying arrogance. Therefore, in my classroom, no words are said about the content of the class at its beginning and it is usually let adopt a free form, with its flow being like a river, evolving in curled lines, unpredictably, by bouncing off the banks of my and the students' ideas and moods of the moment. Likewise, nothing is said in my classroom about the final, testing stage of the learning process and students are kept in limbo regarding its content and the form, all so as to wean their minds off of the habitual reference to destinations and immerse themselves in the present moment, fully and unconditionally. For, not only is the learning process made more effective thereby, as in accordance with Loris Malaguzzi's belief that "creativity becomes more visible when adults try to be more attentive to the cognitive process of children than to the results

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<sup>991</sup> SOP = Standard Operating Procedure.

they achieve in various fields of doing and understanding”<sup>992</sup>, but by detaching students from the idea of the destination, regardless of the form it may take, they are being - as Krishna disguised as a charioteer in the tale of Bhagavad-Gita would have pointed out – enlighteningly realigned with the celestial compass inside them, the compass pointing at each dot on the circumference of this magical Pascal’s sphere that reality is as a point where the center of the existential meaning and a gateway to the secrets of it all lies. Then, in a world where all is the Way and where the purpose of the journey is found on each and every step of it, attachments to rewards, along with cheatings and dishonesties that they bring forth, cease to exist. Although nourishment of the ephemeral vision of the blissful horizons towards which our spirit is rushing in this starry training for the soul christened as life is essential to grasp the subjects at hand, like butterflies flying loose, with a shaft of intellect emerging from our insides, the students are no longer blinded by the shallow destination and, as such, are liberated from the trap into which adults fall by default: the curse of neglecting the road on the account of an obsession with its ends. In such a manner, sincerity and grace, the peaks of the mountains of ethics and aesthetics, the climbing onto which every course and lecture implicitly presents, are being reached by the students, gently grazed and blessedly placed inside of the treasure boxes of their tiny hearts.

But for now, as Little Bear and I drove along Californian highways, the pet sounds filled the airy space with stories of wolves, the evolutionary predecessors of dogs, man’s best friends, and how they start to form hierarchies only when they are abandoned and subjected to hostile circumstances under which their aggressive tendencies start to soar<sup>993</sup>. That freedom and peace have given rise to progressive generations of wolves that eventually approached humans and began to live as integral parts of their communities, while living in stressful, threatening and oppressive environments, away from the families to which the wolves natively belonged, have regressed them and made more animalistic and predatory, at the same time corresponding to the formation of hierarchical packs, immediately instilled an enlightening sense of sacred anarchism in us, as our faith in the merits of unconditional freedom and love, of ruining the hierarchies by placing ourselves at the last place and elevating our disciples, children of the world and whoever else is found below us, ever higher on the ladder of life, became ever more strongly planted in our marvelous hearts. It is for this reason that the German-American theologian, Paul Tillich insisted that the process of building a touch with the divine planes of reality that permeate it all is conditioned by our incessant ruination of whatever the concept of God we happen to be holding in our heads in order to discover the so-called God above God<sup>994</sup> and deepen our faith thereby, the process which is perhaps furthermore conditioned by our subsequent destruction of the very God above God so as to get in touch with the God above this God above God, and so forth, as the processes of ruination and rebuilding alternate with each other along the spiral path of ascension of ours to the stellar realms of being. That inquisitively revisiting the foundations of it all, along with imaginatively edifying the microcosms we build in our hands, that is, standing at the crossroad between “questioning answers” and “answering questions” and figuring out a transcendental middle way that embraces both is the key to our journeying on a progressive spiritual path becomes immediately obvious from these words. For, our evolution towards higher grounds of being, be it in the domains of sciences, arts, craftsmanship, choreography or religious

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<sup>992</sup> Seen inscribed on a wall inside the Pretend City Children’s Museum of Orange County, Irvine, California (2017).

<sup>993</sup> See Temple Grindin’s *Animals Make Us Human*, Recorded Books, Prince Frederick, MD (2009).

<sup>994</sup> See Paul Tillich’s *The Courage to Be*, Yale University Press, New Haven, MA (1952), pp. 186 - 190. Tillich’s discourse on courage concordantly ends with the following thought: “The courage to be is rooted in the God who appears when God has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt”.

thought, is inescapably dependent on our willingness to be openly at odds with their mainstreams and through visionary dissent outline the innovative ways forward. The American theologian, Georgia Harkness allegedly used to say that what Paul Tillich was to American theology, Alfred North Whitehead was to American philosophy<sup>995</sup> and the accent both of these thinkers placed on in the contexts of their explication of scientific and religious thought was one word: adventure, that is, the need to awaken the exploratory wonder of gods within the fountainheads from which the jets and waterfalls of our spirits originate. While Paul Tillich ended one of his most popular books, *Courage to Be*, with saying that “the courage to be is rooted in the God who appears when God has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt”<sup>996</sup>, the same need for adventure rather than confinement of our infinitely curious spirit into shackles of fixed axioms and permanent ideologies was emphasized in the following words by Alfred North Whitehead: “The worship of God is not a rule of safety - it is an adventure of the spirit, a flight after the unattainable. The death of religion comes with the repression of the high hope of adventure”<sup>997</sup>. In that sense, the ancient astronomers spoke no nonsense when they named planets wandering stars<sup>998</sup>; for, the impression is that we, the planetary creatures, can shine only insofar as we incessantly wander, shifting from one stance to another on the infinite celestial sphere of our intellect. Needless to add, to live up to these ideas that hide the key to our progress on individual and collective planes alike, the freedom to disagree and be different instead of the demands to conform and be the same as the authorities that disseminate specific doctrines has to be handed to the rising generations.

A popular Oriental painting depicts one of Zen patriarchs tearing a sutra into small pieces and scattering it into the wind, all to the sound of the master’s saying, “If you find a sacred canon – burn it”<sup>999</sup>. For, as a handful of progressive Christians and Muslims may go on and tell us, it is questionable whether the Christ and prophet Muhammad would have become the sacramental spirits that they were had they had a chance to read the Bible and Qur’an, respectively, let alone if they had been forced to base their faith on them. As the book of Bhagavad-Gita concordantly teaches us, only after our knowledge comes at odds with the mainstream teachings, our true progress begins. In the same spirit, the Greek poet, Euripides, wrote that “the wisest men follow their own direction and listen to no prophet guiding them”<sup>1000</sup>. Miraculously, right at the moment when we break the law of old and steady ways of thinking, we reach the new and refreshing waters of creativity. When they grow sufficiently strong, salmon in salty oceanic waters do not follow the stream, but go against it, yearning to go back to the estuaries of their childhood days and keep on travelling up the river, all until they hatch and die, at the same time giving rise to life of some wonderful little ones that will repeat this beautiful sacrificial story. This natural example presents the same message as the one that Gospels comprise: once one stops living for the survival and elevation of one’s own ego and becomes crucified and tortured because of living for the sake of salvation of others, having been guided by the lights of cosmic Love because, like shrimp, so to speak, yet another form of underwater life, one has helplessly had heart and its

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<sup>995</sup> See Paul Tillich Obituary, Times (October 25, 1965).

<sup>996</sup> See Paul Tillich’s *The Courage to Be*, Yale University Press, New Haven, MA (1952), pp. 190.

<sup>997</sup> See Alfred North Whitehead’s *Science and the Modern World*, Nolit, Belgrade, Serbia (1925).

<sup>998</sup> The term is derived from *asteres planetai*, meaning “wandering stars”, as aside from not scintillating, their other difference compared to real stars has lain in their erratic movement across the celestial sphere.

<sup>999</sup> See Kenneth Kramer’s *World Scriptures: An Introduction to Comparative Religions*, Paulist Press, Mahwah, NJ (1986), pp. 152.

<sup>1000</sup> The quote was found in the prologue to Anthony Storr’s *Feet of Clay: A Study of Gurus*, HarperCollins, London, UK (1996).

guiding beat in his head, one transcends the reigns of ordinary being and becomes transferred to more sublime and eternal spheres of existence. Also, when it comes to the rule-breaking nature of every kind of progress, remember how the Christ was first and foremost a rebellious outcast, the one who bravely stood up against the obsolete understanding of the Old Testament that comprised the mainstream ontological doctrine of his times? That was exactly the reason why he was accused for blasphemy by his fellow Israelites and eventually prosecuted. As pointed out by Natalie Merchant, “From what I understand from the myth, he was a kind man who saw injustice in the world, and he was also a political subversive. There was the Jewish hierarchy, and there was the Roman police rule, and he was against both. So he was a political and religious martyr”<sup>1001</sup>. On top of standing against the old teaching and breaking down the obsolete paradigms that have defined the patterns of reasoning and behaving in his contemporaries, he never wanted anything other than to be openly considered a dissenter and a renegade. “Just as he wants to be counted among the weak and the poor he also wants to be marginal, and be counted among the criminal”, noticed the Christian anarchist<sup>1002</sup>, Ivan Illich. When scribes and Pharisees caught him eating with the sinners and urging his disciples not to fast on fasting days, he said, “They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Mark 2:17), instructing us to incessantly reach out to the spiritual darkness and never cease to hang out with the sinners, for only in such a way would we be able to elevate this world as a whole to higher planes of being and shoot our own spirit to the stars. Love for the sinner, which obviously erases any awareness of the sinner’s sinfulness in one’s celestial head and thus gradually turns into love for an animated emanation of pure divinity, thus lies at the heart of the Christ’s approach to saving the world. In such a way, the Christ could be said to have made his religious teaching adjusted not for perfect spirits, such as Mary of Bethany, to whom he had no advice to give, but for those who have traveled along crooked ways and whose spirits sincerely craved repentance. What is more, not only did he clearly stand in defense of the sinners; he also stood against the superficial obedience of any prescribed rules, insisting on erasing hypocrisies from human hearts and instilling profound channels for communication with the voice divine therein. By showing us how saving human spirits is possible only insofar as human laws are crushed by hearts hungry to grasp and then freely give away the divine beauties that surround us, the Christ handed us a perfect example as to how the progressive being in this world ought to be like. It was neatly summed by the thought of Søren Kierkegaard: “One can be a Christian only if going against something”. Likewise, Martin Luther pointed out the following: “If I wish to be a Christian, I must believe and do what other people do not believe or do”<sup>1003</sup>. The authenticity of the followers of the original Christ’s teaching could be thus measured not by their obedience to the authorities to whom they have turned for guidance, but by the extent to which they oppose the very core of these authoritative teachings. “Louis, like Francis, and Francis, like Jesus, turned the conventional expectations about appearance, as well as behavior, upside down”<sup>1004</sup>, Robert Kiely noticed, while referring to the lineage of saints whom the Christ inspired to walk in the savior’s steps and suggesting that this rebellious treading against the stream, including Christianity in the way in which it is taught

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<sup>1001</sup> See Anthony DeCurtis’ *Rocking My Life Away: Writing About Music and Other Matters*, Duke University Press Books, Durham, NC (1999), pp. 164.

<sup>1002</sup> Note the pleonasm of the term, given that being a Christian *bona fide* and being an anarchist, that is, a person who shuns the authority of oneself and others in all experiential domains, must go together at all places and times.

<sup>1003</sup> See *The Essence of Christianity* by Ludwig Feuerbach, Chapter XXVI. *The Contradiction of Faith and Love*; available at <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/feuerbach/works/essence/index.htm> (1841).

<sup>1004</sup> See Robert Kiely’s *Blessed and Beautiful*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT (2010), pp. 294.

today, is the sign of one's being a true follower of the Christ's way, the way of the rebels and social outcasts. Therefore, I have no doubts that any given spiritual star that has walked across the earthly realms would have found itself in disagreement with any religious saying that rings in accord with the following excerpt from Qur'an: "The Lord does not like those who cross the limits. Do not make mischief on the earth after it has been set in order" (Al-Araf(7):55-56). For, exactly when a state of perfect order and harmony has been reached, required are creative, wondrous spirits that will diverge from it, knowing that the balance between balance and imbalance is what makes us move forward, lest the evolutionary streaming of the terrestrial life come to standstill. This is perhaps why Anthony Storr ended his compilation of stories behind the most spiritually influential inhabitants of this planet by saying that "all authorities, whether political or spiritual, should be distrusted"<sup>1005</sup>, having placed a silent 17-year old girl who mysteriously radiated with entrancing Love and Wonder with her mere presence at the final point and the apex of his vision of the lineage of the most moving gurus that have ever circled the Sun. The memory of this startling twist that toppled on its head everything that common man values most, from rational thought to eloquence to conventional behavior, evokes the image of Meme, a retarded 20-year old girl, beneath whose feet I dreamt many starry nights away, who would only occasionally interrupt her deep silence with an inarticulate shriek or two and who has, in doing so, enkindled the glow of love inside her blessed parents' hearts more than millions of smart and voluble kids, showing that not through complex conceptualizations and oral convictions, but through silence and subtlest of gestures, all unintellectual in nature, anteceding the tasting of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, is how the world becomes enlightened. Like Momo, the mysterious girl that emerged from the pen of Michael Ende<sup>1006</sup>, the girl who lives in the ruins of an amphitheater, who has the privilege of "burning yellow calendars"<sup>1007</sup> because of abiding in "the land of dreams of an eternal spring", who, evoking the Christ's being around "before Abraham" (John 8:58), has also "always been around", and who has the ability to help people find solutions to their problems by simply listening, really listening, deeply and darkly, Meme, mute and enfeebled, has been gifted with the same sacred art, holier and more spiritually potent than choirs comprising millions of most eloquent voices on the planet. Therefore, like Andrei Rublev in Tarkovsky's cinematic visions, putting the crown on his career by becoming the follower of a mute and feebleminded girl, a.k.a. the Holy Fool, and announcing a vow of silence for as long as he lived, I have opted to follow my beloved mother and the muse, the Virgil and the Beatrice of my life, into that wordless sphere of being wherein the most stellar of spirits reside. Which brings me over to the finale of Lewis Thomas' Late Night Thoughts on Listening to Mahler's Ninth Symphony, one of my most favorite passages from literature, written at about the same time Anthony Storr placed the nameless, eternally silent girl on the pedestal of the entire history of human homiletics; in it, the author describes his experience of watching a commentator on the state of the world, indifferent, coldly logical, dry and self-absorbed, and exclaims the following, rather unforgettable words: "The man on television, Sunday-midday, middle-aged and solid, nice-looking chap, all the facts at his fingertips, more dependable looking than most high-school principals, is talking about civilian defense, his responsibility in Washington. It can make an enormous difference, he is saying. Instead of the outright death of eighty million American citizens in twenty minutes, he says, we can, by careful planning and practice, get that number down to only forty million, maybe even twenty. The thing

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<sup>1005</sup> See Anthony Storr's *Feet of Clay: A Study of Gurus*, HarperCollins, London, UK (1996), pp. 232.

<sup>1006</sup> See Michael Ende's *Momo*, Puffin Books, London, UK (1974).

<sup>1007</sup> Listen to Piotr Szczepanik's *Żółte kalendarze* on Piotr Szczepanik *spiewa* (1967).

to do, he says, is to evacuate the cities quickly and have everyone get under shelter in the countryside. That way we can recover, and meanwhile we will have retaliated, incinerating all of Soviet society, he says. What about radioactive fallout? he is asked. Well, he says. Anyway, he says, if the Russians know they can only destroy forty million of us instead of eighty million, this will deter them. Of course, he adds, they have the capacity to kill all two hundred and twenty million of us if they try real hard, but they know we can do the same to them. If the figure is only forty million this will deter them, not worth the trouble, not worth the risk. Eighty million would be another matter, we should guard ourselves against losing that many all at once, he says. If I were sixteen or seventeen years old and had to listen to that, or read things like that, I would want to give up listening and reading. I would begin thinking up new kinds of sounds, different from any music heard before, and I would be twisting and turning to rid myself of human language”<sup>1008</sup>. Decades after this passage was penned, the presumptive prime minister of the United Kingdom would be a guest at a primetime TV show<sup>1009</sup>, the one not advisable for those pure at heart to watch, where she would assert her readiness to “press the button” and “give the order to unleash nuclear weapons, which would mean global annihilation”, and when she was asked how doing that task would make her feel, she simply reiterated that she is “ready to do that”, showing that nothing, really nothing lives in the hearts of politicians who lead humanity, despite their mouths being full of made-up arguments, an insight that should make every graceful soul quieten with disgust and every child in this world feel ashamed about the incapacity of grownups to do just about anything in life properly, when the role of the conductors, of course, is to be handed to them, the children. Besides, having lived through the whole decade of Yugoslav civil wars of the 1990s, I learnt that the loudmouths coming from the frontlines and bragging about horrific events that they witnessed first-hand are usually either liars or psychopaths and that the true account of the horrors of war could only come from those whose tongues were made silent by the intensity of these traumatic experiences, which is the point wherefrom I could argue that in all other spheres of life it is just about the same: to speak is to lie, as the keys unlocking the gates of truth are held strictly in the heads and hearts of those who remain silent like the deep water. All in all, whichever the state the world finds itself in, the mission in front of a creative mind is to turn this state upside down, producing graceful silence in the midst of disturbing noise or lively echoing noise in the midst of deadening silence, is what lies hidden as a message for a juvenile mind within these lines, aside from a regular pointer at language as a double-edged sword that can swiftly switch its role from a useful servant to a mean master, like every other human tool and invention. For, although it is an essential channel for the transmission of the treasures of the human knowledge, whenever it becomes a source of paling of the vividness of literally un-adult-erated, purely childlike experience of being, full of the ineffable magic of wonder, language righteously deserves the epithet of “the pathogen of a progressive corruption of man’s faculty to perceive”<sup>1010</sup>. In Godard’s *La Chinoise*, Jean-Pierre Léaud contemplates on the nature of language and comes to the idea that since words have constantly changed meanings in the past, the time will come when meanings will have to begin to change words, the naïve but intriguing point to which I may add that such reformation of language ought to be such that it

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<sup>1008</sup> See Lewis Thomas’ *Late Night Thoughts on Listening to Mahler’s Ninth Symphony*, Bantam Books, New York, NY (1983), pp. 168.

<sup>1009</sup> Watch Liz Truss Asked about Nuclear Weapons: 'I'm Ready to Do It', Daily Mail (August 24, 2022), retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CM8evVhzHPI>.

<sup>1010</sup> See Heinz von Foerster's *Perception of the Future and the Future of the Perception*, *Instructional Science* 1 (1) S31 – 43 (1972).

obliterates language the way we have known it and discover deeper, profounder ways of communication that proceed nonverbally, but more directly from spirit to spirit. Besides, if we were to extrapolate one of the sayings of Madame Louise from Marie Louise Lévêque de Vilmorin's novel *Madame de...*<sup>1011</sup>, "It's when we have most to say that we can't speak", to a state of brimming with enlightening emotions and visions, like a star ready to burst into a supernova, we would realize that we then must be as silent as breezeless air, not attempting at all to express ourselves using words and turning to body movements and spiritual radiance as our language instead. At the mere jingle of Madame Louise's earrings and the strange coincidences that they evoke, bells start to ring in my head as a reminder me of an even briefer set of words, which I glimpsed engraved on the front sandstone wall of Old Cathedral of St. Mary in San Francisco's Chinatown, right under its clock, as I descended down California St. and hit it exactly at midnight on a June night, with the bells from it clamorously celebrating our encounter: "Son, observe the time and fly from evil" (Sirach 4:23). This line comprehended in the context of Lewis Thomas' late-night musings gather shades of meaning that eclipse their own meaningfulness; for, if we were to fly away from evils of the modern world, one of the greatest evils which we would have to distance ourselves from would undoubtedly be hypocrisies deeply ingrained in the culturally dominant form of the usage of language, that is, as a lusterless habit and a sign of submission to the social clinches that choke our divine spirits and drown them deep inside their sea of deadening mundaneness instead of as a channel for transmitting signs that orient others away from those signs and toward the divineness of life. Had we truly followed this route and flown away from the sin of language, lest we get "killed by the strong word"<sup>1012</sup>, as the epitaph on the tomb of the Serbian poet, Branko Miljković, says, we would gradually transform ourselves into an embodiment of the sea of cosmic silence, of gestures and touches that go beyond any words can reach in their profundity and potential to move the spirits from their static slumbers.

Exactly one such enthralling silence and placidity were monumentally built amidst noisy guitars and deafeningly thrashed drums in the music of the Icelandic band, Sigur Ros. Earlier during this discourse on planets and stars in the earthly realm I used its music to exemplify the thesis that dialectical deviations from a linear and predictable stream of expressions and in the direction of embracing them and their antithetic opposites alike within our artistic arms is the key to producing moving pieces of art, from notes composed and choreographies made to be performed under the big lights to words, gestures and moves performed in the most ordinary settings so as to start chain reactions that will unexplainably enlighten the whole wide world in due time. That our gazing at the crystal ball from which the music of these Icelandic magicians emanates dazzles us much more than that of their loud and angry, raucous and bashing contemporaries serves as an evidence of the given dialectical view of the artiness of human creations; for, producing a sense of softness and gentleness, of dreamily gliding through the clouds of otherworldly grace using the traditional musical language of a rock band stands for a far greater achievement than energizing the listener on the surface only, something that the instrumental approach of a prototypical rock band was originally conceived to achieve. Placid tunes built on a monotonous beat, neurotic and engrossed all by itself, are thus predisposed to be far more artistically pleasing from the dialectical perspective than those trying to expose an explosive energy by means of the same drumbeat. For the same reason, marches, which are all

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<sup>1011</sup> The novel, published in 1951, was adapted into a movie *The Earrings of Madame de...* directed by Max Ophüls and released two years later, in 1953.

<sup>1012</sup> "Ubi me prejaka reč", the epitaph says in the poet's native language, Serbian.

about coupling a marital vibe to a steady beat, a very non-dialectical, thesis-reinforcing approach in its essence, are less aesthetic than music adopting an identical beat while aiming to transmit tranquility and calming lovingness, a clear opposite to what the given rhythmic hammering naturally bears. This is all to say that creating parallel threads and then weaving things in an orthogonal direction, so as to fully oppose the unidirectional nature of the former, is the way to create fabulous embroidery, dialectical in its core, an epitome of the divine way of living that continues to guide us to stars only insofar as it is paved with twinkles of an utmost wonder, allowing one to freely contradict oneself in any thesis proposed along this way. Counteracting a tediously straightforward direction of movement with its complete opposite may also be where an exciting symbolism of the Christian cross lies, quite rebellious and in concert with the original habit-demolishing approach of the very Christ. To reiterate that such going against the stream of predictability and linearity presents the road to the stars, in the video clip for Sigur Ros' song Hoppípolla<sup>1013</sup>, an Icelandic phrase that describes “jumping into puddles”, old men are showed playing wild and boisterously childish games, as if pointing out the need to incessantly break the habits and behavioral clichés that growing old naturally imposes on us in order to remain wonderfully juvenile and inspirational to the world. “Had I not broken rules on daily basis, you would have never read these words nor would I be where I am now”, thus I claim. And verily, this rule-breaking approach is not only the secret of my success, if any, but of all life in its evolution towards more advanced states of being. Namely, whether we have the evolution of life from protozoa and cyanobacteria, of novel ideas that endowed humankind or of enticing expressions and moves, including those of a child learning how to walk, tripping and falling and yet putting a “star” into every new “starting over”, as spoken word poet Sarah Kay said once<sup>1014</sup>, all the while determinedly working against the law of gravity that pulls him down, they are all based on breaking the behavioral standards of normality, habitualness and ordinariness as well as the physical laws of thermodynamics and inertia superimposed on them.

Indeed, it has never ceased to amaze me how out of millions of possible moves, words, melodies and gestures people can make in their daily communications, they always opt for one of the few boringly predictable ones. Indeed, what distinguishes a personality that spontaneously leaves an impression of being a superstar from a clichéd and mundane one is exactly this ability to dig gestures and intonations that go against the grain of conventionality and regular

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<sup>1013</sup> Watch the video clip for Sigur Ros' Hoppípolla, available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmXMA34CeoQ> (2005).

<sup>1014</sup> Watch Sarah Kay's TED talk: If I Should Have a Daughter..., available at [http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah\\_kay\\_if\\_i\\_should\\_have\\_a\\_daughter.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah_kay_if_i_should_have_a_daughter.html) (March 2011). Not only does she put a “star” in “starting over”, but she also puts “wind” in “winsome, lose some”, reminding us of an equally important need not to drowse our spirit in the fluffy clouds of aloofness in sight of success and triumphs in life, but to scatter some of these winsome feelings in the wind and retain a childlike humbleness at all times; for, only in such a way can we continue to stream towards ever more blissful heavenly heights of being. Like Odysseus navigating between the monsters of Scylla and Charybdis as he sailed through the Strait of Messina during his epic journey, so does Sarah in this performance of hers seem to effortlessly walk along a thin line between a nauseatingly insipid mainstream inspirational talk and a hipstery, lower East side indignity which she ascribed her beginnings to, without ever falling into abysses of any. Alongside many touching words she utters in the course of this talk, she finishes her opening poem, B, by sending out the following message, which could be found ringing in the domes of my celestial mind too: “Remember, your momma is a worrier, and your poppa is a warrior, and you are the girl with small hands and big eyes who never stops asking for more. Remember that good things come in threes and so do bad things. And always apologize when you've done something wrong, but don't you ever apologize for the way your eyes refuse to stop shining. Your voice is small, but don't ever stop singing. And when they finally hand you heartache, when they slip war and hatred under your door and offer you handouts on street-corners of cynicism and defeat, you tell them that they really ought to meet your mother”.

expectations of insipid individuals around us. Thinking of how spending time surrounded by random people, be it on a bus, in a shopping mall or at a typical cocktail party, has a drowsing effect on us instead of sparking our marvel in view of our immersion in the midst of the melting pot of life, the greatest wonder in this mostly dead and inanimate cosmos that we inhabit, a circumstance that had billions of years of atoms dancing and interacting preceding it and trillions of organisms sacrificing themselves to let us stand on their ashes and build from their corpses a pedestal from which we could see life in its incredible charms and beauties, has always flooded my spirit with infinite sadness, as if the doors to the inrush of the heavenly bliss of being straight to our soul are found everywhere around us, without no one to reach out and open them. The fact that these commonest living situations leave us aweless and indifferent has always seemed to me as a sin unbeatable in its immenseness, just about enough to send human souls back to the lower stations on their karmic ascension to eternally blissful existential realms. Most of us who have gotten used to this clichéd and habitual forms of communication, have, in fact, stopped noticing the unusualness of this long time ago. Had we kept our eyes on the stars and extraordinariness that starry behavior produces and awakens in others, we would have been puzzled by this. This is why I claim that ETs accidentally fallen on Earth today would have laughed, or alternatively be deeply saddened by the state of affairs concerning human behavior on our wonderful blue planet that spirals through cosmic spaces these days. In a world of hypermodern communication, these clichéd behavioral modes would have been considered as vulgar and almost sinful in their managing to put to sleep the innate human tendencies and potential to be different, to swim against the stream in one's thinking, feeling and acting, which are all traits of creative being in this world. If we were to merely follow the stream of the second law of thermodynamics and solely journey along the arrow of time, in a short period of time our planet would turn into an inert mass of inanimate objects, as life on it would wholly vanish. This is why whenever I can, I try to produce a rebellious movement against the stream of what is customary or expected, and shake people's perception of the world, all until a starry sky of surprises and wonder is awakened in their minds.

For, every question that springs from the divine sense of wonder that enwraps our mind with its starry clouds presents a rebellious sparkle in its going against the stream of paradigmatic thinking. Only because of its inherently defiant nature with respect to the way of thinking that tends to lock itself into preprogrammed and reproducible modes does this questioning attitude arising from the celestial sense of wonder, which we are incessantly allured to substitute with the omniscient spirit that endows epistemic conformists and followers, hold a central place in the adventure of the human mind that we call science. Consequently, since genuinely scientific, deeply wondrous mindset is inherently tied to intellectual and spiritual rebelliousness, it comes as no surprise that some of the most brilliant minds from the history of humanity have struggled with the authority during the schooling stages of their lives, which is also why one can proclaim that it is practically a duty for all of us to stand against the traditional, conditional forms of education, lest we end up wondering over a similar train of thought that Calvin had in mind as he and his tiger streamed over the snow on his slides on a winter day: "Is it truly being if the only reason I behave well is so I can get more loot at Christmas? I mean, really, all I'm doing is saying I can be bribed. Is that good enough, or do I have to be good in my heart and spirit? In other words, do I really have to *be* good or do I just have to *act* good?"<sup>1015</sup> With this final remark that neatly resembled a thought that whizzed once through the head of David Foster Wallace,

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<sup>1015</sup> See Bill Watterson's *The Indispensable Calvin & Hobbes*, Andrews and McMeel, Kansas City, MO (1992), pp. 13.

“Deep down, do I even really want to be a good person, or do I only want to *seem* like a good person so that people (including myself) will approve of me”<sup>1016</sup>, they crashed into a tree, as if signifying the damaging effects of each conditional form of education *per se*, or merely the stunning nature of the revelation on the trail of which Calvin roamed in his thoughts. In any case, we could be certain that the usage of rewards and punishments, be they timeouts or physical penalties, tends to produce more of the dumb and obtuse “bricks in the wall”<sup>1017</sup> and less of the freely flourishing trees of knowledge, something which only tireless irrigation with the water from the springs of unconditional love implanted in our hearts can encourage to grow.

A truly profound education ought to be based on empowering students with the creative power of independent thinking, something that could be achieved only insofar as they are being given a relevant role in decision-making processes of real-life importance rather than pressured to inertly comply with commands handed out to them by the authoritative teachers. For, building one’s leadership on micromanaging insistence to obey orders is a perfect way to breed passive dependence instead of inventive independence. It does not take the insight of a genius to realize that being commandingly micromanaged impels one to think with the head of an authority rather than with one’s own head. In such a manner, the powers of independent thinking are not being spurred - the task whose fulfillment stands for an authentic purpose of the academic training - but heartlessly ruined. This ill approach to education also narrows the scope of responsibility and interest to conceive of beneficent actions among the apprentices, producing a breed of flaccid followers as the result. Also, considering the following thought by Bertolt Brecht, we could be certain that unquestioned submission to authority of any kind, be it a living person, an ideology or a trendy cultural stream, makes the submitted blind to the elementary errors they commit and wholly defunct when it comes to learning from them: “So long as masses are the object of politics they cannot regard what happens to them as an experiment but only as a fate. They learn as little from catastrophe as a scientist’s rabbit learns of biology”<sup>1018</sup>. People prone to exhibit instances of stunning creativeness, including anyone who, like Brecht himself, has aspired to “instill in us great turbulences... to slash with a hammer... to shake up the drowsiness of things”<sup>1019</sup>, have, in fact, found any forms of autocratic human resource management, be they in scholastic, industrial or military domains, extraordinarily repulsive. As a result, the history of human being is flooded with the examples of antiauthoritarian geni to such an extent that the attribute of a groundbreaking thinker and the one of an unruly loner, a social outcast and an outlandish deserter from any mainstream values or customs are nowadays stereotypically paired together. When Paul Gauguin painted his famous scorched self-portrait, with the floral tapestry in the back giving the impression of flowers growing from his head, not only was he inspired by the personality of Jean Valjean from Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables*, that archetypal social outcast, but he also conceived it as a “portrait that is not just a self-portrait, but an image for all the victims of society”, hinting at the idea that no artist destined to change the world can be bred but through teaching him the art of constructive rebellion against the stale social norms and the finding of the comfort in the role of an outsider. My personal response to authoritative commands to be this or that or to act in such and such manner have thus normally resulted in

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<sup>1016</sup> See David Foster Wallace’s *Joseph Frank’s Dostoyevsky*, In: *Consider the Lobster and Other Essays*, Back Bay Books, New York, NY (2006), pp. 257.

<sup>1017</sup> Listen to Pink Floyd’s *Another Brick in the Wall* on *The Wall*, Harvest Records, UK (1979).

<sup>1018</sup> See Bertolt Brecht’s notes on his play *Mother Courage and Her Children*, English Version by Eric Bentley, Grove Press, New York, NY (1939), pp. 120.

<sup>1019</sup> See the quote by W. Langhoff in *Darko Suvin’s Preface to Bertolt Brecht’s Schriften Zum Theater I-VII*, Translated by Darko Suvin, Nolit, Belgrade, Serbia (1966).

throwing these advices in the air, breaking the gates and barbed wires that they would impose on my ways apart, and choosing the paths that fit my own personal predispositions, inclinations, visions and aspirations. On the other hand, subtly offering guiding lights and gently placing them on the palms of my hands would normally leave me enchanted, prompted to deeply ponder over their meanings. Eventually, I would realize that such guidelines were offered with love and with love for their givers I would give a vow that I will follow them, passionately and devotedly, until the end. No wonder then that the Christ, the rebellious archangel, who showed us that going against the stream and believing in the relevance of the music divine that reverberates within one's own heart is more important than blindly following norms given to us by others, taught not by preaching and telling others what to do, but by telling stories in indirect and stargazing fashion. Stories can be interpreted in millions of ways; as such they resemble paths opened in front of us rather than bringing us to the very destinations. They place the keys in our hands, although we still need to invest efforts to discover the doors that they will unlock. Therefore, telling stories is itself a metaphor of the correct educational approach by which not passive armies of followers are fabricated, but the birth of independent and diversely unique thinkers is spurred instead. Such thinkers, ideally, would live by Nietzsche's worldview that places "I will" over "Thou shalt"<sup>1020</sup> and continue to lay humble question marks over condescending exclamation marks while promoting anarchism as an antithesis to authoritarianism of all kinds and at all social, psychological and epistemological levels. Another crucial element of the Christ's teaching approach was purifying other people's hearts by charitable acts that arose from a heart that *is* good rather than desiring to merely *act* in accordance with what other people may characterize as good, as Calvin put it. "For whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?" (Matthew 9:5), thus the Christ asked, urging us to understand that by offering simple commands one resembles the imperfect benefactors who help hungry villagers by giving them fish instead of teaching them the art of fishing, and eventually making them dependent on the products of one's creativity rather than self-sufficient and independent shining stars of some celestial creativeness that will turn out to fill and dazzle the skies of many wondering human minds with precious guiding lights. In that spirit, the greatest teachers do not yield simple and straightforward answers to their disciples, but merely point at the way that ought to be followed. And if we look close enough, we would realize that these two vital aspects of the Christ's teaching method had their beginnings - in terms of the heart from which these incentives originated - and ends - in terms of the traits the development of which they were meant to lead to - in Wonder and Love, respectively. And these two, Wonder and Love, mixed in the pot of the great Cosmos that we inhabit and the starry space of mind that filled most of the creative thinkers of this world have been what many a sign within this and other books of mine have pointed at. Yet, the greatest teachers understand that people are different and that each one of us requires a special educational approach. By having the same method applied for all of the disciples, the teacher would go against the grain of the very principle of incessant rule-breaking as the key to creative acting. After all, versatility of human talents, aspirations and inclinations is what the sustainability and the evolutionary potential of the world crucially depends on. Hence, whereas those that have a tendency to act as followers and inert edifiers of the towers of human knowledge, rather than their creative designers, are to be guided more constrainedly along the roads of their development, those inclined to become paradigm shifters are to be fostered in less

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<sup>1020</sup> See Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, translated by Thomas Common, retrieved from [eserver.org/philosophy/nietzsche-zarathustra.txt](http://eserver.org/philosophy/nietzsche-zarathustra.txt) (1883).

systematic and more groundbreaking, rigidity-shattering, although equally profoundly inspiring ways.

Craving to release the light we have crafted inside of us during many hours of fanciful thinking and idealizing may oftentimes impel us to “make the deal”<sup>1021</sup> with the devilish judges of the world, those who stand as guardians of the gates and prohibit the waters of novel creative expressions to flow through, trying their best to modify our acts and works so that they conform to their personal likings, all until the products of our creativity slowly but imperceptibly lose the traits of godliness and otherworldly beauty that once endowed them. Yet, although it is true that we ought to respect the tradition and learn to speak its language to be understood and capable of delivering profound messages thereto, we should never cease to have faith in the revolutionary novelties that our ideas and expressions ensconce, knowing that only insofar as we go against the mainstream and shock people along the way, facing rejections and disapprovals everywhere we go, we could be sure that we are journeying in the right direction. In contrast, when social doors in life open too easily to let us through, the only reasonable thing to do is to become worried and deeply ponderous over not whether we made a wrong step in the past, but where we made it, having become a king instead of a rebel. Realizing how immense and yet normally imperceptible the sin of followers and conformists is, in his landmark piece, *The Essence of Christianity*, Ludwig Feuerbach posed faith as directly opposite to love, having gone as far as to claim that “faith is essentially intolerant... faith knows only friends or enemies, it understands no neutrality... faith postulates a future, a world where faith has no longer an opposite... faith is the opposite of love. Love recognizes virtue even in sin, truth in error... It was faith, not love, not reason, which invented Hell. Faith condemns, anathematizes... All the horrors of Christian religious history... have arisen out of faith... in Christianity love is tainted by faith... A love which is limited by faith is an untrue love... Love knows no law but itself; it is divine through itself; it needs not the sanction of faith; it is its own basis. The love which is bound by faith is a narrow-hearted, false love, contradicting the idea of love”<sup>1022</sup>. Instead, the art of questioning, of revisiting the correctness of our and other people’s positions, of incessantly overturning and scrutinizing the foundations of worldviews which we hold on to, can be said to be a vital trait of all profound intellectual stances in life. Aside from the Christ’s open standing against the hypocritical and superficial veneration of the religious principles found in the Bible, Gautama Buddha also mentioned that a true religious teaching is all about pointing out that in order to live religiously, one has to travel against the stream of biological, environmental, cultural and social conditioning that humans are heirs to<sup>1023</sup>. For this reason and in order to clarify the essence of Buddha’s nature, the Tibetan born writer, Dzogchen Ponlop placed side by side<sup>1024</sup> his definition of a “rebel” as “one who questions, resists, refuses to obey, or rises against the unjust or unreasonable control of an authority or tradition” and of “Buddha” as “the awakened mind”, claiming that one without the other cannot be attained and that action can be enlightening only when rooted in intrinsic rebelliousness. Noah Levine has concordantly claimed the following: “The original rebel saint, Sid – the Buddha... isn’t a god or deity to be worshipped. He was a

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<sup>1021</sup> Listen to Bob Dylan’s *Like a Rolling Stone on Highway 61 Revisited*, Columbia Records (1965).

<sup>1022</sup> See *The Essence of Christianity* by Ludwig Feuerbach, Chapter XXVI. *The Contradiction of Faith and Love*; available at <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/feuerbach/works/essence/index.htm> (1841).

<sup>1023</sup> See Poep Sa Frank Jude Boccio’s *Going Against The Stream: The Not-Self Teaching of the Buddha*, available at <http://zennaturalism.blogspot.com/2010/03/going-against-stream-not-self-teaching.html> (2010).

<sup>1024</sup> See Dzogchen Ponlop’s *Rebel Buddha: On the Road to Freedom*, Shambhala, Boston, MA (2010).

rebel and an overthrower, the destroyer of ignorance”<sup>1025</sup>. Like the Hindu lord, Krishna, who, as little, had a habit of eating dirt and then denying it before his guardian, Lady Yashoda, who once made Krishna open his mouth so as to dig dust from it and embarrass baby Krishna, but glimpsed a whole universe glittering in it, the Buddha also used a route of disobedience from customary laws and precepts, flirting with sheer immorality at times, to prove his and everyone else’s divine nature to the skeptics and the cynics. Still, though labeled as a rebel that decisively stood against the ignorant and obsolete ways of practicing religious thought, the Buddha never ceased to balance his inherently insubordinate nature with the unconditional embrace of anything that abides under the starry hat of the Universe with his angelic arms of infinite love. Hence, although the renowned teacher of humanities, Gilbert Highet claimed that “individuals differ and brilliant individuals differ widely”<sup>1026</sup>, he also mentioned the following: “Rebels are not necessarily individuals. At certain times and in certain schools it is orthodox to be a rebel; and in general it is a very poor class that does not contain at least three pupils who can be counted on to oppose the teacher’s authority and loudly and persistently to question everything he says. No, the individuals are those who go neither with the stream nor against it, but dart violently from side to side, spin slowly round in a backwater, bury themselves in the mud at the bottom, or, occasionally, take wings and soar in the air above”<sup>1027</sup>. Of course, if we were to descend from the crust of the human psyche to its deepest rooms and layers, we would realize that, fundamentally, these individualistic spirits idealized hereby are composed of that magical blend of Wonder and Love, the former of which drives them to enter the realms in which no human foot has stepped before, while the latter of which makes them lean their hearts in empathy near the very same ones that they heartily dissent against. There is no doubt that Ludwig Feuerbach attempted to proclaim a similar, infinitely benevolent rebelliousness of our spirits as a reflection of our true pursuance of the religious path. And that mutinous swimming against the mainstreams is the trait of all the geniuses that have inhabited the Earth has hardly ever been summed up as neatly as in the following thought by Alan J. Perlis that found its place in his *Tao-Te-Xing* for computer geeks, *Epigrams on Programming*: “Everyone can be taught to sculpt: Michelangelo would have had to be taught not to. So it is with great programmers”<sup>1028</sup>. For, not open paths, but obstacles that are to be crossed is what the most inventive minds in this world ought to have placed in front of them to foster their creativity. Guiding stars that relentlessly show them the right ways and passions and drives that move them forward are plenty in their minds and hearts. It is by rebelliously going against the stream and crashing all the barriers posed in front of them as stagnant standards and norms that they continue to progress and deliver things of precious importance to the world along the way. This is when we could recall how the witty paperback character, Stephanie Plum equated “creativity” with “not playing by the rules”<sup>1029</sup>, confirming the hereby delivered stance that suggests that no other way for becoming a source of utterly inventive actions that dazzle and bring bliss to the eyes of the world is there but to oppose the streams along which the habitual human thoughts and behavioral clichés are channeled and find always new ways that lead to the ocean of oneness with all things that abide in this universe.

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<sup>1025</sup> See Noah Levine’s *Against the Stream: A Buddhist Manual for Spiritual Revolutionaries*, HarperOne, New York, NY (2007).

<sup>1026</sup> See Gilbert Highet’s *The Art of Teaching*, Vintage Books, New York, NY (1950), pp. 45.

<sup>1027</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41.

<sup>1028</sup> This also explains why everyone should have a little bear to distract one by pointing at the stars and galaxies and the celestial beauty that revolves around all things.

<sup>1029</sup> See Janet Evanovich’s *One for the Money*, Harper Torch, New York, NY (1994), pp. 30.

Consequently, one should look not for open paths and easy-flowing streams of thought as those that will truly deliver great fortunes to us; instead, a vast obstacle is a necessity on every path of progress that we could imagine, as I boldly claim. Hence, a door slammed in our face, shackles tied to our feet or gates closed so as to block the walks of our dreams are nothing but signs that we truly may be travelling on the right ways. Now, in the course of our quests, our relentlessly searching spirit will sometimes yield fruits other than those that we have expected to find or sought after, as in the cases of miners who dug through the mines of Bor in early 1900s in search of gold, but mostly found immense amounts of copper<sup>1030</sup>, the excavation of which signaled the beginning of the golden age for Serbian economy, of investigation teams that searched for a missing airplane and found unseen valleys, volcanoes and an underwater mountain taller than Mt. Everest in the Indian Ocean<sup>1031</sup>, of Midwesterners who sought oil under the Great Lakes and came across the largest underground salt mine in the world extending under the entirety of lakes Michigan and Huron, of the Islamist vandals' unknowingly discovering the Hanging Gardens of Babylon by blowing up and bulldozing the ancient Nebi Yunus shrine in the city of Nineveh in search of precious artifacts to illicitly sell and fund their destructive activities<sup>1032</sup>, or of my own searching for Sneaky Pickle and then, after missing the bus No. 88, walking despondently in the opposite direction and coming across Banksy's girl with an umbrella under which it rains, a Mona Lisa of the modern times, whom I had never ever dreamt of seeing, but in the end I did see. It goes without saying that there may be occasions when we find a treasure and thereby lose an even greater treasure that has been with us all of the time, as in Grozeva and Valchanov's film *Glory*, where the railway lineman discovers millions of euros tucked inside the railroad tracks, then notifies the authorities and gets promoted into a local hero, but then during the award ceremony receives a honorary wristwatch, whereupon his old, father's watch gets taken away from him, never to be found, bringing him a series of misfortunes in the wake of his attempts to retrieve it. However, such, inherently ruleless, is life, one of the major charms of which is that treasure and rubbish often swap places and take the form of one another. Still, regardless of which way our ardent quests for treasures in life take us, we should know that coming onto a gate closed by the worldly authorities will always be a sign that we are journeying along progressive roads. For, the most advanced ideas are, as a rule, discarded as meaningless and hollow by mainstream critics and masses in all times, while mediocre pieces of human creativity are widely embraced as beloved masterpieces, or at least that has been how humanity has reacted to novelty so far. When Vd pointed out in the context of the roadblocks he and his bandmates faced as one of the most innovative new musical acts in Yugoslavia in the early 1980s that "once you reveal yourself as a type that is neither (politically) dangerous nor brings about anything new, then you get labeled as a rock group that can play anywhere"<sup>1033</sup>, this should be taken as a statement of fact applicable in any sphere of society where innovation clashes with stale habits and novelty challenges norms. Knowing so, we should not despair about obstacles

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<sup>1030</sup> See Bor – Istorijski razvoj, Turistička organizacija Bor, retrieved from <http://tobor.rs/nesto-vise-o-boru/istorijski-razvoj/> (2013).

<sup>1031</sup> See Potraga za MH370 dovela do potpuno novih otkrića u okeanu, B92 News (July 20, 2017), retrieved from [http://www.b92.net/zivot/nauka.php?yyyy=2017&mm=07&dd=20&nav\\_id=1284553](http://www.b92.net/zivot/nauka.php?yyyy=2017&mm=07&dd=20&nav_id=1284553).

<sup>1032</sup> See Noah Charney's Did ISIS Inadvertently Uncover the Secret to the Lost Hanging Gardens of the Babylon, Salon (March 12, 2017), retrieved from <http://www.salon.com/2017/03/12/did-isis-inadvertently-uncover-the-secret-to-the-lost-hanging-gardens-of-babylon/>.

<sup>1033</sup> See Hronika BG talasa (3. deo) – Šarlo akrobata – Milan, Koja, Vd: Nas trojica smo van utabanih staza, Džuboks (March 27, 1981), retrieved from <http://www.yugopapir.com/2014/04/hronika-bg-talasa-3-deo-sarlo-akrobata.html>.

placed on our paths, such as those I have faced in form of relentless criticism of my works that blended the logic and analytical rigor of the traditional scientific and philosophical thought with the eruptions of lyricism and the “stream of consciousness” style of writing, where dozens of ideas stand connected by analogies and crafted into sentences so as to form dazzling trains of thought that make the readers dizzy and enchanted, as if spun round and round, like a pirouetting ballerina, while gazing at the starry sky where hundreds of glistening ideas shine from, or feeling as if ridden on the most fanciful rollercoaster imaginable while quietly sitting and reading a most gorgeous book under the infinitely peaceful umbrella of divinity watching over us. For, to blend Virgo-like orderliness and methodical classiness with a fanciful wildness in wording, such as that adopted by James Joyce in *Ulysses* or, more recently, Lucy Ellmann in *Ducks, Newburyport*, Gertrude Stein - an experimental writer whose work is said to have “consisted in a rebuilding, an entirely new recasting of life, in the city of words”<sup>1034</sup> - in her children’s stories<sup>1035</sup>, and Jack Kerouac in *On the Road*, the book that had secretly attracted me to throw anchors of my ship onto the SF seafloor, and thereby question not only the dull and unimaginative presentational manners that dominate the modern science, but its robotically programmatic empirical foundations too, has been the aim of my playful and prayerful walks through the dark forests and minacious meadows of the province of science. In a world where every technical paper, grant proposal and conference talk use the same lifeless lingo and where even the slightest deviations from it are enough to label one as a lunatic and silently exclude him from the scientific community, the effort to revitalize this language I have placed on the same line of efforts to romanticize, beautify and soften the hearts turned into stones under the weight of the walls of bureaucratic institutions made by various freedom fighters and spiritualists throughout the history, from Joan of Arc to Galileo Galilei to Gandhi to souls who did not go down in history, earning neither a bust nor an inscription in the pantheon of humanity, but nonetheless acting as bricks which, if removed, all else would fall. In the spirit of conceptual arts, where the renewal of the form refreshes the spirit and instigates the search for the renewal of the essence, I have aspired to have my scientific works live up to John Updike’s adage, “A novel of real ambition

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<sup>1034</sup> See the excerpt from Sherwood Anderson’s introduction to Gertrude Stein’s *Geography and Plays* (1922) in the Wikipedia article on Gertrude Stein, available at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gertrude\\_Stein](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gertrude_Stein) (2013).

<sup>1035</sup> See Gertrude Stein’s *The World is Round*, a collection of children’s stories, the most famous of which is *Rose Does Something*: “So Rose did not sing but she had to do something. And what did she do well she began to smile she was climbing all the while climbing not like a stair but climbing a little higher everywhere and then she saw a lovely tree and she thought yes it is round but all around I am going to cut Rose is a Rose is a Rose and so it is there and not anywhere can I hear anything which will give me a scare. And she thought she would cut it higher, she would stand on her blue chair and as high as she could reach she would cut it there”. Published by Shambhala, Boston, MA (1938). Gertrude Stein’s *Lectures in America* went a step ahead in this deconstruction of language in an attempt to reanimate it and provided a crucial impetus for the rise of language poetry as a legitimate postmodern approach to poetic expression free of any grammatical, typographic or stylistic rules and constraints. An example of the form her expression took in the *Lectures* comes from her musings on movement as the absolute: “I said in the beginning of saying this thing that if it were possible that a movement were lively enough it would exist so completely that it would not be necessary to see it moving against anything to know that it is moving. This is what we mean by life and in my way I have tried to make portraits of this thing always have tried always may try to make portraits of this thing... It was to me beginning to be a less detailed thing and at the same time a thing that existed so completely inside in it and it was it was so completely inside that really looking and listening and talking were not a way any longer needed for me to know about this thing about movement being existing... All that was necessary was that there was something completely constrained within itself was moving, not moving in relation to anything not moving in relation to itself but just moving, I think I almost at that time did this thing”. First published by Random House, New York, NY (1935).

must invent its own language”<sup>1036</sup>, knowing that the confinement into the rigid limits of clichéd, so-called technical language is a perfect way to make the scientist a bureaucrat and a conformist rather than a creative spirit that dies to innovate everything, from the content to the form, from the essence to the surface. I have known, of course, that the resistance to one such novel language will be immense in an intrinsically broken system of merit that science is, where the great majority of research is a simple derivative of the major trends in the field and where peer reviewers, who are predominately such derivative people with derivative interests, mainstream inclinations and mediocre ambitions, would favor those who do more of the same thing, thus collectively stirring a whirlpool in which the cravings for originality, revolutionary ideas and imagination sink deeper and deeper, getting harder and harder to glimpse and appreciate. And yet, deep down, my overarching goal in this realm that craves for romanticists as much as Dark Ages craved for them has been to counteract the bland ideas, the insipid spirits and the blasé stances taken on by the stereotypical scientists of the modern day with bedazzling imagination, with liveliness of a white forest bunny and of angels leaping across the room and flying across the skies, as well as with the gentle flows of poetic spiritedness, living all the while in accordance with the norm that has guided my endeavors ever since I was a child, coming from the pen of Fyodor Dostoyevsky and not accidentally ascribed to one perceived as an idiot by the mediocre masses<sup>1037</sup>: “Beauty will save the world”. But then, there is no wonder that the implicit message of these strivings to poeticize and humanize natural science and attach a transcendental, spiritual meaning to it has reechoed the one Morrissey had in mind with his call to “burn down the disco, hang the blessed DJ because the music that they constantly play, it says nothing to me about my life”<sup>1038</sup>, explaining why both the message and the messenger have been targeted for ruthless termination by the academic powers that be, as devoid of poetic senses as legions of Claude Frollo and Cruella de Vils. To that end, one could say that I have aspired to be a Lemmy Caution, the protagonist of Jean-Luc Godard’s *Alphaville*, on a mission to crash the cold, deterministic brain behind the wheels of modern science and use poetry to conquer the sterilely rigid mechanism governing its workings, the mechanism run by a computer program, not the infinitely lively, unpredictable and imaginative human intelligence. A curious parallel can be drawn at this point: namely, the revolution of infecting the inherently unpoetic world of science with the seed of lyricism and reinventing and rejuvenating it thereby, being the endeavor that I have been ardently involved in, can be compared in its magnitude with the revolution of bringing the “scientific” rigidity of techno beats and coldness of robotic synths to the pop music realm by the pioneers of electronic music in post-World War II era. Until the old adopts the new, however, the heralds of the latter are bound by fate to seem utterly foreign to the mainstream, which explains why I, as an example, have been perceived as equally foreign and out-of-place to the stereotypical scientist of the modern day as the earliest electro musicians appeared to pop rock partiers in the 1960s. As ever, being innovative is a hard cross to bear, implying the readiness of all the progressives to be subjects to ostracism by the mainstreamers and the mediocre powers that be. In addition, I have strived to revolutionize the scientific writings in the same way Godard revolutionized the art of cinema, that is, by creating works that implicitly question and criticize its trends and clichés, while feeding on improvisatory imaginativeness and anarchically disobeying any established principles and precepts, having no beginning or end in the classical

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<sup>1036</sup> See John Updike’s *Other Continents: Two Anglo-Indian Novels*, In: *More Matter: Essays and Criticism* by John Updike, Random House, New York, NY (1999), pp. 429.

<sup>1037</sup> See Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky’s *The Idiot*, Prosveta, Belgrade (1869).

<sup>1038</sup> *Listen to the Smiths’ Panic*, Rough Trade (1986).

sense of the word<sup>1039</sup>, but being mishmashes of impressions and ideas that magically trigger the pathways to enlightenment in the viewer. Yet, I have known that if a hypothetical scientist were to mimic the path crossed by Jackson Pollock from the time of his first solo exhibition in 1943 at the Art of This Century Gallery in New York, when there were still distinct traces of representational and figurative elements in his untitled paintings, to a couple of years later, when there were none anymore and everything got plunged into a purest abstract expressionism conceivable, suggestive of perfect liberation from all the bonds and boundaries and inspiring amongst millions of connoisseurs the Stone Roses to dream of a personality reflecting this ultimate freeness, as in their song Going Down, where Ian Brown sings of how “she looks like a painting, Jackson Pollock’s Number 5”<sup>1040</sup>, referring to the painter’s work from 1948, and if he were to move from moderate to plenary to supreme freedom of expression, quite in the way I may be attempting to do with this sentence and with works that slowly push the boundaries of scientific writing in this direction, from rigid, clichéd and orderly to free, unconventional and chaotically unconscious, this scientist would be quickly labeled as a lunatic and the doors to his advancement as an academic professional would become shut for good, and yet the question perpetually revolving around my head, coming to me like a saintly apparition every goddamn day, is how one could cross this path in the scientific domain and by doing so bring an unmeasurably bounteous wealth to science and humanity, a torch that lights up the fire of human creativity for ages to come, and be celebrated by future generations for this gift and lifelong effort. This explains why the urge has been brewing in me ever since I joined the scientific order, growing by now into a fire ready to swallow everything in its sight, to counteract the dull, prosaic and lackluster expressions that dominate today’s corporate science with expressions resembling supernova outbursts of inspiration, lyricism and originality. As I pointed out on an occasion of standing up, taking on a shield glistening with love and bouncing back with it the arrows of angry criticisms of one of my fanciful scientific papers by an army of plain puppets, calling it “the work of someone who is beginning to lose the grip on reality”<sup>1041</sup>, “I do hear these positivistic calls for prosaic, purely technical and heartlessly mechanized scientific presentations, but what my lab strives to do is to counter these calls and produce something on the diametrically opposite side of the spectrum – something poetic, something proving that expensive techniques matter not if you nest great ideas inside you and something that has a heart and is not a machine, that is, something that trips and falls every once in a while. This paper is in some respects a testimony to these ideals”<sup>1042</sup>. When it comes to individual sentences, to satisfy these ideals of timeless beauty, I knew that they had to contrast their bland brevity in typical scientific articles with eruptions of energy, with endlessly winding flows, and with convoluted spirals slaloming through space, having slides forward and slides backward blending into one. Godard’s movie *Tout va bien*, for example, was to some extent his protest against the demanded brevity of public commentaries, the reason for which the striking workers in it deliberately deliver exceedingly long monologues to the camera; similarly, my writings in which each sentence strives to be a universe unto itself, resembling individual frames in a Kurosawa’s film, telling a story of their own, independently of the rest of the film, sometimes reflecting the

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<sup>1039</sup> Watch, for example, *Histoire(s) du cinema* directed by Jean-Luc Godard (1988 – 1998).

<sup>1040</sup> Listen to the Stone Roses’ *Going Down* on *Made of Stone* single, Silvertone Records (1989).

<sup>1041</sup> See Derek Lowe’s *An Odd Paper?* *Science Translational Medicine* Blog (November 17, 2017), retrieved from <http://blogs.sciencemag.org/pipeline/archives/2017/11/17/an-odd-paper#comment-287655>.

<sup>1042</sup> See my December 9 and 10, 2017 comments to Derek Lowe’s *An Odd Paper?* *Science Translational Medicine* Blog (November 17, 2017), retrieved from <http://blogs.sciencemag.org/pipeline/archives/2017/11/17/an-odd-paper#comment-287655>.

overarching semantic point of it and sometimes standing untied to anything in it, are also a revolt against the expressional vulgarity of the modern, Twitter age, wherein no elaborate unwinding of the threads of thoughts from here to the Moon is given space to in public forums, wherein snappy news have taken the place of lengthy analyses, wherein daily communications come with the incisiveness of a knife rather than with the softness for the soul of a poem or a symphony that take time to open, develop and close, and wherein the characteristically Americanized simplicity of sentences, most authentically dating back to Walt Whitman's vow in the preface to the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* in 1855 to "not have in my writing any elegance, or effect, or originality, to hang in the way between me and the rest like curtains", has fully eclipsed the rollercoaster strings of words, long-winded run-ons with endless ups and downs and no end in sight, that typified the works of Hegel, Kant, Kiš, Dickens, Beckett, Hugo and many others, alongside the very sentence that is just about to come to an end. The pervasive calls to adjust the form of scientific articles to the "twitterization" of information in this digital age and make them ever more succinct and straight-to-the-point, as in the case when a former editor of *Cell*, one of the most prestigious scientific journals, insisted that individual articles be made akin to single pieces of a 3D Lego puzzle<sup>1043</sup>, which could be only in the author's head assembled into a bigger and holistic picture, I thus counter with the vision of the expression on the face of any master of literature, filmmaking, musical composition or visual arts if he were to be told that his magnificent book, movie, symphony or a painting, containing universes of meaning in its finest details, is to be chopped into pieces and released as a myriad of meager segments and crude themes; be it a frown, a gesticulation of bewilderment or a haughty laughter, it would mean a million to me by encouraging me to shove this reductionist proposition into the ditch and never let go of the dream of building similarly grandiose wholes as Renoir's *Dance at Le Moulin de la Galette* or Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, if not the *Ring of the Nibelung*, with each scientific paper of mine. Still, unlike Godard, who, himself, admitted that he was a more skilled film critic than a filmmaker<sup>1044</sup>, in a sense that he more efficiently shook the art of cinema than human hearts with his cinematic works, I have made it a goal to be equally effective in both, that is, in bringing a multitude of aspects of scientific research and science communication into question and in carrying out superb research that shifts the paradigms and advances human knowledge and also inspires the peers and the public to keep on investing their hearts and hands in this great adventure of the human mind that we call science. For, just as exceptional art on one hand provides an emotional solace and an endless source of inspiration to its consumer, speaking about his life as if it was his most intimate friend and a guide, while on the other hand it evolves the given art conceptually into whole new territories, the type of science that I have dreamt of doing does provide significant practical findings through papers and presentations, but it ever more so questions the current scientific climate through the same media and outlines progressive paths toward whole new empirical and semantic grounds and ways of expression. One, particularly notable exemplar of this fine balance between creating art that resonates powerfully with people on the emotional planes and evolving the art conceptually into new forms is Ludwig van Beethoven, which can be christened from this perspective as the epitome of a perfect artist. Namely, not only was his composition both more impressive and more expressive than any music that preceded it, capable of immersing the listener into a vivid aural experience, but he also single-handedly ended classicism and set the foundations for musical Romanticism, which

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<sup>1043</sup> This story was shared by John Pham, Editor-in-chief of *Cell*, Personal Conversation, Boston, MA (May 2018).

<sup>1044</sup> Watch Dick Cavett's interview with Jean-Luc Godard, Public Broadcasting Service (1980), retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYVWQ3aChPU>.

was a conceptual innovation of the form and which was so influential that it made this new style last for a century and a half in music, longer than in any other art, starting with his immediate Romantic followers, including Schubert, Schumann and Chopin, and ending with the 20<sup>th</sup> century likes of Mahler, Rachmaninoff, Bruckner and Sibelius. All of a sudden, from Beethoven onwards, fear, fury and other darkest emotions and passions streaming through the human soul were no longer forbidden to express, but rather became the carriers of the torch of the most beautiful in art, notwithstanding that with them a Pandora's box was opened, which the death of everything classically aesthetic in art around the mid-20th century could be traced to. Moreover, classical music in eras that preceded Beethoven, including classicism, baroque and renaissance, was reserved for the aristocratic courts, leaving the common people out of the euphonic equation, and yet Beethoven flipped this state of affairs<sup>1045</sup>, opening his music to broader audiences and allowing the philistines, the philosophers and the partisans to rejoice in it side by side, hinting at a powerful political connotation that his music had alongside its aforementioned striving for structural immaculateness and for the invention of an own language. Following in the footsteps of this grand exemplar, I have aspired to do science that excels at fundamental and practical levels, but also simultaneously challenges the present forms of expression and thereby helps it evolve to unforeseen new terrains, alongside frequently throwing light on inequalities governing the political terrain from which it stems. The Hungarian-French composer, Joseph Kosma, is said to have believed in making art with “the arrogance of thinking that the artist will change the course of history with it”, while also understanding, humbly, that “if he touches two people, he has done something extraordinary”<sup>1046</sup>, and, analogously, the conception of science that pushes the scientific expression and modes of thinking to radically new territories, while never ceasing to resonate with the actual knowledge and people holding on to it, has been the one I have dedicated my life to. Therefore, I could say that the practical meaning of the scientific work still matters to me, but the crux of my perspective on it has been the same as that of Pablo Picasso's on his paintings, which he never saw as merely “a work of art”, but always as research on the art of artistic expression, intercepting his interviewers often with a comment “ah, then what you're talking about is *mere* painting”<sup>1047</sup>, meaning that there was a whole world of meaning beyond that of a good painting in every painting of his, questioning a myriad of artistic premises, trends and clichés implicitly through it. Likewise, it is said that many a painting by Howard Hodgkin was “a painting about the nature of all painting”<sup>1048</sup>, including, for example, Discarded Clothes, where the necessary absence of the creator from the work of art created is being tackled, alongside “the inevitable imperfection of every representational picture: its inability to be more than a painted surrogate for a fraction of the life of the person who brought it into being”<sup>1049</sup>. As far as this necessity for the artist who strives for the summits of excellence to question the most fundamental concepts of art through each of his works is concerned, the next one who comes to mind is Jean-Paul Sartre and his holding that the implicit obligation on behalf of the artist during the last hundred years has been subdued to the need to call into question the art itself<sup>1050</sup>,

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<sup>1045</sup> See Mark Wigglesworth's Why Beethoven, retrieved from <https://www.markwigglesworth.com/writing/why-beethoven/> (2020).

<sup>1046</sup> Watch My Journey through French Cinema directed by Bertrand Tavernier (2016).

<sup>1047</sup> See David Hockney: A Retrospective, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA (1988), pp. 83.

<sup>1048</sup> See Andrew Graham-Dixon's Howard Hodgkin, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, New York, NY (1994), pp. 51.

<sup>1049</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1050</sup> See Richard Roud's Introduction to Godard on Godard, edited by Jean Narboni and Tom Milne, Da Capo Press, New York, NY (1968), pp. 8.

oftentimes eclipsing the will to produce a truly moving piece of art. Concordantly, I, myself, have given a vow to, similarly, always aspire to enrich the essence, to overturn the foundations, but also to never cease to work in the direction of creating things of palpable importance, with delicate appeal. And yet, I have known very well that most people, conformist by both nature and nurture, would be blasphemed by this cocktail, cold-bloodedly rejecting, discarding and judging it as trifling and worthless. But such closed gates will be faced by some starry eyes and, determinedly, with a golden sword in hands, torn apart, so that the gentle and elegantly analytical, and yet ecstatic and joyfully poetic walks towards some wonderful and unforeseen horizons of being and seeing the world, which my writing has symbolized, can be continued.

After all, one of the crucial riddles of the Sphinx posed in front of the current generation of thinkers is how to explain the discrepancy between the nature of the core of scientific research and the manner in which it is being presented nowadays. Namely, on one hand creative scientific endeavors stem from the roots of imaginativeness that in its rebelliousness busts the boundaries of clichéd, standardized and customary thinking and produces surprising innovations as its fruits, while on the other hand the less imaginative and boundary-breaking we are in the way we present scientific results in professional journals or at scientific meetings, the greater the chances that we would receive praise and accolades from the peer reviewers who stand as Cerberuses, the demonic gate guardians, in front of our road to recognition and success. However, what I have aimed at accomplishing with my writings in the field or science has been exactly shattering one such delusive discrepancy that threatens to rotten the core of genuine scientific creativeness that dwells deep inside of each scientist's mind. "Movies now have gone past the phase of prose narrative and are coming nearer and nearer to poetry. I am trying to free my work from certain constrictions – a story with a beginning, a development, an ending. It should be more like a poem with metre and cadence"<sup>1051</sup>, Federico Fellini notably remarked once in an attempt to outline the essence of his artistic approach from a more systemic perspective and I, myself, could easily use these very same words to describe my own efforts in the realm of scientific writing, spinning on the wheel of wishes to revolutionize what I have considered as bureaucratically boring and all-but-inspiring scientific language lying impressed on the pages of professional journals and hearable at conference and academic lectures. Scientific spirits were traditionally romanticists, dreamers and the best ideas came to them down the threads connecting their minds with the sublime skies of philosophy and poetry. However, the explosive growth of scientific information on the wings of pure practicality coincided with the implosion of *Das Glasperlenspiel* cravings to entwine poetic and philosophical fanciness with empirical rigor and with their disappearance down the black holes of oblivion. Not so long ago, scientists did not hesitate to use fancy metaphors or lyrical phrases to illustrate scientific ideas, alongside being busy writing research manuscripts and essays clarifying philosophical issues in their sciences with an equal zeal. One example comes from the birth of the coagulation cascade theory, which now presents the cornerstone of explaining the biological process of hemostasis at the molecular level<sup>1052</sup> and which proceeded, like the rise of most major scientific ideas, through the clash of contradictory points of view. It involved on one side the monofactor, prothrombin hypothesis developed by Walter Seegers at Wayne State University at the time, who "was a philosopher as well as a

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<sup>1051</sup> See Robert Richardson's *Film and Literature*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN (1969), pp. 106.

<sup>1052</sup> See Rodney J. Y. Ho, Milo Gibaldi – "Biotechnology and Biopharmaceuticals: Transforming Proteins and Genes into Drugs", 2nd Edition, Chapter 10, Wiley, New York, NY (2013).

scientist”<sup>1053</sup> and whose papers his alphavillian adversaries described as “replete with obtuse philosophical quotations and statements”<sup>1054</sup>, including the following comment found in one of them: “I started with a beautiful and time honored materialistic perspective and sincerely did my best to be objective just as if this could be possible. I believe my original orientation continues to retard scientific progress, accounts for heartaches and for a scientist being regarded circumspctly. It was eventually my good fortune to notice that idealism is compatible with progress and health and that subjectivity is the basis of all that is real”<sup>1055</sup>. Of course, any attacks on the concept of objectivity, even though it appears to any moderately insightful philosopher as stable as a castle made of sand, or the use a lyrical word such as “beautiful”, is an unforgivable blasphemy in the eyes of the modern breed of the scientist, drier and more narrow-minded than ever in the history of science. Hence the following comment to these deep thoughts as accompaniments of research ideas: “In the modern age, dilettantism is seldom compatible with the objectivity so necessary in hard science”<sup>1056</sup>. On the other side of this fruitful divide was the multifactor, stepwise and amplificatory enzymatic activation hypothesis by Gwyn Macfarlane based at the Blood Coagulation Research Unit in Oxford, yet another philosopher and lyricist among scientists, noted for having “had the gift of writing in elegant prose”<sup>1057</sup>. His first major scientific review in 1931 opened with the following string of lyrical statements, which would never past pass the peer review gate in any reputable scientific journal today: “The extent of medical knowledge is so awe inspiring that the dark abyss of ignorance underlying it is frequently forgotten. The classical medical conditions, in the majority, bear such a complex superstructure of fact and fancy, deduction and discussion, that only the learned and industrious may perceive the foundations of mystery, or hope to write with any authority, concerning them. There are a few clinical entities, however, whose divine simplicity reveals the unknown to all, even to the lazy and ignorant who may bask in the realization that here at least, they are almost as wise as the illustrious. Haemophilia is one of these. ...Like the glass mountain of fairy stories it stands for all to see, unassailable, its base littered with the wearied hopes, and damaged reputations of the past”. The words such as “awe”, “mystery”, “divine”, “fairy”, “wise”, sadly, do not belong to the vocabulary of today’s acceptable scientific writings. For example, one of my recent review papers<sup>1058</sup> was not accepted until “magic thread” was changed into “line”, “crowned as the prince of peculiarities” into “serving as a paradigm for peculiarities”, “Her works” into “natural creation”, “two hands digging their way through the dark” into “hollows”, materials science universe” into “biomineral family”, “extraordinary beauties and meanings” into “semantic signs”, “befriending” into “examining”, “beloved” into “evolutionarily favored”, and “princess” into “epitome”, following the insistence of the editors that the overly lyrical phrases be substituted with more acceptable terms lest the paper be straightforwardly rejected. In any case, after a series of original claims and rebuttals exchanged between Seegers and Macfarlane in

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<sup>1053</sup> See C. Hougie’s The waterfall-cascade and autoprotehrombin hypotheses of blood coagulation: personal reflections from an observer, *Journal of Thrombosis and Haemostasis* 2, 1225-33 (2004).

<sup>1054</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1055</sup> See W. H. Seegers’ Historical Perspectives Related to Thrombin, In: Chemistry and Biology of Thrombin, edited by R. L. Lundblad, J. W. Fenton, K. G. Mann, Ann Arbor Science Publishers, Ann Arbor, MI (1977).

<sup>1056</sup> See C. Hougie’s The waterfall-cascade and autoprotehrombin hypotheses of blood coagulation: personal reflections from an observer, *Journal of Thrombosis and Haemostasis* 2, 1225-33 (2004).

<sup>1057</sup> See C. Hougie’s A Review of the Scientific and Literary Accomplishments of Professor R. G. Macfarlane CBE, FRS”, *British Journal of Haematology* 133, 581 – 590 (2006).

<sup>1058</sup> Vuk Uskoković – “The Role of Hydroxyl Channel in Defining Selected Physicochemical Peculiarities Exhibited by Hydroxyapatite”, *RSC Advances* 5, 36614 - 36633 (2015).

the mid-1960s, the reconciliation - or victory for the cascade hypothesis of Macfarlane, depending on the point of view - was reached when Macfarlane introduced the image showing shadows of a wineglass and a wine bottle side by side in a dramatic conclusion to one of his papers<sup>1059</sup>, before demonstrating that they both originate from a same object illuminated by two beams of light lying at right angles to each other. My mission has correspondingly been to revitalize the deadening style of scientific presentations by infusing elating eruptions of poetry, artistic charisma and childlike fanciness to them. As original as this approach of mine has been, it has managed to present orange-juggling clowns<sup>1060</sup>, childlike drawings of the sun<sup>1061</sup>, single lines representing nothing<sup>1062</sup>, random micrographs<sup>1063</sup> and photographs of dreamy boys playing with seashore pebbles<sup>1064</sup>, touch the pragmatic and metaphysical foundations of science and muse on the role of love in its realm and then strew the readers with innumerable other glistening philosophical, ethical and aesthetical insights side by side with rigorously drawn analytical threads of thought, and yet be published in quite revered scientific journals. Reading these works, one might have an impression that I, the writer, never wander too far from the discoursed subject of research; instead, I would always return to it after curiously and adventurously getting lost in amusing analogies of thought, knowing that these intellectual diversions are akin to our reaching out to precious trees of knowledge on the sides of our research roads, but only to enthusiastically waddle back to them with our arms full of embraced enriching insights collected during the moments of our philosophical pensiveness, providing a vital food for our continuous journeying on the scientific path. By crafting such works, I have hoped that their readers would feel as if they have glimpsed “the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord” (John 1:23) ringing from their invisible foundations, eventually producing an avalanche of the inflow of inspirational aesthetics in scientific presentations of the postmodern day.

Hence, the moment we break the law of regularity and habitualness of our modes of thinking, feeling and acting, we open the doors that lead to stellar paths of novel, more exciting and progressive ways of being. One of the last thoughts of Jerry Nolan, the drummer of New York Dolls, the one that Legs McNeil decided to place as the final line of his history of punk, was the memory of Jerry’s sister deliriously dancing on an Elvis Presley’s concert and him, standing still, amazed by the hole in Elvis’ shoe<sup>1065</sup>. Being one such source of amazement for the world, offering wake-up punches by going against the grain of habitual modes of experiencing reality and expressing oneself, while at the same time delivering spurs of joyful excitement from the carousel of love that revolves gracefully within the cosmic depths of our heart is what the ideal of perfectly creative being in this world holds for us. For, long time ago I made it clear to myself that just as modern drug delivery devices are designed as mildly malign so as to penetrate

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<sup>1059</sup> R. G. Macfarlane – “The basis of the cascade hypothesis of blood clotting”, *Thrombosis et Diathesis Haemorrhagica* 15, 591–602 (1966).

<sup>1060</sup> Vuk Uskoković – “Isn't Self-Assembly a Misnomer? Multi-Disciplinary Arguments in Favor of Co-Assembly”, *Advances in Colloid and Interface Science* 141 (1-2) 37 - 47 (2008).

<sup>1061</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1062</sup> Vuk Uskoković – “Revisiting the Fundamentals in the Design and Control of Nanoparticulate Colloids in the Frame of Soft Chemistry”, *Review Journal of Chemistry* 3 (4) 271 – 303 (2013).

<sup>1063</sup> Vuk Uskoković – “A Collection of Micrographs: Where Science and Art Meet”, *Technoetic Arts: A Journal of Speculative Research* 7 (3) 231 – 248 (2010).

<sup>1064</sup> Vuk Uskoković – “Major Challenges for the Modern Chemistry in Particular and Science in General”, *Foundations of Science* 15 (4) 303 – 344 (2010).

<sup>1065</sup> See *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk* by Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain, Grove Press, New York, NY (2006), pp. 407.

the targeted organisms efficiently before releasing their benevolent contents, and just as in my musical system cacophony that makes the listener's hair stand on end, bringing him to a state depicted by the screaming ghost immortalized on Munch's memorable painting, presents a vital element of a musical piece, the one that enables the message of its harmonic sounds to penetrate deep into the listener's mind and leave a lasting trace therein, so does the lecturer on the stage or any other performer in life have to constantly stun and amaze the audience with odd words and movements in order to have the message of his talk penetrate the minds around him and leave a lasting imprint therein, sowing the soils of their mental landscapes and inconspicuously giving rise to wonderful trees of thought on some distant days. Of course, all the while as we shatter the rules of routine, normality and ordinariness with one pole of our creative being, the other pole thereof should complementarily send outbursts of unconditional love to wash the world thoroughly with. With such a lovingly rebellious state of mind, in the depths of which the carousel of Wonder and Love is being incessantly spun, one retains an eternally juvenile nature, vigorously dancing and rejoicing with every creature and detail of the world all until the day one drops dead, never growing old and weary in one's spirit, but always living driven by a mysterious starry energy tapped from the divine sources above, similar to the one that moved the sage, such as the Christ, to heal others with his touch, the peacemaker, such as Mahatma Gandhi, to repel and silence weapons with his mere cosmic presence, and the artist, such as the singer from Ann Arbor who felt being "a street walking cheetah with a heart full of napalm"<sup>1066</sup>, to inspire the world with enchanting moves and melodies. Hence, to love with one hemisphere of our mind and to break the law with another is what the eternal starriness of punkish wisdom and juvenile sentiency holds in store for us. As if being an epitome of the Big Island of Hawaii, arid and treeless on its Western side, resembling the barren surface of the Moon, and bursting with life, full of thick and juicy tropical fruits and forests on its Eastern side, or of the island of Hispaniola on which the Little Bear and I landed for our honeymoon journey, the satellite view of which clearly reveals the border between its two states, Haiti, deforested, bare, shaken and rebellious in current times, and Dominican Republic, a peaceful and verdant paradise on Earth in comparison with the former, the crossing of which would probably appear equally stunning to one as it was for Lewis and Clark when their expedition, who had been bred to believe that a chipmunk could jump from one tree branch to another all the way from the East coast to the Pacific coast, came across the Great Plains and the deserts in the Western United States, not only does a brilliant mind adopt a deserted, silent and introverted appearance on one of its hemispheres while the other one flourishes in exotic and extrovert lush, but one side of it also always needs to be rebellious and disobedient, in constant turmoil of one kind or another, while the other one cordially and graciously offers its fruits to the world with divine devotion and respect.

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<sup>1066</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 125.



Albeit not as striking as the transition from a southern Californian oasis to a desert captured on the aerial photograph above, one still does not need a political map to notice the borderline between the two countries on the island of Hispaniola that separates/connects the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea from the satellite (bottom left) or a plane (bottom right), deserted and derelict Haiti to the West and luxuriant and opulent Dominican Republic to the East<sup>1067</sup>. It is said that a mind embodying a similar blend of opposites, thus bearing resemblance to the full Moon, sunlit, shiny and expressive on one side and dark, remote, veiled and impassive on the other, is the one endowed with the utmost creative potentials in life.

Even these very words arise from a similar encounter of the drive to logically arrange the dominoes of individual images and ideas into perfectly consistent wholes and complementary

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<sup>1067</sup> The map was taken from Audrey L. Mayer's *Principles of Sustainability from Ecology*, a chapter found in the book I reviewed for Bentham Science Publishers, Oak Park, IL: *Sustainability: Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives*, edited by Heriberto Cabezas and Urmila Diwekar (June 2011).

impulses that tend to tumble them down, knowing that love dwells among the ruins and ruins only and that, like in Horace Vernet's *Departure for the Hunt in the Pontine Marshes* wherein an idyllic forest landscape is depicted, along with a fallen tree with a mysterious light emerging from a hole in the ground where its roots used to be, thoughtful ruination of worldly entities is oftentimes a requirement to expose the light that resides amongst their foundations, producing as a result lively expressions wherein order and disorder are well blended and which engrain a crucifying pull into chaotic abysses and horizons of sunshiny clarity at the same time, as it occurs in every healthily developing natural system. Countless artistic approaches have thus involved conception of an overwhelming barrage of stimuli that may be seen as filling the mind to its full capacity, only then to be stripped off of one stimulus after another, all until a partially barren and ruined tower of expression, invoking a partially saddening sense of beauty that cracks the human heart to two and makes the underlying light burst out, emerges into view. One proof that such a method can bear fruit has come from Wilco's unanimously best rated album to date, *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*, which was made to sound so captivating, let alone prophetic with its 9/11 anticipating iconography and lyrics<sup>1068</sup>, resulting in its being still considered as one of the best records of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, by means of a systematic and smart destruction of its first, instrumentally complete version<sup>1069</sup>. Needless to add, such combinations of movements that alternately reorder and disarray pieces in our works of art must be a necessity if we wish to breathe life and the spirit of timeless relevance into them. For, whereas the desire to cement the bricks of ideas into perfectly structured semantic wholes free from any inflows of spirited and intuitive spontaneity typically produces dry and lifeless expressions, poetic fullness of the heart without any rivers of logical thought flowing along the riverbeds of one's brain leads to frenzied and muddled linguistic manifestations of our psyche. And as reiterated numerous times across the pages of this book, it is always the dialectical blends of opposites that illuminate the way forward. In that sense, a battle of one type or another has to incessantly be surrounding ourselves in our run through the cosmic vastnesses along the evolutionary path. One of the facets on an anonymously created anarchistic Christian stone I mysteriously found in an SF gallery illuminated this message with the following words: "If we are walking around and do not feel that we are in the midst of a battle, whether spiritual or political or social or internal, we have assuredly strayed from the path"<sup>1070</sup>. Or, as recently sung by Jamie T, "When there's no one left to fight, boys like him don't shine so bright, soon as I see the dust settle, let's go out and find some trouble!", and as pointed out by William Hazlitt in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, "The fight, the fight's the thing, wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king"<sup>1071</sup>. For, another thing that the great book of *Bhagavad-Gita* tells us with its metaphor of the battlefield along the middle of which our hero travels with his divine guide is the necessity of dialectical confrontations for the sake of launching both ourselves and the world towards ever higher levels of existence. Yet, in this modern age of hypocritical cheesiness and sugarcoated two-head-nodding to all things around us, wherever we look, from interview rooms wherein interviewees are patted on the shoulder for their amazing performances, but then belittled behind their backs, to cocktail parties

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<sup>1068</sup> Watch the Marina City twin towers on the front cover and listen to "tall buildings break, voices escape, singing sad, sad songs" in the song *Jesus, Etc.* In: Wilco's *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*, Nonesuch (2000/01).

<sup>1069</sup> Watch the documentary movie about the making of Wilco's *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*: *I am Trying to Break Your Heart – A Film About Wilco*, directed by Sam Jones (2002).

<sup>1070</sup> See *Girding for War: A Journal of Christian Anarchism Issue #6: Stone of 144 Facets, Myopic Apocalypse* Press, Portland, OR (2011), No. 125.

<sup>1071</sup> See William Hazlitt's *The Pleasure of Hating: Love Turns, with a Little Indulgence, to Indifference or Disgust: Hatred Alone is Immortal*, Penguin, London, UK (1823).

whereat dishonest pretense dominates over the spirit of sincerity that is true to oneself at all times, to Facebook settings wherein one can like, but not dislike comments of one's friends<sup>1072</sup>, to clichéd chats dominated by massive superlatives and contributing as such to semantic deflation of adjectives<sup>1073</sup>, to remote communication tools which are for many people nowadays the only means by which they will express their disagreements<sup>1074</sup>, something that they are too fearful to show when they are face-to-face with other parties, to millions of souls that comprise the jigsaw puzzle of the Universe, trapped within the blind spots of their perception with no one to friendly point out the errors they are committing and liberate them thereby, signs that people awkwardly avoid benevolent dialectical confrontations and do not get that opposing others from time to time is vital for each and every one's progress are everywhere.

Once we realize that even we, ourselves, are ideally to be our own enemy as much as we have firm faith in our own divine potentials, the process of deflation of our ego begins in parallel with an expansion of our egoless, cosmic consciousness that identifies with all things. That is, we ought to constantly contradict ourselves by never ceasing to empathize with new, diametrically opposite angles of looking at the worldviews that we keep close to our heart, if our personality is to evolve into the ideal posed by the great One, which sees oneself in everything and all things in oneself. In that sense, to the amazement of many, you might often hear me contradicting myself in statements given seconds apart, while exercising my egoless stances along the way, living like an angel lightly floating through the air, unattached to anything in life. Every single sentence in this book could be thus picked by me and challenged for its inadequacy and imperfection. By doing so, I would subtly offer signs that any given statement or viewpoint that we might propound in life is inevitably imperfect and that there is therefore the need to go beyond leaning onto single, one-sided stances and embrace everything instead, including the diametrical opposites of opinions held seconds ago. Our mind thus becomes trained to infinitely expand its content and identify itself with everything. It does so by posing gates in front of itself, judiciously

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<sup>1072</sup> How Facebook content turns from newsy to trashy and from neat to nightmarish when we like way too many things on it tell the results of a two-day experiment on liking every single post on it, which is reported here: Mat Honan's I Liked Everything I Saw on Facebook for Two Days. Here's What It Did To Me, Wired (August 11, 2014), retrieved from <http://www.wired.com/2014/08/i-liked-everything-i-saw-on-facebook-for-two-days-heres-what-it-did-to-me/>. As the experimenter, himself, concluded in the end, "By liking everything, I turned Facebook into a place where there was nothing I liked". Too much Yes, thus, after a while, as some may notice, turns into a stupendous No.

<sup>1073</sup> When one uses attributes such as "awesome", "great", "splendid" and others constantly in communication, even to describe things that are not so awesome and great, then the right words will be missing to describe something that is truly awesome and great once it appears in our worlds. For this reason, the word "okay", which once used to be attributed to things excellent or very good in nature nowadays means that something was average, merely bearable, that is, all but great and exceptional.

<sup>1074</sup> The following postmodern Zen story by Clive Barker touches the essence of this insight that tells us that remote communication tools have potential to foster animosities which simple facing another can heal, an insight which should be particularly worrying in this age of cell phones and Internet wherein the links of intimacy between human hearts are thinner and weaker rather than stronger and more profound: "The general has only eighty men, and the enemy five thousand. In his tent the general curses and weeps. Then he writes an inspired proclamation and homing pigeons shower copies over the enemy camp. Two hundred desert on foot to the general. There follows a skirmish which the general wins easily, and two regiments come over to his side. Three days later, the enemy has only eighty men and the general five thousand. The general writes another proclamation and seventy-nine more men join up with him. Only one enemy is left, surrounded by the army of the general, who waits in silence. The night passes and the enemy has not come over to his side. The general curses and weeps in his tent. At dawn the enemy slowly unsheathes his sword and advances on the general's tent. He goes in and looks at him. The army of the general disbands. The sun rises".

and repulsively, to a lesser degree and instead opening its petals to an ever greater extent, seeing it all as one and welcoming every detail of the surrounding reality into its bright inner core, transforming itself thereby from a finite little bottle of ego to a limitless ocean of love. Moreover, behind such mutual embracement of conflicting stances stand my firm beliefs in the evolutionary merits of dialectical encounters of opposites as well as realizations of the enlightening artistic experience as the one reserved for expressions that appear crucified under the force of contradictory emotions. Paul Valéry and T. S. Eliot have both claimed that “the progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality”<sup>1075</sup> and embracement of this ideal can be said to hold innumerable benefits in store for us, from the diminishment of our ego owing to lesser bonds with the fruits of our action to the incessant refreshment of our creativity and rejuvenation of our self which then strives to identify with it all and thus becomes nothing and all at the same time, in Wonder free to fly like a bird over the skies of the world and yet in Love to empathically recognize oneself in everything. In that sense, I have lived quite in accordance with what Marcel Duchamp once casually observed, “I force myself to contradict myself to avoid conforming to my own taste/style”<sup>1076</sup>, which is also in agreement with the school of somatic exercises of Thomas Hanna<sup>1077</sup>, the core principles of Hatha Yoga<sup>1078</sup> and the school of dancing of Merce Cunningham, which were all about breaking a habit, going against our own habitual flow of body language, “embodying the principle of self-contradiction in movement”<sup>1079</sup> and thus turning ritual into an art, coupling gestures and parts of postures that all but go together, thereby increasing flexibility and naturalness of our movement through space and expression of our spirit. Hence also the ageless meaningfulness of Nick Cave’s following the thought, “I will not tell you about the girl, I will not tell you about the girl” by coming to the mic and saying, “I will tell you about the girl”<sup>1080</sup>. For, just as journeying in the direction of positive and negative infinities makes us reach the same destination,  $\infty$ , so does perfect breakage of laws, detachment from it all and perfect acceptance of it all, anchorage of our hearts to all things around us bring us to the one and only vista of the Way of Love, of utmost meditative remoteness and empathic intimacy with the world, whereby a fabulous gracefulness is let permeate each and every one of our physical movements. By streaming to reach stars in our stellar wonder, with one arm raised like a superman, we are thus brought back to the earthly reigns from which we took off, realizing that there are no stars in Cosmos such as the little lampions of wonder twinkling in earthlings’ eyes. Reaching out for perfect freedom by breaking the laws of habit and expressional clichés imposed on us by our social milieus, tending to behave like a starry wild child of a kind, thus eventually merely instills in us the awareness that the utmost freedom is exercised in perfect bonding to fellow beings in love and empathy, and *vice versa* - inexorable creative bursts of love from our heart, with which creatures around start to feel blessed and beatified, are possible so long as we incessantly travel towards farthest stars in our visionary thoughts, as the Way of Love is here to remind us.

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<sup>1075</sup> See Frank Kermode’s Poet and Dancer before Diaghilev (1961), In: What is Dance? Edited by Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen, Oxford University Press, New York, NY (1983), pp. 159.

<sup>1076</sup> See Roger Copeland’s Merce Cunningham and the Politics of Perception (1979), In: What is Dance? Edited by Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen, Oxford University Press, New York, NY (1983), pp. 317.

<sup>1077</sup> See Thomas Hanna’s Somatics, Perseus Books, Cambridge, MA (1988).

<sup>1078</sup> See Selvarajan Yesudian and Elisabeth Haich's Yoga and Sport, Saznanja, Belgrade, Serbia (1949).

<sup>1079</sup> See Roger Copeland’s Merce Cunningham and the Politics of Perception (1979), In: What is Dance? Edited by Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen, Oxford University Press, New York, NY (1983), pp. 317.

<sup>1080</sup> Watch Wim Wenders’ Der Himmel über Berlin (1987).

Moreover, nothing other but kindhearted openness to criticism offered by others, as in accordance with the Christ's advice, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44), can release our spirit from the burdens of ego and soar us high, into the realms of mind and being where angels reign. Friedrich Nietzsche's superego in the form of the Persian sage, Zarathustra, went a step further in this sense when he argued the following: "If you should have an enemy, then do not requite him evil with good, for that would shame him. Instead prove that he has done you some good"<sup>1081</sup>. After all, only when we have our hearts open for each and every one, irrespective of how hateful and scornful they may be with respect to our being, and accept everyone's advice as a lifesaving sign on our roads can we expect to touch the clouds of sublime consciousness. Only when we begin to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15) and become heavenly pure children at heart, able to sympathize with every creature and detail of the world, without judging anyone, knowing that the dialectical evolution is embedded in the very heart of reality and that the forces of goodness and light are therefore needed as much the Mephistophelian ones that crave to deliver evilness, but in the end only manage to reinforce and rejuvenate their divine opposites<sup>1082</sup>, we will know that our feet have touched the road to enlightenment. In that sense, love for all is what sets our mind onto a transcendental, elevated plane with respect to that upon which the ordinary battles of life are being fought, enabling us to engage in them in an egoless manner, while enlighteningly seeing them as a childish game only, a playful necessity for the blue planet on which we stand to evolve into ever more beautiful emanations of the divine being.

This is all to say that too much of friendship can turn into being an enemy for another in the sense of blocking each other's chances for improvement, as much as too much of animosity can lead thereto. The traps of sheer conformism tending to suffocate the inner drives that push us in the direction of unique and individualistic flights of creativity, of delivering the one and only voice divine that our soul secretly cherishes are thus as dangerous as those of self-centered and autistic mistrust of another and confinement into a solipsistic bubble from which we could never break away because of never building enough love and empathy in us, which are the only forces able to break through its seemingly impermeable barrier. The ethics of finding ourselves along middle ways, saying temporary goodbyes, waving joyously with the white flags of our heart and swiftly changing perspectives whenever we find ourselves spending too much time looking at a creature or detail of the world from only one angle, knowing that temporary estrangement is necessary to keep the trees of empathy fresh and luscious in our hearts, or quietly and patiently gazing into the starry wells of the eyes of another and leaning our ears onto the homes of their hearts whenever our adventurous quests scatter our attention and interests extensively, thus emerges like a greatest monument to inspiring being descending on us from the Heavens. After all, if the blend of Dalmatian genes, which engrain the lightness of the sea and the spirit of travelers, adventurers and sailors of my ancestors on my Mother's side, and of Montenegrin genes, from which the spirit of rock hardness, of heavyheartedness, of stony stability and gritty willpower of my ancestors on my Father's side has sprung into life, has endowed me with something, these are for sure the drives to incessantly switch perspectives, to always be on the road, instilling a systemic curiosity and interdisciplinary inclinations in me, and yet to patiently and perseveringly gaze at the wonders of the world for hours, knowing that "small is beautiful"

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<sup>1081</sup> See Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, translated by Adrian Del Caro, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK (1883), pp. 50.

<sup>1082</sup> See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*, W. W. Norton & Co., New York, NY (1832).

and “love is staying”, as Fritz Schumacher and Erich Fromm would have reminded us, respectively. This is exactly why the Way of Love celebrates the balance between approaching another and moving away, knowing that too much of self-centered desolateness and meditative withdrawnness may alienate us from others and pose barriers on our ability to bless the world with the treasures of our spirit carefully forged from the inside, whereas too much of intimacy with others may deprive us of the ability to sanely dwell inside of our own mind and heart and sort out our impressions for the sake of enriching our inner world and eventually blessing others with its shine.

To celebrate these dialectical clashes of antipodes that light up the lampions of Love and Wonder in the starry space of our mind once more, I am finishing this section with a simple image of the Caribbean Sea, captured off the shore of Catalina Island, on top of the one of a pebbly Montenegrin beach at which roads that led to the fulfillment of the dreams of becoming a graceful wonderer with eyes gazing at stardust falling on us from above and a sailor of love, anchoring one’s heart ever deeper into earthlings’ eyes, finding ever starrier and more monumental beauties therein, a newborn and a timeless sage at the same time, a descendant of Atlantis, devotedly holding one hand on the dusty pillars of the ancient values and messages that abound everywhere around us, and a child born from the stars, out of this world, joyfully waving at the stellar umbrella of the Universe that holds us all in its arms and lulls us with its mysterious, celestial music with the other hand, were sparked in my mind. Looking at these tropical waters, I recalled once and for all that what makes the sea beautiful is the vivacity of the wavy dance of its surface, on which sunrays joyously leap, while it remains peaceful, composed and serene at all times. Earlier, we touched the grounds of the insight that emotional opposites blended in a song yield enlightening paradoxes that have an aesthetically pleasing effect on the listener, and were soared to the stars thereby. The question I keep on asking is how we attain the ideal of perfect stillness and placidity while simultaneously exhibiting a dance as enchanting and captivating as that of a calm and yet infinitely lively sea. How do we produce one such blend of depth, breadth, constancy and stability on one side and glistening vivacity on the other, which makes those with the blood of sailors flowing in their veins, such as myself, able to watch it ceaselessly, for hours at a time, without ever getting even a bit bored? And the answer revealed to my mind is always the same: the Way of Love. As we enter its divine realm, as our feet land on its sublime grounds, we realize that we ought to incarnate one such silence of the still sea in us if we are to produce enlightening expressions that would also open our eyes to the divine messages and angelic voices that are interwoven within each detail of the fabric of reality. As these eyes to the divine beauties of the world miraculously open, we could easily see that they begin to illuminate all things around us with the rays of an utmost empathy conceivable to a human being; it is this love for all and a sense of intimate oneness with everything and everyone that it produces that opens the meditative ways inside, into enkindling an ever greater glow of our divine self. Hence, this image of the sea invites to jump into the ocean of love that is everywhere around, as hopes are that it will guide us on its waves in the right directions. At the same time, it will slowly refill the sea of empathy that crashes along the coasts of our mind and as this love for Nature becomes ever greater, so will the guiding lights of Nature shed on us from all angles be ever brighter and glossier, deepening our love even more, as we find ourselves spun in the magical circle of the Way of Love, journeying towards becoming a spiritual superstar on the face of the Earth. After all, as the legendary R. E. M.’s song, *Nightswimming*, reminds us, it is by plunging ourselves in the sea by night, lying flat with our ears covered by the waves of its serene silence, that the stars are most brightly and strikingly visible. Jump freely into this sea, therefore, and all will turn into

a smile. It will be an epitome of an end placed exactly in the midst of this book as an opening to a new way of beautiful being, of being rather than preaching about being, pointing at which this entire book serves the purpose of. The photograph “on the dashboard”<sup>1083</sup> that I have attached to this page may also stand forth as a symbol of the sea of divinity that Nature is, the sea that invites us to leap into it, freely and faithfully, for, as we see, with love for it and its love for us we will be spun within a circle whereby our eyes will open to a new reality, whereby Nature will unfasten the shutters of all of her windows and let us see Noah’s rainbows that adorn the reality beyond the Plato’s cave on whose walls we spend time glancing at mere shadows of the real, spiritual figures dancing through space and eventually become one such dancing emanation of pure divinity. For, these two, heavenly seeing and heavenly being, have always had their hands clasped together, like two Orion constellations placed side by side. Then, the prophecy that tells us that a thing more beautiful than watching a sea is watching a creature whom we love, the marble, long-necked and ethereally statuesque son of Atlantis, watching the sea spread in front of both of us in all its beauties would become crystal clear, like the waters of the Adriatic.



Realization of the impossibility of coming up with perfectly stable definitions and quality assessments, which would be accepted unanimously by all, stands at the beginning of our road to sacred being in this world. This is why Lao-Tzu began his timelessly relevant manual on sacred living, Tao-Te-Xing, with the observation that “a way that can be named is not the sacred Way, Tao”, suggesting that the first step towards the attainment of saintliness belongs to the recognition of the inability of words to describe the path leading to it. As expected, this fundamental insight coincides with our starting to more profoundly use silence in words and becoming more sensitive to nonverbal vibrations of feeling and thought that pervade Nature as a whole and billions of sprouts of stellar souls sown all over this planet. This realization can hit us suddenly when we come face to face with qualities of any systems we might have in mind as dependable on the contexts of their existence, rather than on the systems’ contents *per se*. In one direction, these contexts extend to the most distant stars and galaxies and time zones, while on another side they reach out to the dustiest cedar boxes of memories hidden in the cellars of human hearts. Let me give you a following example as an illustration of this point.

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<sup>1083</sup> Listen to R.E.M.’s *Nightswimming on Automatic for the People*, Warner Bros (1992).

Imagine that I have just plucked a red, glossy **apple** from a tree and bit into it. Now, some of you will be prompted to spin the feeling of biting into a soft, fresh, crispy apple on a warm summer day in your heads. Needless to add, this vision instigated by my words would be different for each one of us because the memories that would be used to craft these visions are always unique, one and only in the Universe forever and ever, for each one of us. Others might, however, think of an apple in a metaphorical manner, quite possibly bringing to mind the apple plucked from the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden, which was to give humans the power to discern good from evil and essentially gain insight into how good truly things in the world around them are. If you remember, Eve's picking of that fruit led to her and Adam's exile from Paradise and into the world in which hardships and suffering awaited them. In the 2010 movie *True Grit* directed by the Coen brothers, as our heroine, who had wanted to revenge his Father, finally delivers her judgment shot, its powerfulness pushes her in the opposite direction and sends her into a dark cave in which she gets beaten by a snake, the one that tempted Eve to taste the fruit off the tree of knowledge, and thus becomes a victim of her own judgmental and vengeful intentions, fulfilling the Christ's prophecy along the way: "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1). Unlike this heroine, my Father, whose own Father had been sentenced to death by the Yugoslav communists near the end of World War II, never nurtured any vengeful feelings or hatred for those who committed the crime against his Father's chaste priesthood. Instead, he fully forgave them, showing me too the sacred way of being, which is all about shoving away the dark clouds of our latent judgmental nature with the winds of forgiveness and instilling pure sunshine of love for all and everyone on the skies of our mind.

What the Biblical story about the exile from the Garden of Eden secretly wants to tell us is that too much knowledge is linked with much sadness, which is why love instead of judging is oftentimes advised as a key to fulfilled being by the sages. Remotely sensing the seeds of misery sown all over the soils of knowledgeable minds and the power of the mop of all-forgiving love that could polish the soiled mirror of the human spirit and enable it to reflect the divine light present everywhere and redirect it to the hearts of people surrounding us, Lord Byron thus claimed through his character of Manfred that "Grief should be the Instructor of the wise; Sorrow is knowledge: they who know the most must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth - the Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life"<sup>1084</sup>. Likewise, "what is beautiful I do not know"<sup>1085</sup>, Albrecht Dürer wrote as an accompaniment to his engraving with a bat holding a banner that says *Melencolia I*, portraying a melancholic muse in the midst of a space abounding with knowledge, lost to a similar extent as Goethe's doctor Faust during the period of his searching for happiness and fulfillment in knowledge and knowledge only. This is also why Lao-Tzu celebrated in his verses the sage who "teaches without words and lets all things emanate, whilst not rejecting anything" (*Tao-Te-Xing II*), who "does not debate, for those who debate are not good men" (*Tao-Te-Xing LXXXI*), uprooting the tendencies to indulge in discerning good from evil and consequently exhibit judgments of any kind, instilling an enlightened frame of mind within the genuine followers of his teaching. Quite in agreement with Lao-Tzu's ancient teaching, a recent study has shown that about a half of the time humans spend awake they aimlessly wander in their thoughts and this wandering makes them essentially unhappy,

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<sup>1084</sup> See Lord Byron's *Manfred*, Act I, Scene I, Lines 9 – 12 (1817), retrieved from <http://l-adam-mekler.com/manfred.pdf>.

<sup>1085</sup> See the Wikipedia article on Albrecht Dürer's *Melencolia I* retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melencolia\\_I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melencolia_I) (2019).

according to the results of the study<sup>1086</sup>. On the other hand, of course, had there been no drives to reflect on things that do not present immediate objects of our actions, we would have slowly returned to a stage in the evolution of consciousness that is nowadays occupied by apes and less cerebral animals. For, this inner drive to get lost and wander off in our thoughts, away from what is right here, right now, can be said to present a force that has spun the wheels of evolution of our thought and being ever since. The merits of being lost and found should thus never be underestimated since this phenomenon of adventurously going astray from the narrow path, though only to return to it and then wander off again, and so on and on, lies at the core of the evolution of our spirits. The same implicit call for one to alternately wander away and restore faith in the road being travelled on can be seen interwoven within the metaphor of the Way from which the entire microcosm of my philosophy and every word that you read here have sprung to life. In the spirit of the discourse style adopted by genuine systemic thinkers of this world, thoughts inscribed in this and other books of mine have also shown a tendency to wander off a central thread every once in a while, although most of the time faithfully returning to it. Such an approach to discourse whereby chaos and clarity are blended in equal measures, as in every healthily developing natural system, is necessary in order to retain loyalty to the act of wandering, being on the road, as one of the founding bricks of the tower of ideas built among these lines with the dream of having them touch the sky one day. For, as the line of starry thoughts that has occupied the central place in the philosophical system I have propounded, resembling a milky way of a kind, has been the concept of the Way of Love, arising straight from the symbolism of the way, the need to be constantly on the road has had to be epitomized in each and every aspect of the explication of this philosophy.

Being imperfect and looking away from the things that we face in our vicinity thus once again proves as a vital way of improving our knowledge and skills in handling thereof, as the blind spot effect and the Way of Love with its incessant urging us to be meditatively withdrawn and distant as much as empathically intimate with the creatures of the world, to move back and forth with respect to beings and objects that we would like to retain an undyingly lively communication with, to be lost to be found, to embody the symbol of the way in our mindset and approach to acting, with its simultaneous separateness and connectedness, in order to transform ourselves into a constant deliverer of spurs of Love to the world, have been telling us. Moreover, if this reflective straying away of our awareness indeed presents abysses from which common minds fall from grace and into wetlands of filthy and miserable thoughts, in which dangerous karmic crocodiles await them, then it is the task for only the bravest ones to jump from these cliffs and embark on a great adventure of the human mind, at the end of which they will find wonderful treasures of thought and yet never forget to bring them back to the daylight of humanity with inscribing them onto some stones, papers and screens of the world, for all to realize their beauty. Such masterful adventurers may then be crowned by the spirit divine as genuine and godly philosophers of this world.

Be that as it may, as we have taken a bite of an apple and chewed it for a few seconds or so, we have drifted into a totally unique range of thoughts, fancily glimpsing an angelic crown placed on our head before this very sentence interrupted us. Another person with a different history of thinking would undoubtedly end up constructing quite a different train of thoughts in which individual insights, somewhat akin to train cars, are linked to each other by logical and metaphorical threads. Hereafter, you could see that whatever stands inscribed in words would be

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<sup>1086</sup> See “Study Finds the Mind Is a Frequent, But Not Happy, Wanderer” by Steve Bradt, available at [http://www.eurekaalert.org/pub\\_releases/2010-11/hu-sft110210.php](http://www.eurekaalert.org/pub_releases/2010-11/hu-sft110210.php) (2010).

reconstructed by the interpreter of these words, which is the process beyond the control of the creator of the text. This is how semioticians arrived at the foundational principle behind the heuristics of language: *aliquid stat pro aliquot*, that is, “something stands for something else”, wishing to tell us that not only is any object labeled as “something” always something greater and beyond the given “something”, but what is represented as “something” in our own personal universe of thought also always stands for “something else” in the epistemic microcosm of another and in the ontological macrocosm of reality hidden behind the veil of our senses. For this reason, Hans-Georg Gadamer imagined the communication process as the one where two horizons, one opened by the creator of the linguistic message and the other one drawn by the interpreter, meet<sup>1087</sup>. Analysts of the semantics of theatre as an art form, Anthony Frost and Ralph Yarrow similarly spoke of the act of co-creation of meanings in interaction between the performer and the audience, noticing how “when we mean, we bleed: across our boundaries, out of our skins, into each other”<sup>1088</sup>. The modern trends of open-source algorithms, “costumer co-creative” merging of users and designers, reaching solutions through dialogue as opposed to autocratic decisions all stand forth as extensions of this notion of co-creativity of it all, which we have arrived at using common sense, a.k.a. systemic reasoning, and a little zest of philosophical insight. Hence, whatever we say will be helplessly reconstructed by others, and yet, as you will soon find out, this would be the reason for despair only if we live this life from a very limited perspective, typically trying to inculcate into other people’s heads whatever we may think is best for them, which, as my following discourse on an apple will show, we can never know. For, in order not to be expelled from the metaphorical Garden of Eden, we should truly stick to the powerful message of the Christ: “I came not to judge the world but to save the world” (John 12:47). The moment we begin to judge others and form perfectly certain conclusions, we, in fact, make a full circle and emerge on the other side: the side of perfect ignorance. This also explains why a blend of ignorance, of the freedom to proudly say the magic phrase “I don’t know” on one side, as kindly and gleefully as pronounced by Latika in *Slumdog Millionaire*, and of knowledge and factuality on the other can be said to be the one that drives the wheels of science rather than a sense of perfect certainty, which, in fact, epitomizes a true lack of knowledge.

In that sense, we should also be reminded that the most enchanting notes, messages and expressions always blend mystery and clarity in its pointing at the way that leads to hidden treasure rather than handing a processed and digested answer straight to one. Insisting on 100 % clarity in our expressions leads to unexciting and uninspiring presentations of our knowledge, and I have oftentimes accused this principle for depriving the nowadays accepted writing style in modern English of innumerable subtle charms. On the other hand, merely trying to confuse with chaotic, tangled or looped thoughts presents another, passive-aggressive extreme which should be equally avoided. With all my heart, therefore, I hail expressions which entwine transparency and obscurity, such as the recent Facebook post by Nathan Parish, in which he said, “I forget this except when I’m traveling, but my secret superpower is being invisible to faucet motion sensors. How exactly this will enable me to save the world I haven’t worked out yet”; this I immediately flagged up as an “authentic SF post”. Not that I am a devoted Facebook user or an avid fan, as it were, and there is a whole cosmos of little reasons I could refer to for my dislike of it as a communicational channel of the modern day. The breadth of communicational opportunities offered by its means aside, reducing an infinite spectrum of emanations of human being down to

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<sup>1087</sup> See Hans-Georg Gadamer’s *Truth and Method*, Continuum, New York, NY (1997).

<sup>1088</sup> See Anthony Frost’s and Ralph Yarrow’s *Improvisation in Drama*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY (2007), pp. 217.

an array of photographs, textual assertions and links to web pages is not doing a favor to the unbound richness of subtle gestural dancing of our bodies that inescapably entails expressions of our starriness on Earth. “I think we’re all talking *at* one another, not *with* one another”, says a cartooned user of this or a similar type of social network despondently, before adding that “we’re now advertising ourselves, trying to shine up and sell our pitiful little lives – all this is just more buying and selling”<sup>1089</sup>, hinting at these reduced gestural features, this lack of direct, eye-to-eye communication as a key to the pervasive alienation that the ever increasing online connectedness bears in the world, as paradoxically as it can be, creating a giant hole in each human soul, a hole that self-promotion and prostitution in this era where investments in marketing have exceeded the investments in innovation even in the most creative of industries attempt to fill, albeit in vain. In that sense, I share the belief of a Serbian clinical psychologist, Branka Kordić that Facebook may contribute to the rise of “generations of people who will not know how to read some social cues in communication; they may not know if someone feels like crying, if someone is sad”<sup>1090</sup>. This growing trend in the reduction of a myriad of vital elements of human expression down to sheer text will over time surely have dramatic consequences on the inner illumination of our souls, as the extents to which travel down the roads of self-satisfaction and of empathic expressiveness in the fullness of our being, as the Way of Love predicates, are directly proportionate to one another. Alongside pervasive misinterpretations arising from substitution of the intonation of the voice and body language cues with the inaptly imagined or anticipated, a global trend towards the acquired autistic inability to empathize with fellow humans may ensue from the use of this and similar, almost strictly textual communication platforms, carrying disastrous consequence for the happiness of human creatures by turning its sunshine lusciousness to an arid desert or a vacuous interstellar ride. We already live in a world that is, more or less, illiterate in body language and blind to the infinitely rich semantics of the way each one of us dances one’s way through space, as, for example, lyrics, notes, rhythm and sound colors of a popular rap tune may be decomposed in search of their meanings, but not so readily will we witness an explication of what was told by the rapper with his dancing moves<sup>1091</sup>, such as pelvic grinds, bows and frowns, the swagger walk, gun-drawing moves of the arm, dramatic isolations of parts of the body and other, usually anger- and prisonlike alienation-speaking motifs. However, the rise in the popularity of Twitter, Facebook, Google+ and other social networking platforms that reduce the full range of human expressions down to words and words only will only increase our sense of discomfort in using anything but textual communicational channels and will certainly not be capable of ameliorating this already unfavorable trend of neglecting the most important aspects of the expressions of our emotional beings. Also, one thing is to firmly believe in the merits of transparency of information, from WikiLeaks to the diary nature of the words I write hereby, while a completely different thing is to be justly concerned by false impressions left by these poor portrayals of the essence of human being. Reducing the infinite richness and variety of states that define human being in its living form in real space and time down to a single photograph and a pile of textual remarks, craving to be pathetically decorated with punctuative emoticons to have their flatness elevated, cannot but not lead to shoaling of

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<sup>1089</sup> See Michael Cho’s *Shoplifter*, Pantheon Books, New York, NY (2014).

<sup>1090</sup> See Loša strana društvenih mreža, B92 (March 31, 2013), available at [http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2013&mm=03&dd=31&nav\\_category=12&nav\\_id=700429](http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2013&mm=03&dd=31&nav_category=12&nav_id=700429).

<sup>1091</sup> See Jane C. Desmond’s *Embodying Difference: Issues in Dance and Cultural Studies*, In: *Everynight Life: Culture and Dance in Latin/o America*, edited by Celeste Fraser Delgado and José Esteban Muñoz, Duke University Press, Durham, NC (1997), pp. 35.

relationships and friendships and, then, after the conditions for exhibiting empathy have vanished, to the epidemics of unashamedly vulgar self-promotional attitudes that take the heart and soul from the supposedly benevolent social enterprise we call humanity. Another immediate demerit of these impoverished contemporary communicational conditions comes from the fact that with its lastingly engraved, let alone false, impressions that vaguely indicate who one is, a shiny spirit Xeroxed to the point of fading away, Facebook makes it incredibly hard to ruin and then rebuild one's personality from scratch, that is, to erase all that one has been before after a luminously introspective moment of staring at the ceiling on a night filled with stars, release a big fat outcry "that's not me"<sup>1092</sup>, flip the page and start all over again, an act that seemed perfectly plausible in its absence only a decade ago. "I am who you think I am: that is who I am"<sup>1093</sup> is the rather constructivist response David Bowie gave when someone asked him who he was and the question it naturally instigates is the following: how do we create a personality that goes beyond the superficial image of ourselves available to others via these online networking sites using but scanty and spurious snapshots of the ineffable infinitude that life and each soul endowed with it are? What's even more important, how can we evolve our personality into something ethereal and sublime that goes beyond any verbal or pictorial descriptions thereof if we, ourselves, are bluntly attached to a very earthly and lackluster image of ourselves - a collage of photographs, a fistful of words to accompany them and an occasional video clip or a link to a song, all of which are pieces of imitation of life, not life at its best and most glorious. "Neither is what you see as me I nor is what I see as you You and so farewell to y'all from this platform, I am off to the sea" was thus, I remember, a part of the goodbye note I, having gotten weary of communicating with mere shadows of real life, planned on posting on Facebook before exiting it for good. However, the main systemic reason I quote for my rare indulging in communications on this virtual platform is that as the Universe streams towards new horizons with every new second of its existence, contexts that hang over all physical systems and co-define their qualities change. As these contextual skies gracefully looming over our heads constantly travel and adopt new appearances, every question anyone in the world poses always requires a new, unrepeatable answer as a perfectly illuminating response to it. For this reason, the most masterful orators and sages never prepare what they aim to say to others in advance but let their spirits go with the flow and keep the prophetic eye of their mind widely open for the absorption of a magical energy of the moment. They, as it seems to me, have understood that the other side of the coin of uniqueness of every mortal is the constant questioning of what it is that only one and one only in the whole Universe could do, seeking this expressional uniqueness with all one's heart and, thus, becoming a source of impulses that mysteriously beautify the Creation and inspire it to grow toward ever brighter and more splendid emanations of divinity. And as we see, the starting point of such endeavors lies in the realization that not only is each one of us a constantly changing form of life, always a different Thou as the Cosmos evolves, but since all of us are unique in our essence, special responses are to be given to hypothetically identical questions multiple creatures may ask us. A folklore story tells of a preacher who came to give a sermon for a hundred people in a church, found only one seat in it occupied and nevertheless proceeded to give the talk that he had planned to give. Although he hoped to produce a hundred times more illuminative effect on the listener, the latter stood up at the very end of it and said, "Father, I am a simple man, a shepherd, but when I have to feed a single sheep, I don't give her the food for a hundred of them". The morale of the story is, of course, that each one of us rests on a different height of the

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<sup>1092</sup> Listen to the Beach Boys' That's Not Me on Pet Sounds, Capitol (1966).

<sup>1093</sup> Watch the documentary movie David Bowie: Five Years, directed by Francis Whately (2013).

ladder that connects the Earth with stars, having a unique view of the world and speaking a distinct language of the heart, one and only in the history of all cosmoses combined, and requires a special incentive to be pushed to make a step to the next crossbar. It is for this reason that Jalāl ad-Dīn Rumi almost cryptically claimed that “the fakir is obliged to invent a lie as an answer to be in harmony with the asker’s capacity and ability; although everything a fakir says is truth and not a lie, still, in relation to what the true answer is for the fakir himself, the answer is a lie, however right – and even more right – it may be for the one who hears it”<sup>1094</sup>. Miscomprehending that our lessons need to speak the language of another and not be disguised in the clothes of self-absorbed pretense and a despotic belief that all should be like us and us only in order to be truly fruitful has comprised the central mistake of the elitist intellectualism of the present and past. Like the wiseacre who consistently picks 1 in the game wherein contestants are asked to choose an integer between 1 and 100 and told that whoever’s is closest to two-thirds of the average will win the grand prize and then wonders why he’s been losing all the time, failing to realize that the common man does not think too many steps ahead<sup>1095</sup>, so may we remain broke and totally disvalued in the eyes of the Heavens despite all the gifts that they endowed us with if we keep on neglecting the need to adjust our enlightening messages to the simple language of the masses in order to convey them properly thereto. The first step in avoiding falling into the traps created by this fundamental error committed in communicating our knowledge to others and become a spontaneous deliverer of those transcendental expressions that are able to magically touch the surrounding souls is to acknowledge the operation of equality and the sore spirit of sameness that it evokes as a biggest blunder in the sphere of human reasoning. In that sense, I may once more join Alfred Korzybski, the coiner of the famous phrase “map is not the territory and name is not the thing named”, in his lucid claims that equality equals insanity and that reliance on the verb “be” and the sense of equality that it emphasizes, as in “I am”, “they are”, “that is”, etc., must promote none but mental anguish<sup>1096</sup> due to its fundamental erroneousness in reality wherein no two real-life entities are truly equal to each other and wherein linguistic descriptions and the objects described belong to two completely different ontological sets between whose members only the operation of correspondence, but not equality, makes logical sense to be applied. Although we live in the times wherein most have been accustomed to see those who express themselves independently of the setting, who “dance as if no one is watching”, so to speak, and who use unchanged wordings before a variety of receptive souls, as adorably true to themselves – hence the erroneous semantic equivalence between unaffectedness and genuineness in our vocabularies - and those who tell different stories to different people and under different skies as shifty, fake, dishonest, weak or submissive, we must learn how to infuse the core of our being wherefrom the rays of momenta leading to verbal and gestural expressions on the bodily surface radiate with improvisatory intuitiveness, a task that

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<sup>1094</sup> See *Signs of the Unseen: the Discourses of Jalaluddin Rumi*, Introduction and Translation by W. M. Thackston, Jr., Shambhala, Boston, MA (1994), pp. 126.

<sup>1095</sup> The online competition that included close to 20,000 contestants resulted in 22 being the winning number, exactly two-thirds of the two-thirds of the average, demonstrating that the great majority of people do not think even a single step ahead, as they have picked 33, that is, two-thirds of the most probable average, 50. Some may add that this demonstrates that it pays off to be dumb and explains why overly intelligent people, let alone geni, usually live in poverty. See also Colin Camerer’s *Neuroscience, Game Theory, Monkeys*, TED Talk (January 2013), available at [http://www.ted.com/talks/colin\\_camerer\\_neuroscience\\_game\\_theory\\_monkeys.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/colin_camerer_neuroscience_game_theory_monkeys.html).

<sup>1096</sup> See Leo Widrich’s *The Psychology of Language: Why are Some Words More Persuasive than Others?* Life Hacker (April 2, 2013), available at <http://lifehacker.com/5993267/the-psychology-of-language-why-are-some-words-more-persuasive-than-others>.

may seem daunting, but is, in fact, a true blessing since striving with all our heart to accomplish it will not lock us into robotic repetition of prefixed ideas and thus suck up all the liveliness from our spirit, but rather place us on a path of incessant self-rejuvenation and self-renewal whereon a new I will be born with every blink of our glistening eyes and whereon our journeys to the pearly divineness hanging from the celestial ceiling above our heads, like the unending ride of the sailboat of your attention along the waves and troughs of this sentence, could continue unremittingly. Succeeding in this assignment will be hard, of course, since we will have to act from within a milieu composed of the ordinary minds who are drawn to the illusion of constancy of forms and qualities, singing “never mind, I’ll find someone like you”<sup>1097</sup> along with Adele and “I could have another you in a minute”<sup>1098</sup> along with Beyoncé and surprisingly neglecting that each one of us is a universe in itself, unrepeatable and inimitable in each second of the colorful cosmic ride that life is. All this commoners’ obsession with disposability, replaceability and replicability notwithstanding, Victoria Legrand’s cry, “Like no other, you can’t be replaced”<sup>1099</sup> is million times truer to the holiness residing in us, the holiness that children, naturally, are in a far more intimate touch with than the grownups. Observing, for example, a two-year old being swung in the park by her grandma, asking the lofty old lady if she could move to the adjacent swing and receiving a discouraging “No, they are the same” as the response, I was prompted to first recall Theo’s frustrations upon being forced to learn that each piece of a puzzle, which he thought must fit an infinity of places, has only one place on the board to fit in and then to reminisce with sadness about the necessity for the little ones of this world to embrace the notion that two things that may seem vastly different in their eyes are, in fact, identical, even though they, strictly speaking, never are, and all that in order to become smoothly incorporated in the lifeless streams of social life. Over time, this operation of equality, when performed a sufficiently large number of times, shapes desensitized selves, to whom all appears the same regardless of the response they envisage and nothing makes a difference anymore. Even worse, to pull themselves from this cognitive mud, they often make a life out of an effort to be different, an effort that is only marginally related to our spiritual growth as the purpose of our time spent on Earth. All this time, however, the true way out, as ever, has lain in the restoration of the perception of a child before whom no two objects are ever the same, the perception that is being constantly challenged by the attempts of the grownups around them to make them regress from this primordial and in many aspects paradisiacal view of the world that they naturally hold and become yet another dull bearer of a narrow mental machinery wherein logic means all and sublime emotions, free exhibitions of tempestuous temper and divine intuitiveness mistakenly mean none. In *Big*, the 1980s classic about a boy who has a genie from a pinball machine grant him a wish to become a thirty-five year old adult, the now grownup boy first enchants everyone with the honest exhibitions of his sweet childishness, naturalness and unrestrained wonder. Later, however, he realizes that he is being symptomatically hated by the real grownups around him, all of whom drown in the three Dante’s vices - lust, avarice and gluttony - that besieged the poet at the very same age of thirty-five like ominous shadows in the dark forest of his mind<sup>1100</sup>. The punchline of the movie comes after one of these arrogant busters literally punches the boy out of

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<sup>1097</sup> Listen to Adele’s *Someone Like You* on 21, XL (2011).

<sup>1098</sup> Beyoncé Knowles’ song is ironically named *Irreplaceable* and could be found on her record *B’Day*, Columbia Records (2006).

<sup>1099</sup> Listen to Beach House’s *Lazuli* on Bloom, Sub Pop (2011).

<sup>1100</sup> See Dante Alighieri’s *Divine Comedy, Inferno: Canto I* (1321), retrieved from <http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/dante/dante-longfellow.pdf>.

sheer jealousy and loses his girlfriend over this act, who then delivers it straight to his puffed face still contorted from articulating the question “What’s so special about him”: “He’s a grownup”. This classic line is here to implicitly suggest the point I have been trying to make all my life, which is that grownups are to be striving to become like children instead of forcing the children to becoming mentally corrupt, wooden and hollow like them. For, only when we look up to children as if they were the most glorious skies we crave to ascend to and place their portraits as destinations at which all the trains of our thoughts, emotions and expressions are to converge will we be able to purify our spirits from the ill feelings that plague the soul of an average grownup and enter the Garden of Eden even before we pass through the pearly gates. With the last few sentences, our minds have been taken on a quick journey from tiny letters that sympathetically blinked on a computer screen to the greatest cosmic distances and back so as to conclude that writings on Facebook walls are unnatural; how to draw lines that would not dim some people’s spirit while enlightening others’ is a task which I have been clueless about for quite a while now. Writing in a circumlocutory, cryptic and mildly ironic style or in an overly naïve, simplistic and ordinary manner may thus be a way to satisfy the wisecrack and the clever cynic, that is, a large portion of the modern scholarly minds, and to irritate those inclined to natural and sympathetic childlikeness, that is, many who nourish a sense of spiritual sincerity in their hearts, or *vice versa*, respectively, and we should be sure that the same diametrically opposite interpretations await every textual comment that we intend on leaving imprinted on the virtual portals of the modern day. “My fave for 2010 is a record by a band that does not have a Wikipedia entry. Life is sweet. Knock, knock”, I wrote on my Facebook wall one day, wanting to point out my glee in view of the fact that I have gone beyond the trendy and populist mainstream path and reached still unrecognized territories of beautiful expression, feeling as if footsteps away from Heaven’s door in my fancy, on which I could then happily knock, and yet I have known that some would surely see it as a cocoon of craziness and pathological non-conformism that tends to clash with any authority posed before one nested in my mind. For the very same reason, my tendency to exhibit sheer muteness in verbal communication increases in direct proportion with the number of its participants. Hence, I can be quite talkative and expressive when communicating directly to one or two persons because then I feel as if my expressions are being spontaneously shaped to guide their recipients towards destinations of some stellar insight. However, the sense of impossibility of finding words that would be crafted in the twinkling of an eye to bring light to one person while not leaving someone else enshrouded in clouds of misunderstanding tends to dawn on me whenever I become surrounded by too many people, and in those cases I typically plunge into quiet speechlessness. For, I have learned that whatever the form human expressions take, oral, textual or gestural, the potential to reverse the intentions dwelling within the psychological core of their creators into their diametrical opposites will always exist, no matter what. In the context of Facebook, for example, if I reveal that I have never erased a friend off my Facebook list, person A might see this as I sign of my being a very loyal person who may be always out there for a friend, counted on as a helping hand even to those who fail to act as good friends at times. In contrast, person B may see such comment of mine as an indicator of an inherent carelessness of myself with respect to friends around me; for, if I do not differ between friends and foes and treat everyone the same, it may really mean that I set myself too high in relationships with others, treating everyone like a speckle of spiritual dust situated far lower than the puffed-up clouds whereon the egotistic seat of my self resides. And so on – examples illustrating this infinitude of possible interpretations of any given expression we could think of are verily endless. On a communicational platform such

as Facebook, where lines are curt and crisp, beginning and ending in a phrase or two, these issues of misinterpretation get worse to the point of my being able to conclude that all a typical communicator does on it most of the time is communicate with, well, essentially, oneself. For, through such short flashes of communication, already limited in scope via its reduction to a sheer textual nature, as with daily exchanges of considerate and courteous words with neighbors in the street, nothing but the surface, that is, the mirror of one's own prejudices and expectations, can be glimpsed. This type of communication, where one is under the impression of communicating with another when all one does is communicate with oneself, merely reiterates the presumptions that one holds deep within oneself instead of cross-fertilizing them through dialogical discussions, thus leading to the rise of dangerous dogmatism and idolatry, antisocial in essence, contrasting the social purpose that Facebook originally had. The outcome is, of course, the distancing of the outcome away from the cause, as it is perhaps the case with all ideologies applied in reality. Now, repeatedly contemplating on this disparity between meanings intended to be conveyed by a person and meanings grasped by their judgmental recipients, particularly the unintended ones, I am being over and over again brought to the entrance of the legendary essay by Jorge Luis Borges, entitled *Borges and I*: "It is the other one, the one they call Borges, that things happen to". Using these words, the Argentine writer placed himself temporarily, for the sake of a narrative, into a third-person perspective and thus clearly demarcated our own experience of our experience from that experienced by external observers, as if attempting to show that whatever the real intentions behind one's words and actions are, they are regularly being misinterpreted not only by the external observers, but by the very subject as well, enshrouded by the deceptive veil of ego. If we were to think as a physicist, we would say that this unbridgeable disparity between the world we see and the world seen by others provides a difference in potentials of a kind, which sustains the current on which knowledge and the very life endlessly ride and develop along the way. Despite all of this, I have known that being misinterpreted is an unavoidable fate of all the progressive creatures that peer far beyond the horizons available to ordinary minds. Accepting the effects of our benevolent actions as such could have a liberating effect on our expressive creativeness by making us worry less about them and cease to timidly hide from view, in the dark corners, behind the curtains of the world's stage, and engaging us instead in charming, *che sera, sera* communicative dances whereby we never lose out of sight the fact that our acts are drawn on the walls of the world by the pencil of our heart and that an enlightened heart, no matter how secretive or loud it is, will always leave a trail of stardust of divine grace behind each act arising from its depths, be it an unnoticeable simple breath, a quietly impressed word in the sand or stunning summersaults and cartwheels displayed through space.

This brings me to the point that one of the most striking communication arenas where reshaping and remolding of thoughts offered in conversation take place by the interpreting side are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other communication channels in which information is sent in tiny packages, not exceeding the size of a haiku poem. Reducing expressions down to a few lines of text and their deliverer to a still picture, when we know that the body language dynamics is a true determinant of the extent of inspiration that our expressions invoke, is doing quite a disservice to the evolution of the richness of human communication, some may say. If the words truly mattered in human attempts to convey the most essential truths to one another, two of the greatest cinema masters, Charlie Chaplin and Yasujirô Ozu, would not have continued to make silent movies long after the first sound films were made. In contrast with the hordes of mediocre filmmakers who rushed to create the so-called talkies after seeing Bing Crosby in the Jazz

Singer, Chaplin and Ozu, the former of whom is still an unsurpassed master of pantomime and the latter of whom is said to have created movies from the perspective of still objects<sup>1101</sup> watching people and commenting in their infinitely beautiful language of subtle movements, colors and shades on their transient and pathetic lives, must have shared the belief that words do not add too much to the semantic richness of human expressions. Yet, as it usually happens, less aesthetic things become multiplied over time and come to compose the mainstream, while the most aesthetic ones tend to remain the underground forces heartily embraced only by the most authentic social dissenters and deserters. This is how we have arrived at the state of the world wherein words are crowned as the peaks of human expression, being yet another instance of the long history of human valuing surface far more than the essence. Thoughts on the modern communication platforms that include Facebook, Twitter, online forums, email messaging and smart phone texting, are thus conveyed in an extremely condensed and pure textual form while being stripped away from the color, intonation and rhythm of the voice and the rest of the body language, which have been shown earlier to account for 38 and 55 % of the meanings we ascribe to words in communication, respectively<sup>1102</sup>. In other words, music and dancing associated with words semantically outline the bulk of the counters with which they are handed to others, to be then reshaped into their final, interpreted form depending on the intentions, anticipations and the overall intellectual background and capabilities of the interpreter. According to the referred study, although it certainly is an overly precisely determined numerical difference, what we say in communication matters only 7 %, whereas how we say it matters the remaining 93 %, yielding a numerical difference that evidences how crucial and dominant the overall context in which we enwrap our words is. “The right words need not be well chosen words; well-chosen words need not be the right words” (Tao-Te-Xing LXXXI), is how Lao-Tzu’s masterwork correspondingly ends, reminding us that the most crucial steps in our spiritual ascents to stars are marked with our recognizing that proclamation of meaningful words in communication is not necessary for our participation in it to yield the fruits of faith, love and divine beauty in the hearts of surrounding creatures. Hermann Hesse’s *Demian* would have certainly agreed with Lao-Tzu’s depreciation of attitudes oriented strictly towards clear and concise speech and favoring of broken verbosity with a heart shining with love instead, as on one occasion he, himself, uttered the following: “We talk too much. A smart speech is worth nothing, really nothing. It only makes one distance from oneself. And to distance from oneself is a sin. One must know how to get fully into oneself, like a turtle”<sup>1103</sup>. Michael Ende’s landmark novel *Momo*<sup>1104</sup> thus tells us of a girl who was able to enlighten the world by means of mere listening, without uttering a single word, ringing yet another bell of the body language and reminding us of how subtly, sensibly and spontaneously offered grimaces, gestures and rays of love gleaming from our heart are just about enough of the communicational tools to allow us to beautify the face of the world for good. And when we develop the use of body language to convey our points, with means that could be imperceptibly subtle, we would be able to discard language as a tool of communication, just as Mies van der Rohe often did at the Illinois Institute of Technology, owing his instruction style to the ability to “teach by silence”<sup>1105</sup>, that is, bring his students to the

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<sup>1101</sup> See Yoshida Kiju’s *Ozu’s Anti-Cinema*, Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (1998), pp. 16.

<sup>1102</sup> See Albert Mehrabian’s *Nonverbal Communication*, Aldine Transaction, Piscataway, NJ (2007).

<sup>1103</sup> See Hermann Hesse’s *Demian*, Slovo Ljubve – Narodna Knjiga, Belgrade, Serbia (1919), pp. 64.

<sup>1104</sup> See Michael Ende’s *Momo*, Mono & Manjana, Belgrade, Serbia (1973).

<sup>1105</sup> Watch *Mies* directed by Michael Blackwood (2005).

doorstep of important ideas by simply gazing at their or other people's studies together and then walking away. Here, this phase transition from verbosity to silence always stems from the massively disappointing realization of multiplicity of meanings ascribable to every single linguistic phrase we utter, the reason for which anything we say should be supplemented with appropriate gestures in order for its meaning to be conveyed more or less veraciously. For example, in the already mentioned cinematic masterpiece, *Mulholland Drive*, minutes before she leaves the audition for a Hollywood movie to help a friend and engage herself in a real-life adventure, the main protagonist, Betty, re-acts in an improvisatory manner to an already played script, articulating identical words but with a wholly different body language, portraying two completely different personalities thereby and demonstrating how not what we say, but how we say it is what holds the greatest share in our ability to enlighten the world with our actions. Due to this immense effect of the body language on the impression communicators leave, people are often flown from one place to another to be met in person before important contracts are being made, so as to avoid potential misunderstandings that email communications in general bear. And even then, paradoxically, as we see, the interviewees are hired and contracts signed not for the things the interviewees and contractors said, but for the things left unsaid, that is, given out in nonverbal cues. Also, since the body language of another is always found in a broader context of our complete sensory surrounding, millions of subtle worldly details that chirp and radiate light around us often have a more decisive effect on shaping the impressions that we collect in verbal communications than words themselves. Not only that, therefore, people tend to feel more dominant if they literally occupy more elevated stances or if beacons of light are seen glowing behind their back, but they also tend to more prone to enter an argument with another person at a round table meeting if she is sitting across the table rather than right next to one, shoulder to shoulder. For, subtle environmental clues are sometimes sufficient to completely eclipse the meanings ascribed to words proclaimed in communication. At the same time, the subtle gesturing dance of our body, which is such that sometimes sheds apparent signs to fall into pools of other people's eyes and sometimes sends incredibly delicate messages while resembling the shimmering surface of the sea, profoundly placid and yet astonishingly lively at the same time, has a decisive influence on how the words exclaimed in communication will be grasped by the minds surrounding us. Hence, how we present our ideas and in what context is what mainly determines the effect our words will have and the impression they will leave in communication through language. Words stripped off the color of the voice, intonation, melody and one's complete body language, including its finest elements which we oftentimes unconsciously detect and take into account when judging the orators, are thus perfect grounds for miscommunication of meaning. For, when the interpreter has to fill these 93 % of information missing in the interpreted expression in order to breathe a sense of authenticity into it, it falls down to his presuppositions and prejudgments to decide whether good or malign intentions have lain underneath the interpreted words. Confined within the medium of mere textual symbols, we need to accept the fact that the interpreting side will inescapably breathe something of its own essential beliefs into comprehended words and grasp them in this quite personalized light, which may quite often be an antipode of that in which the author composed the words. On one hand, words imperfectly reflect the experiential reality which they relate to and as such always present notorious lies in the light of the whole, whereby on the other hand meanings that we intend to express with words are, as we see, furthermore distorted whenever we hand them to others. This brings us over to the fact that whatever we may express by means of language is a white lie both in the eyes of the Universe and in the eyes of fellow humans, which is why we have a dual

choice in front of ourselves: we could either sink into deep *maunam*, a silent, unearthly communication with the world, or we could freely wave flags of white lies in front of ourselves, while resting with the eye of our mind on the foundations of blissful intentions, aspirations and empathy that present what really matters at the end of the day and are what is poured out of the spiritual sea of our heart and into that of others, while mere words, trifling as they are, like paper planes of a kind, become scattered in the air.

Despite the enormous gap that interpreters of linguistic expressions containing mere textual symbols fill forthrightly, oftentimes drastically warping the meanings that their authors intended to convey, it is interesting to observe that internet forums wherein participants in communication are limited to using words and symbols only to get their points across quite often bear a significantly better representative sample of the public opinion or, I should better say, social consciousness than what one could collect during face-to-face encounters at parties and other social gatherings. The reason comes from the fact that people can afford hiding their identities behind the veil of internet, only one of remote communication channels in usage today, and let even the darkest, the most malevolent and offensive thoughts emerge on the surface, something which they would rarely dare to do during public meetings due to fears that that would damage their reputation. “No one here knows I’m a dog”, says a cloud of thought over a puppy sitting next to a computer screen and typing on the keyboard in a cartooned image in Bill Gates’ autobiography<sup>1106</sup>. Parents tend to be more tolerant of their baby’s crying when she is in a different room, let alone when being placed in a nursery many houses away, and, as we know from the infamous Milgram experiment, infliction of pain is proceeded with much easier when performed across an impermeable barrier that separates the inflictor from the inflicted, which brings us over to an anonymous thinker’s definition of war as something fought between those who know not each other, but under the command of those who know each other, and which altogether speaks in favor of physical separation as a promoter of the ills of irrational animosities and physical proximity as the most natural remedy for this ailment that corrodes the soul in a most inconspicuous of ways. This, of course, is only one of the reasons why interpersonal conflicts are nowadays much more prone to occur during distant, email correspondences rather than when people are allowed to communicate their messages using their whole bodies and in full presence. Including only music of words into verbal communication, as during phone calls, is already much less likely to produce a quarrel compared to emailing, certainly owing to more revelatory feeling that one has with respect to the essence of one’s being knowing that the music of words is being transmitted to the other side, implicitly proving that this music is more central to communication than the words picked for it. The greater the barrier posed between humans in their full expression capacities, including subtle eye palpitations capable of capturing the hearts of millions without a single word being said, be it the body of an automobile or the walls and valleys crossed by phone lines or internet cables, the lesser the potential for the sympathetic chemistry of understanding to click and induce bonding of the hearts, we are thence free to conclude. Still, over the past decade or so, our world has grown into the one wherein the assertion “we should talk” is seen more as a threat rather than an invitation to rejoice, with social spaces, from buses to hallways to classrooms, being filled with people who would rather communicate with faraway friends via written word using their phones and portable computers rather than open the flowers of their hearts to those who are in their immediate vicinity. This state of affairs is particularly unfortunate when we realize that it belongs to the fundamentally

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<sup>1106</sup> See Bill Gates’ *The Road Ahead*, Viking Press, New York, NY (1995).

passive-aggressive<sup>1107</sup> Western culture that is taking over the world and that promotes backstabbing via emails in a more positive light than direct confrontations of differing points of view, the latter of which is seeable in its eyes as the act of bullying rather than the moment of souls coming together to bridge the vacuous gap between them, so that all could be conciliated, harmonized and healed, a culture that, as such, naturally leads to ever deeper aggravations of any existing conflicts and unstoppable disaffection of human hearts from each other, of which the eternally distancing galaxies of the night sky are one out of millions of metaphors that abound around us. What these flawed current definitions of what constitutes a normal interpersonal contact, paradoxically assuming less to bear more, indicate as a core social problem is the extent to which we have coalesced with hypocritical and euphemistic ways of expressing ourselves and communicating with others, which are traits that, of course, exist on the basis of our selfish attachment to ego. And if the demise of My Space, the social networking platform whereon the opportunity for aliased communication exists, and the thriving of Facebook which instigates its users to use their real-life identities can indicate something, it is that ego and self-exaltation and not the urge to simply communicate, to conjoin hearts and confluence the rivers of our thoughts into great estuaries of common knowledge, are still the most powerful drives behind communication of the modern day, despite the fact that the most beautiful acts arise from selfless urges to communicate something on behalf of the soul of the universe and for the sole benefit of the recipients of the given communication. Tackling this problem of ill attachment to ego by assigning real-life identities to literally symbolic communicators, as on Facebook, merely conceals its symptoms instead of healing its core and comprises a completely inverse approach from tying masks around people's faces at carnivals, thus hiding their identities while letting every other facet of their body language hang about in an anonymous manner. Yet, as Niels Bohr noticed, "the opposite of a great truth is quite often yet another great truth"; quite possibly the same rule applies to lies in life. The steps to ameliorating these conditions that call for one's withdrawal into a secret and desolate room in order to be honest to the world, the act similar to renunciation from the world that many nuns, other dwellers of monasteries and spiritual loner wolves who realized that humanity could be loved so long as they stay away from it have undertaken, lead through gradual perceptual broadening of one's consciousness through empathy with all kinds of creatures and worldviews, all until our heart and mind begin to encompass it all. At this point, as we have ceased to be tied to the little limited set of traits of our persona and have become it all, we could afford acting in any of the infinite plethora of possible ways, without ever feeling guilty about that, knowing that the dialectical wheel of evolution will straighten it all out by using what we had to offer as bricks for building roads and towers in progressive streaming forward of humankind. Our ego and our inclinations to hypocrisies in daily communications thus disappear in parallel and all that is left are genuinely honest expressions of our being in harmony with the unlimitedly versatile spirit of the divine implanted inside of our heart. Able to identify and sympathize with it all, it lets our starry spirit, carefree and dancing through space, be unattached to anything, having home amongst stars, and yet throw anchors of empathic congeniality all over the social space, shedding divine signs in words, music and gesture alike.

In reality, language can be seen as yet another, superbly subtle form of dancing with our bodies, with our larynx, lungs and tongue rather than with our hips and extremities. Or, as pointed out by Robin Collingwood, "The written or printed book is only a series of hints, as

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<sup>1107</sup> Dishonesty and Janus faces that underlie this passive-aggressiveness can be seen as a natural corollary of the hypocritical roots of the Western culture, of which its historians throughout the ages may have more to say.

elliptical as the neumes of Byzantine music, from which the reader thus works out for himself the speech-gestures which alone have the gift of expression... Every kind of language is in this way a specialized form of bodily gesture, and in this sense it may be said that the dance is the mother of all languages”<sup>1108</sup>. Clearly, then, the purpose of these very words is to teach us how to use them as steps that would elevate us to vistas of more enlightened expression of our spirits rather than finding solace in eloquent preaching by their means. By engraining an illuminating message side by side with the instructions on how to annihilate and transcend their very essence, words such as these live up to what I have considered the ultimate ethicality in life - self-sacrificially encoding the process of dying in our acts and seeds of creativity and thereby yielding a great abundance of spiritual treasures in the world around us. In that sense, each linguistic expression is similar to Gautama Buddha’s boat, the purpose of which, remember, is to help us cross the river and arrive to the other side rather than to keep it tied to ourselves after we have reached our goal. Just like William the Conqueror conquered England by arriving to its shores with his fleet and then ordered all the ships to be dismantled, run ashore and destroyed so that “the cowards might not have ships to flee”<sup>1109</sup>, so must we deliberately demolish the words after they fulfilled their purpose of leading us to the destinations of celestial being and making us all washed and spiritualized by the divine waves of Tao if we are to join the Christ in his cry, “I have conquered the world” (John 16:33); that is to say, we must “throw away the ladder after we have climbed up on it and we must surmount these propositions”, as Ludwig Wittgenstein urged us to do, before we could “see the world rightly”<sup>1110</sup>. To demonstrate this, in the midst of a conversation churning and flashing with sparks of exciting ideas, Buddha was known to hypnotically stand up, get close to a flower and silently gaze at its ethereal beauty, as if showing others that the key to spiritual fulfillment lies not in leaning onto words, but in using them as a means to a beautiful action, of which more will be said later in the text. Resultantly, “Buddha refused to answer metaphysical questions: he gave the path of love that leads to Nirvana, the Kingdom of Heaven, where all questions shall be answered, and the answer will be life”<sup>1111</sup>, sublime and inconvertible into words, as Juan Mascaró further noticed. The only words worth uttering are therefore those that transcend the words and initiate illuminative action, just as much as the most sublime art is that which opens the path to life lived in the godliest of glories rather than close it before its consumers confined in self-sufficient bubbles, the reason for which Vittorio de Sica made a lot of sense when his delinquent boys escaped from the prison and into life in the midst of none other but a movie projection<sup>1112</sup>. A similar point was made by the mother from Godard’s 2 or 3 Things I Know About Her when she defined language to her son as “the house man lives in”, suggesting the safety and comfort that abiding in it brings, but equally insinuating that the most exciting things, life as it were, happen strictly outside of it. With language seen in this way, that is, as a disposable means to life rather than an end in itself, a vital change of perspectives takes hold and a space for sending forth enchanting intonation and magically enlivening color of the voice, which is to substitute the unconscious, clichéd and robotic linguistic exclamations, opens.

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<sup>1108</sup> See Robin George Collingwood’s *Language and Languages* (1938), In: *What is Dance?* Edited by Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen, Oxford University Press, New York, NY (1983), pp. 373.

<sup>1109</sup> See the essay called *William the Conqueror, The Travelling Historian*, available at <http://www.travellinghistorian.com/conquer.html> (2013).

<sup>1110</sup> See Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Routledge, London, UK (1918), proposition 6.54.

<sup>1111</sup> See Juan Mascaró’s *Introduction to The Upanishads*, selected by Juan Mascaró, Penguin Classics, London, UK (1964), pp. 21.

<sup>1112</sup> *Watch Shoeshine*, a movie directed by Vittorio de Sica (1946).

In fact, by routinely representing speech by means of a written word we have gradually confused a map with its territory and began to accept language as a communicational code free of the body language in which it is naturally enwrapped. Even though the musical elements of language - pitch, stress, tempo and rhythm - are normally not even attempted to be captured by words as textual symbols, it is said that readers need to silently speak the words to their minds as they read and this is always done with a particular intonation and melody which crucially determine the light in which the words will be absorbed. Even the words that I write right here are tumbled and turned all until they reach the point when they appear more or less flawlessly flowing and gracefully dancing through the space of my mind, shedding stardust of divine signs approved by bowing and sweetly giggling muses and angels in my head. This entire process of evaluating the immaculateness with which words flow and dance through a semantic space while still delivering their logical points across, depends on the intonation and softness of speech with which I play them in my head over and over until they appear satisfying to me; this is when they are not touched nor changed anymore. In other words, music in which words naturally exist has a critical influence on their compositional structuring as well as interpretative understanding. And with this music sounding uniquely inside each cosmic creature and in each instance of her marvelous existence, we must be certain that every line of text within this book or elsewhere will be comprehended in an utterly unique manner by every nous that makes an effort to cognize it. When we add to these different aural vibes and the emotions they echo the totally different visions that each word and each combination thereof evokes inside different beings too, we come to conclusion that a total destruction of meaning exists as it exits one mind and before it becomes reconstructed again out of this jagged semantic glass in a way that matches the cognitive modes of the recipient mind. To be misinterpreted is thus an unavoidable cost of engagement in any conceivable verbal communication of meaning. And that beyond language we must go if we wish to truly connect with spirits inhabiting this world, be they the most proximal or the most distal to us, is a precept naturally emanating from this thread of thought. Lest we become tied in a labyrinthine web of language, never to untangle ourselves completely, we ought to listen to the ending lines of Ludwig Wittgenstein's luminous tractate and start communicating using the uncommunicable, using the language of the heart and of the holiest of spirits sitting squatted in it: "What we cannot speak of, we must pass over in silence". And when nothing is faithfully expressible or interpretable by verbal means, then the most valuable feelings and ideas must be exclaimed on the rooftop, in the backyard or in places far away from the house of language, under the open skies, like those at which the Little Tramp and his muse stared with their home set on fire by the evil forces of this world<sup>1113</sup>, all of which find roots in language, the escape from which, as Lao-Tzu insinuated in the final lines of Tao-Te-Xing, marks the exit from the realm of earthliness and the entrance to the sphere of saintliness.

Familiar with all these limitations of bare textual communication, to limit the variability of meanings ascribed to my Facebook posts I invented the following method of writing them. Namely, just as script writers use the third-party voice between the brackets following assertions of persons involved in a dialogue to more precisely depict the dramatic situation, I occasionally use the same in Facebook posts. For example, when Chris Patil posted a remark from Douglas Adams' *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* as his status, "Isn't it enough to see that a garden is beautiful without having to believe that there are fairies at the bottom of it too?", my reply was at first meant to me a mere "No", but it ended up being an enriched "No \*looking with a tear in his eye and walking away\*". After all, stellar paths in life are often secret passages hidden from

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<sup>1113</sup> Watch the *Great Dictator* directed by Charlie Chaplin (1940).

the face of the world, “strait gates that leadeth unto life” (Matthew 7:14), precisely such as these starry parentheses that quietly parent ways to novel dimensions of creative expression. Or, as we were told by Tim Booth in one of the anthems of the Madchester scene, James’ Sit Down, the song which was predicted never to exceed the audience of 20,000 before being collectively sat down to in countless European dance clubs, from England to Greece, “The wisdom that I seek has been found in the strangest places... Drawn by the undertow, my life is out of control, I believe this wave will bear my weight so let it flow”<sup>1114</sup>, reminding us that whatever the criteria we have in mind for judging about the shine of intentions, aspirations and devotion glowing invisibly within one, be it words decreed, the body language used, the acts committed or creative products left behind, our attempts to reach the harbors of perfect judgment will be in vain. As the co-creational thesis let us know, we could never escape the cognitive foundations from which we judge the world and which are reflected in each and every inference we draw. Hence, sooner or later we would accept that going with the flow of divine feelings within us, as nonjudgmental as they could be, releasing ourselves onto the waves of the divine ocean that is everywhere inside of us and around us is the best foot forward when conceiving acts that will dazzle the world with their bursting emanations of the beauty divine.

Be that as it may, whether we have products of other people’s creativity in mind or those of very Nature, we may never have a perfectly clear insight into qualities of any natural system that we subdue to our scrutiny. The subjective reason is that we, as observers, are always partly involved in defining the properties of the observed systems, as the very co-creational thesis tells us. However, objectively speaking, the reason is also that the qualities of any given system do not reside in the system *per se*, but in the entire rest of the Universe as well. To prove this, simply transplant an object from one context to another and carefully observe how what appears as its essence in the eyes of the observer begins to gradually change. This is one of the most important observations that the systems science has come up with, and it brilliantly points at the necessity to cultivate sprouts of ignorance within the soil of our mind in order to have it give rise to some wonderful crops of knowledge. In the legendary Christmas movie, *It’s a Wonderful Life*, George Bailey despairs over his life, having an impression that it has been thoroughly frivoleed away. Hearing his laments, however, angels, depicted as teeny twinkly stars in the sky, start to shimmer and worryingly send signals to each other, trying to think of the way how to help him. Eventually, an angel comes down to Earth to teach George that his life has been far from being wasted, as he might have thought. On a side note, we indeed ought to know that whenever we send one such angelically pure and prayerful question in the air, Nature will surely send her angels in various forms to us or the creatures that we pray for from the depths of our heart, be it flowers, clouds, humanly made structures that will metaphorically bring recollection of the right ways or humans beamed down from heavenly heights to guide one by the hand towards some greater and more sunshiny horizons of being. Such prayers that touch the seats of the Gods most powerfully and rock them with their moving energy also do not arise from repetitive and mechanical mumbling words in our head; instead, as St. Peter of Alcántara noticed, “The truest prayer is the one when we forget that we pray”. Thence, as in Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, a simple prayer whereby we merely feel as if “a spring of love gushed from our heart and we blessed them unaware” turns out to be just enough to draw roads that lead to glimpses of divine blissfulness and heavenly salvation in front of us or anyone else upon whose ships of attention floating on the endless sea of divinity the seagulls and messenger doves of our blessings gracefully land while sacrificing their leisured and carefree flights across the

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<sup>1114</sup> Listen to James’ Sit Down, Rough Trade (1989).

skies of sublime thinking. For, the reality inhabited by us is truly like a turtle floating on an immense sea. While this turtle may stand for physical appearances that are perceptible to us, the foundations upon which they stand are imperceptible and divine and yet they embrace and pervade every single detail of our worlds, so that what is visible may only be compared to the tip of an iceberg. Angelic hands of divine Nature are truly everywhere and a prayer for those whom we love right here, right now may activate these hands and let them draw strings upon which the puppet-like reality of ours is suspended, opening the paths of salvation and happiness in some distant parts of the world. We should also live every moment of our lives to be equally prepared to be one such angelic creature that surprisingly steps into someone else's world and selflessly points at the way of hope, love and faith. For, if a creature, no matter how lost and perplexed, has made in the past a beautiful wish or selfless thought from which the genuine beauty of love sprouted, angelic hands will forever and ever be watching over it, as I helplessly believe. Nevertheless, in this classic movie, George proclaims the following: "I wish I was never born", giving a hint to the angel on how to help him. The angel then erases all the visible effects of George's being in the world and, thus, the things George essentially *is* outside of the boundaries of his own physical self. Then, this very world becomes devastated and lonely, and George fascinatingly realizes that his being, which has thrived in humble goodness, has been impressed everywhere and that the limits of his being never end. What one does or says at any given moment spreads endlessly all until it reaches the most distant vastnesses of the Universe, remaining to reverberate forever and ever through the cosmic ether.

Yet, we seem to live in a world in which the majority of its inhabitants are blind to any causal links that extend beyond the horizons of their immediately available views. Actions that may seem unacceptable if they stand in our sight, apart from us by merely a few causal linkages, are thus more often than not seen as completely acceptable if they lie in the distance, far beyond our sight could reach. How many animal eaters would turn vegetarian if they only had to witness animal slaughters, let alone kill their food with their bare hands, and how many supporters of war would become notorious pacifists if they had undergone the horrors of war on their skin I know not, but am certain that their number would be nothing but surprisingly large. Now, this ignorance of causal connections that do not lie in our sight leaves innumerable unfavorable consequences on the state of the world. For example, in the scientific arena, only those who have arrived at a sound new scientific principle or a new drug will be acknowledged for this discovery and rewarded accordingly, while all those who have inspired or provided bases for the fruitful work and development of these discoverers will become neglectfully forgotten since their effects stretch too far in the distance. Likewise, humanity condemns those who have committed murders, but loses out of sight those who may have been equal or even worse murderers while incarnating their malign intentions in more subtle ways. The one who shoulder-grazes people in the street, curses at others in traffic or sends insulting comments on online forums, spreading hate and destructiveness throughout the world by more subtle means may actually be starting chain reactions that end up with similarly disastrous effects. David Wark Griffith's 1919 movie, *Broken Blossoms*<sup>1115</sup>, presents only one out of a myriad of artistic allegories that indicate how these minor acts of tormenting others with harsh words or gestures may lead to an irretrievable demise of chaste human spirits around us, or as the author himself stated at its opening: "We may believe there are no Battling Burrows, striking the helpless with brutal whip - but do we not

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<sup>1115</sup> One of the most fascinating features of this cinematic classis is that the eye of camera is the only one to notice the truth, impossible to arrive at by any human witnesses of the described events, particularly the regularly judgmental ones.

ourselves use the whip of unkind words and deeds? So, perhaps, Battling may even carry a message of warning”. Yet, these very same insolent acts committed while one is moved by sincere following of sublime ideals and visions of how enlightened humanity should appear like, maddened by the hypocrisy and unfairness of the modern world may somehow produce chain reactions that result in overall beautification of the world. For, sugarcoated head-nodding can certainly be imagined to sometimes merely reinforce other people’s journeying towards spiritual ditches in life and only an intense call of their attention to the wrongness of their doing, to which they may have become blind over time, can then serve as a lifesaving wakeup call. Certainly, these networks of causal chains are so complex and intertwined that it is impossible to trace them, which on the other hand implies that our judgments with regard to which actions are malign and which of them are benevolent are always tremendously partial and biased, resembling judging about the shape of a glacier based not only on its visible tip, but on a single crystal of ice on its tip. The fascinating nature of causal chains is such that it allows us to dream of how a simple and hardly noticeable shrug of one’s shoulders can cause a storm or a sunny day in the eyes of a person on the other side of the globe, as the butterfly effect, emanating as one of the key examples of chaos theory, tells us. This is why Blaise Pascal hypothesized in his *Pensées* that “had Cleopatra’s nose been shorter, the whole aspect of the world would have been altered”, alluding to these quiet shrugs of one’s shoulders and tiny flaps of butterfly wings that have the power to bring tremendous change to the trajectory of the evolution of this planet, especially when they arise from a heart overflowing with the blissful waves of cosmic love. Or, as Pascal would have further reminded us, “There is no better proof of human vanity than to consider the causes and effects of love, because the whole universe can be changed by it”<sup>1116</sup>. In such a way, every fruitful or devastating deed of humanity could be seen as arising from the peak of a pyramid, while the entire pyramid, every brick of a human being that has ever been a part of it can always be seen as a contributor thereto, as somewhere in the distance we could hear the bells of Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s message reverberating: “Each of us is responsible for everything and to every human being”. In no work of art has this message been presented with such visual splendor as in the last scene of Bong Joon-Ho’s *Memories of Murder*, a movie based on a true story about a serial killer responsible for murdering ten women wearing red in South Korea in the late 1980s, a killer who had, symbolically, never been caught. Namely, when one of the detectives revisits the site of one of the murders more than a decade after the investigation ended, a dirty ditch by a road surrounded by golden early autumn crops, as he looks inside it he is interrupted by a schoolgirl walking by the road, as surreal in its pureness as Fellini’s Paola, the silky haired girl with ethereal innocence and transparent goodness haunting Marcello Mastroianni in *La Dolce Vita*. When she says that, coincidentally, she had earlier seen another man crawling into the same ditch, perhaps the murderer himself, the detective realizes that it was the moment and the witness he had waited for his whole life. When he asks her what this person looked like, the answer he gets is, “Usual”, after which silence sets in, intercepted only by the sway of the slender wheat stems and of the girl’s hair in the wind. He turns to face the camera, teary-eyed, the moment at which the movie ends, suggesting that the murderer may be an ordinary person, probably even including the viewer himself. For, if we could only follow all the atomically precise events in the causal chains extending from our acts driven by revulsion and anger, God only knows how many murders we would realize we have committed in more subtle ways than by bluntly pulling knives through people’s chests. In turn, whenever a single person becomes rewarded for a certain feat,

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<sup>1116</sup> See Blaise Pascal’s *Pensée* No. 197, Series XV. Transition from Knowledge of Man to Knowledge of God. Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK (1669).

we should know that entire humanity has contributed more or less to it, which could bring us any day to Fellini's fool picking a pebble from the ground and finding in it yet another crucial factor influencing the evolution of the Earth toward states godlier than those in which it finds itself today<sup>1117</sup>. At the same time, "it is not the murderer that is guilty for the murder, but rather all of us, the society as a whole, for driving the murderer down the wrong path", one of Dostoyevsky's characters, if I recall it well from the cellars of my memory, said once, and it has been ages, indeed, since I embraced this point of view, which has helped me see people who were utterly malicious to me and my work not as intrinsically evil, but as simple products of the wicked system. This point of view is essential in preventing the rise of hatred toward a fellow human being inside a noble heart, which will always be stomped over and humiliated in this life, and refocusing the attention of its bearer to fixing this corrupt system to which humans are but helpless slaves, humans which, irrespective of the amount of poison that they willingly spew onto our path, we would have an infinite love for for as long as we hold tightly onto this virtuous viewpoint. However, shortsightedness and superficiality of the mainstreams of humanity when it comes to recognizing causal chains that extend beyond our immediate sight is such that they typically celebrate only those who have found themselves at the very peak of this pyramid at the moment of recognition of the importance of the given accomplishment. Yet, to witness the effects of global warming, we cannot only look around our neighborhood or the city. Instead, we would have to depart to the North Pole, far, far away to realize what the trends of insatiable overconsumption and toxic hyper-production are doing to Nature. Although this example showing how one needs to travel far in order to figure out the effects of one's habits and decisions is familiar to many these days, rare as diamonds in the dust in the insipid intellectual milieu of the day are those who have managed to recognize the spiritual connotations of the precious message concealed in it.

I have always claimed that the secret to figuring out the extent of goodness which our actions in the world produce lies not in their superficial values or meanings, but strictly in the shine of the heart of intentions that has stood at their base. The plate upon which it stands written that "the road to hell is paved with good intentions" I toss into the ocean depths, while embracing wonderful horizons behind which the sun of belief that the foundations of our actions in the world are those that the heavens may only judge us for rises. Hence, only a painter who paints seemingly meaningless lines and streaks on the canvas can have an insight as to how great or trifling his work is since none of us would be able to catch a glimpse of the well of his heart and precisely measure to what extent his products will live up to Walt Whitman's guideline which told us something along the line of "even though you may not understand these verses, they will still bring you good health". For, the causal chains of the natural world are mysterious and oftentimes "you tap at one place and it echoes on the other side of the world", as Fyodor Dostoyevsky's Father Zosima noticed<sup>1118</sup>. Yet, even though only the artist can realize how awesome his piece of art is by recognizing the light inside and waiting for the subtle voice of Nature to praise his devotion by means of secret and hardly noticeable signs, this does not mean that we should indulge in the way of thinking whereby a light seen in our heart would launch us into the starry sky of the presupposed untouchable greatness of our self. For, this presumed untouchable nature of our self would slowly become obvious as a solipsistic curse of our faulty stance in life with respect to the balance of the Way of Love, slowly but surely pushing us into dark alleys of desolation and mental and emotional alienation. And eventually, just as the Way of

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<sup>1117</sup> Watch *La Strada* directed by Federico Fellini (1954).

<sup>1118</sup> See Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, Prosveta, Belgrade, Serbia (1880).

Love has prophesied, without an intimate touch with the world around us, to which our creations are to be ultimately dedicated to, our ability to dwell in the light of inner harmony of our being would vanish. Instead, we should never forget that stars that bring light, the food of life, to the surrounding planets, selflessly, without asking for anything in return, do so while remaining in the dark, in the blind spots of their own light, which is why the Christ advised the following, trying to teach us the beauty of being unsure, insecure and ready to ceaselessly question rather than to pretentiously observe the world like an omniscient creature, a lofty mister know-it-all of a kind: “For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind... If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth” (John 9:39-41). In other words, what he taught was clearly the spiritual merits of the bliss of ignorance, of abstinence from judgments, for, as we see, even a short, common sense array of arguments can convince us that any judgments in this world are intellectually and ethically unfounded and unsound, and should always be given forth as merely our assumptions or hypotheses about the state of the world. Even natural sciences, the cultural prototypes of the human ability to prove things, never prove anything, as any philosopher of science could remind us, for all the inferences and conclusions that eventually become accepted as proofs rest on human assumptions about the state of the physical reality. Even the most ordinary logical deductions would topple down in their invalidity should we only slightly perturb these foundations composed of multiple implicit assumptions about the state of the world.

After this pensive detour and a brief analysis of the general nature of quality assessments, it is time is to return to the apple which we have held in our hands all this time. Namely, the battle is raging these days over whether organically or conventionally cultivated fruits stand forth as a better nutritional choice. However, just as in the cases of all other assessments of the qualities of ecological systems, which inherently depend on the complex web of ecological relationships in which they are intertwined rather than only on what they comprise within themselves, the solution to this dispute is not that easy to reach, primarily because it is not easy at all to define what is better and healthier: an organic apple or a conventional one. The argument of the proponents of the former lies primarily in the pesticide-free nature of the produce, whereas the argument offered by the latter is that no studies have shown yet that apples sprayed with pesticides nor the antibiotics-containing milk cause harmful effects to the consumers. They have argued that the poverty-stricken areas of the world could not have been fed without the application of pesticides and other artificial agricultural yield boosters, and although I would personally always pick an organic fruit over the conventional one, the question that I am incessantly posing to myself is whether preaching from a perspective of a wealthier consumer of more expensive organic produce to someone who is poor and can afford only the cheapest, non-organic fruits is merely hypocritical or truly lifesaving. And all of this is without even mentioning the possibility that there may no significant nutritional difference between the organic and the conventional produce in the western world because both of them may have been brought down to an equally low level as the result of industrialization of the production of both. For, there may be a striking similarity lurking beneath the popular music and the produce decorating popular supermarkets posed side by side: namely, just as the quality of pop music has been degraded by its becoming a child of the profit-driven music industry, the same fate may have stricken the food available to consumers in commercial stores, be it organic or conventional in origin. Because of the mediocritized directives of the food industry, where mass popularity is the target and served is what people want, not what they need, one cannot find on supermarket shelves anymore sour cherries, real forest fruit, bitter tangerines or anything but tastelessly sweet

fruit, having a lot in common with the sweet, synthetic songs making it to tops of the pops or garbage soap operas, reality shows and Hollywood lemonades crowding cable TV channels and nowadays equally mainstreamed online streaming services. Like the tunes topping the major pop music charts, bursting with energy but tiring the spirit, ultimately being as vacuous as an empty seashell, food that the inhabitants of the agriculturally industrialized world have access to is exactly the same: feeding the body with extraordinary energy, but impoverishing the spirit. Just as the mass production of food has vulgarized nutrition, so has the popularization of music stripped some of the most sublime aesthetic qualities off of it, confirming the worn-out adage that warns against the mainstreaming of ideas, lest they lose their value and potency to inspire and fertilize whichever is arid and scorched in the soil of the human spirit. Besides, one need not wonder farther than a local plant nursery in search of seedlings for the garden to realize that the qualities valued by the sellers and sought by the customers are describable by attributes such as determinate, resistant, large, uniform, smooth-skinned *et cetera* instead of sensitive, frail, wondrous, small, versatile and filigreed with dark spots and corrugations. It is not surprising that in a world that worships bigness and strength on the account of disparaging smallness and sensitivity, a petite apple embodying all the latter qualities, one and only in the Universe, would be ditched to the side of the road instead of celebrated for its essential nutritional and aesthetic value.

Be that as it may, the aforementioned effects that eating an apple has on the human body and spirit would be exceedingly hard to spot because of their unpredictable, subtle and long-term effects, which are also subjects to undetectable synergetic effects when paired with other food or environmental factors. Recently, the world has witnessed the case of a woman whose eyelids began to make a clicking sound every time she blinked because pieces of bone formed in them following a plastic surgery aimed to reduce her wrinkles<sup>1119</sup>. The clinicians, namely, infused both a traditional dermal filler and mesenchymal stem cells derived from the patient's own fat tissue under her skin, overlooking the fact that hydroxyapatite present in the former will induce the differentiation of the stem cells into osteoblasts, that is, bone cells, which will tend to form new bone, even if found in an epithelial tissue, such as skin is. This and many other biochemical or nutritional synergies, including the ability of the organism to absorb fat-soluble vitamins exclusively in the presence of dietary oils<sup>1120</sup>, remind us of a vital omnipresent law that governs the evolution of the reality: if A is not the solution and B is not either, their combination, AB, could be, though at times it happens that both A and B *per se* could be the right selections, while their consummation in synergy would be an erroneous choice. Just like the arrangement of plants on an agrarian field can either foster or impede the growth of each one of them, the combination of ingredients consumed, aside from the time and frequency of eating, the size of the portions, the rhythm of swallowing and chewing, the posture, the state of mind and innumerable other factors that belong to the context of our food consumption, outlines the effect that each one of them will have on our wellbeing. However, so strong and unquestioned is the reductionist background of the contemporary nutritional science that every once in a while a magic substance pops up on the market, be it açai palm berries or coenzyme Q<sub>10</sub>, alluring the consumers to

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<sup>1119</sup> See Ferris Jabr's In the Flesh: The Embedded Dangers of Untested Stem Cells Cosmetics, *Scientific American* (December 17, 2012), available at <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=stem-cell-cosmetics>.

<sup>1120</sup> See Melody J. Brown, Mario G. Ferruzzi, Minhthy L. Nguyen, Dale A. Cooper, Alison L. Eldridge, S. J. Schwartz, Wendy S. White – “Carotenoid bioavailability is higher from salads ingested with full-fat than with fat-reduced salad dressings as measured with electrochemical detection”, *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 80, 396 – 403 (2004).

believe that it could be *the* magic ingredient that will solve all their physical ailments and pave the way to eternal youthfulness, even though the holistic nature of reality is exactly built around its not allowing one take over the million, so to say, as well as engraining multiple mechanisms for mitigation of the possible failure of weak links via its intrinsic cyclicity and compositional redundancies. Any nutritional studies, in order to be feasible, must focus on a limited number of variables and dumb down the complexity of metabolic networks comprising any given organism, but the result of this are empirical reports containing false findings, as derived from the erroneous reductionist assumptions, the mutual contradictoriness of many of which is but amusing to a holistic scientific mindset, such as when ascetic reports advising abstinence from carbs, fats or a myriad of other elements of regular diet are posed side by side with the hedonistic ones advising drinking red wine before smoking tobacco to eliminate the negative effects of the latter<sup>1121</sup>. As a matter of fact, in a world where hormesis represents a real-life effect, where increases in health span can be entailed by decreases in longevity and *vice versa*<sup>1122</sup>, and where a complete absence of adverse influences would put our immune systems to sleep and allow the microbial cells, which comprise a great majority of the total number of cells in our bodies, to take over our organisms and diminish their biological integrities, the negative effects of the consumption of or exposure to specific chemical agents are impossible to distill from the positive ones. Still, as I sat and listened to a nutritionist from one of the most advanced health centers of the modern world advise diabetic patients to limit their intake of carbohydrates and carbohydrates only, neglecting to realize that innumerable other processed ingredients of meals prepared on each street corner exert equally, if not more adverse, though also more indirect, effects on the body's ability to regulate the flow of sugars through it, or tell an obese patient to limit his intake of fats and fats only, failing to notice that sugars that are routinely added to fat-free products trigger the internal production of insulin, a signaling molecule for the synthesis and deposition of fatty acids<sup>1123</sup>, I realized how far the mainstream nutritional science is from this aim of reflecting the holism of Nature in its propositions and facts. Just as in an ancient Zen story a foolish character blames salt for the yuckiness of his meal, so do reductionist nutritionists of the modern day keep on searching for a magical ingredient to boost the human health with, while failing to realize that contexts and synergies, rather than intrinsic contents only, define the qualities of physical systems in general. As a result, contradictory effects on many isolated entities on human health, from the salt to the sunshine, are reported in the literature; for example, despite the immense body of evidence that high intake of salt increases the chances for the development of cardiovascular disease, which my own published research contributed to as well<sup>1124</sup>, the recent decade-long study has indicated that the effect of salt in diet is quite opposite: namely, the low-salt diets are expected to increase the risk of heart disease and stroke<sup>1125</sup>. However, like yet another fool from a Zen story, on the run to dig out the eyes of a muse known

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<sup>1121</sup> See V. Schwarz, K. Bachelier, S. H. Schirmer, C. Werner, U. Laufs, M. Böhm – “Red Wine Prevents the Acute Negative Vascular Effects of Smoking”, *American Journal of Medicine* 130, 95 – 100 (2017).

<sup>1122</sup> R. T. Wu, L. Cao, E. Mattson, K. W. Witwer, J. Cao, H. Zeng, X. He, G. F. Combs Jr., W. H. Cheng – “Opposing impacts on healthspan and longevity by limiting dietary selenium in telomere dysfunctional mice”, *Aging Cell* 16, 125 – 135 (2017).

<sup>1123</sup> See Linda Page's and Sarah Abernathy's *Healthy Healing*, 14<sup>th</sup> Edition, Healthy Healing Enterprises, LLC., Monterey, CA (2011), pp. 145.

<sup>1124</sup> See my article entitled Surface Charge Effects Involved in the Control of Stability of Sols Comprising Uniform Cholesterol Particles, published in *Materials and Manufacturing Processes* 23 (6) 620 – 623 (2008).

<sup>1125</sup> See Gina Kolata's Low-Salt Diet Ineffective, Study Finds. Disagreement Abounds. *The New York Times* (May 3, 2011); available at [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/04/health/research/04salt.html?\\_r=2&hp](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/04/health/research/04salt.html?_r=2&hp).

for her golden views of the world, thinking that he would thus equip himself with her blissful worldviews, so do the reductionist scientists of this age on one hand irrationally reduce thousands of food ingredients to calories and twenty amino acids to proteins, while on the other hand they are on a vain search for philosopher's stones, single magical ingredients in food, hastily evaluating the effects of innumerable of those, while ignoring the context of the consumption, along with a myriad of holistic synergies comprising it. Of course, a plethora of such studies posed side by side inevitably leads proponents of these reductionist approaches to sit and perplexedly face their insolvable incompatibilities. For me, however, these discrepancies serve as an indirect, but quite decent implicit proof of the synergistic, holistic and systemic nature of nutrition and, thereafter, all things around us. Hereupon, every time I smell curry powder or hypnotically gaze at a salt shaker sitting lonely on a kitchen table drenched in dusky sunshine, I am reminded of the irreducibility of their fragrance and nutritional value, respectively, to individual spices and chemical elements comprising them and, thence, of the holistic norm "the whole is more and beyond the sum of its parts" as deeply interwoven into each corner of the fabric of reality.

All in all, the point I am trying to make is that one cannot grab two apples of a different kind, simply compare their contents and conclude which one is more nutritious and less toxic than the other. "Poison is the dose", Paracelsus said long time ago, and also to run this evaluation properly one would need to take into account the soil on which the apple trees have grown, the history of the soil - whether it was used for cultivation of monocultures and thus selectively deprived of certain nutrients or not, whether fertilizers have been used, including the effects of climate and geography, *etc.* - as well as multiple other environmental, economic and social factors. For example, cultivating specific species that are either nonnative to a given ecosystem or are cultivated in an overly abundant manner, which exceeds the capacity of the ecosystem to sustain them and pushes the latter out of balance, can have drastic effects on the environment. Essential relations within the ecosystem may thus become disrupted following cultivation of specific species, which will, in turn, leave trace on the yield of the apple trees themselves because everything in the living world works in cycles in which causes and effects travel in circles, making our actions like boomerangs, always returning to their origins to leave the trace in accord with the intentions and cleverness with which they were thrown into the world. How good an apple is, therefore, cannot be told without grasping this whole web of ecological relationships, which is, as one can tell, a task that exceeds the actual powers of humans and computers to model and calculate. Years ago, I discoursed over a single molecule of water that travels along a river stream and concluded that the trajectory and destiny of that particular molecule depends not only on the laws of physics, but on the factors or geographical and even astronomical nature, which all have their say in guiding this molecule along its path<sup>1126</sup>. Hence, "when you drink water, think of its source" stands inscribed on one of the tiles on the floor of Jack Kerouac Alley in SF, on the subjective, microcosmic side reminding us how the quality of thoughts and the sensual wonder with which we ensconce food in our palate and explore it with our taste buds determines the divine light in which it will be absorbed by our body and mind, while on the other, macrocosmic side it prompts us to accept that the treasures of quality of anything in life, food included, rest among its most distant origins, which are hidden from view and ungraspable in their entirety in the complex web of life in which we are tangled. When I learned, for example, that most items in our immediate surrounding have traveled the world and

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<sup>1126</sup> See my article entitled On the Relational Character of Mind and Nature published in *Res Cogitans: Journal of Philosophy* 6 (1) 286 – 400 (2009).

on its high seas more than we might ever do<sup>1127</sup>, an enlightening finding it was, making all the tiny objects around me, from saltshakers to the hands on grandfather clocks to colors on impressionist paintings hanging on the wall to the wall tapestry itself and the whole space I stood in start to wave as if being ridden on a boat at sea. Therefore, I am free to say that a vital aspect of food consumption is to accompany it with a journey of the consumer's mind all the way back to the food's ontological and epistemological origins, the first of which can be said to rest on the realistic coast of its co-creation in the world of our experience, that is, in the way the food was brought to life, grown, picked, packaged and delivered to our plate, while the second of which can be seen as dwelling on the idealistic coast of its co-creation, that is, in the deepest spheres of our consciousness wherefrom the waves of grace and gratefulness are to radiate outwardly and wash the fruits and vegetables held in our hands with far more important waters than those in whose streams we place them over the sink. Maybe if we succeed in learning this art of seeing the world holistically, as if the Earth and the Universe and all that has ever been is mirrored, as if in an Aleph of a kind, in any given object held in our view, we would make a long awaited step away from living according to the incidental premise put forth by Adam Smith in the *Wealth of Nations*, which was that experiencing compassion for the fate of people on the other side of the globe, whom one will probably never look in the eyes, is an illusion, a stance that most notably made itself obvious when the French fashion designers allured beachgoers to associate the brand new models of two-piece swimsuits with the first nuclear bomb thrown onto Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands by the US Army in the summer of 1946, the bomb that destroyed the wildlife and the human habitats alike, converted a paradise on Earth into one of the most feared places on it and made it virtually inhabitable for decades to come, while irradiating countless Guinea Pig US Navy marines and causing their premature death<sup>1128</sup>. Some may argue at this point that an incredible phase transition at the level of our consciousness, unrealistic to expect to occur in any near future, must take place before we could rid ourselves of views that favor what lies in our plain sight over that which is hidden from it. For, remember, ours is a world wherein watching a film whose main protagonist is a pathological person and his victims and the seekers of justice are either given side roles or kept hidden from view awakens sympathy for the former, not the latter, in the viewer's mind, demonstrating how our innate empathy, far more powerful in its essence than reason, can turn against itself and become our fiercest enemy if it only remains unbalanced with the rational acceptance of things lying beyond the limits of our being as equally relevant and real as those lying on the other side of this boundary, being an ultimate test on the road of our spiritual growth, which, we know, starts from a miniscule and limited self and ends in its self-annihilating expansion and identification with the Cosmos as a whole and every line, item and heartbeat in it. This intrinsic propensity of our psyches to value the proximal more than the remote and the manifest more than the concealed holds the key as to how come people in the political arenas and any other social domains rent by antagonistic, mutually competitive forces find it most natural to stand on the side of those physically closest to them and against those whose story they may have never had a chance of hearing, leading us to endless conflicts and wars that threaten the future of our civilization more than anything else. Yet, how glorious would be a world in which politicians and public personas would have kind words to say from time to time of powers that stand on the opposite sides from the social groups to which they belong, I

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<sup>1127</sup> See John McMurtrie's *Out to Sea: Review of Rose George's Ninety Percent of Everything: Inside Shipping, the Invisible Industry that Puts Clothes on Your Back, Gas in Your Car, and Food on Your Plate*, *San Francisco Chronicle* (August 18, 2013), pp. F5.

<sup>1128</sup> Watch the documentary movie *Radio Bikini* directed by Robert Stone (1988).

often ask myself and envisage in the course of many ruminative nights, while dropping vows all around the dancing silhouette of my spirit always to keep my arms open to everything and, through the art of seeing the world from the eyes of another, embrace in empathy the whole existence equally. And, as I wonder day after day, maybe it is true that only learning to see right, and that, undoubtedly, by making each object akin to a prism that refracts the linear rays of light that our eyes shone onto it in all directions, expanding our views towards infinity with every observation act, is needed to predispose ourselves to do things right as well, spontaneously, with no significant effort, while going with the flow of Tao, which stays, no matter what, always transfused, like the divine breath, in us.

As the science of chemistry becomes more reliant on superbly sophisticated reactions that are chaotic in the deterministic sense of the word and are therefore quite challenging for the scientists to reproduce as such, the fact that every chemical system is inevitably in touch with an environment of a kind, which includes primarily the vessel walls, is seen as more critical than ever before<sup>1129</sup>. The only way to have a liquid perfectly isolated from an atomic surrounding is to place it in vacuum; alas, then, the liquid would quickly evaporate. Consequently, whether we have gastronomy or chemistry in mind, we should know that the effect of an environment, aside from that of content, presents a crucial one in discerning the qualities of systems in question, and every time one witnesses how the savor of beer changes from better to worse depending on whether one drinks it from a drinking glass, a plastic cup or a metallic can<sup>1130</sup>, one comes across a practical indication of this systemic fact. As a matter of fact, how sensitive we are to even environmental effects that are normally thought of as trivial and sideways is illustrated by the outcome of the experiments carried out by Robert Irwin and Ed Wortz in the late 1960s to investigate the single-tone aural effect on the taste of Carlsberg Elephant Beer; what they surprisingly found out was that it tasted best when drunk coupled to a 650 Hz pitch, whereas a slightest variation of this frequency made the beer tasteless and almost undrinkable<sup>1131</sup>. This is all to remind us that some of the food critics will stay at the level of sheer taste and never bother to judge apples based on their nutritional value or agricultural origins and place in the grand web of life, reflecting the modern culture of superficiality in which humans roam like spiritual zombies with no compass of love and devotion to the divine installed in their minds and hearts, feeling lost and perplexed. Taste, plating and originality thus most often present criteria based on which the food critics give their ratings. Others would remark that it is with the Sun of one's plexus that one should eat food and think not only with one's belly when it comes to differing between the good and the bad food, but with an entire body. Yet, others, stretching this context within which the qualities of a single apple lie dormant, would notice that not only one's organism, but the entire ecosphere has to be assessed before reaching a definite conclusion about the quality of an apple. Of course, one cannot survey the entire ecosphere not even in one's lifetime owing to the broadness of both the time and the spatial scales of the effects that would be relevant for these observations. As we see, step by step, we have expanded the space and time spheres inside of which the qualities of a single apple are found. From an apple itself and its

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<sup>1129</sup> For more details on this, see my critical review entitled Challenges for the Modern Science in its Descent towards Nano Scale, *Current Nanoscience* 5 (3) 372 – 389 (2009).

<sup>1130</sup> What is more, a recent behavioral study performed at the University of Bristol has demonstrated that the rate at which beer is being drunk is greatly determined by the type of the vessel from it is being drunk. See the press release Glass Shape Influences Speed at Which We Drink Alcohol, retrieved from [www.bristol.ac.uk/news/2015/april/glass-shape-and-alcohol-consumption.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/news/2015/april/glass-shape-and-alcohol-consumption.html) (May 6, 2015).

<sup>1131</sup> See Lawrence Weschler's *Seeing Is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees: Expanded Edition, Over Thirty Years of Conversations with Robert Irwin*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA (2009), pp. 134.

physical boundaries we widened our gazes all until we grasped the entire Earth and the starry Universe in which we float, knowing that the qualities of our apple and anything else we may imagine are impressed truly everywhere. “I will astonish Paris with an apple”, Paul Cezanne is noted to have said<sup>1132</sup>, and here I have used an apple as the starting point for an inquiry into the nature of existence, the rays of which have gradually expanded and eventually landed onto the farthest realms of the Cosmos.

This entire quality evaluation has, however, touched solely the objective, realistic side of experience. On its other side, the subjective nature of every experience in this world, including eating an apple, lurks. Each one of us is a unique and a special island chopped off of the spirit of the Universe with unique and special needs. Not only should then the definition of healthy diet and thriving experiences in general be provided differently for each one of us, but we should also keep in mind the powerfulness of homeopathy and the butterfly effect, that is, the one of powerful amplification of miniscule effects after being introduced into circular and iterative causal loops within the organism, that stands at its core when considering the effect of the food that we provide for others on their health as well as of all other creative actions of ours that influence other people’s experiences and subtly draw the shades of beauty that they will see beyond the horizons. This is why I have always stated that making food with a golden touch, with a sunshiny heart bathed in the divine One and ornamented with stars of grace and love for the fellow earthlings, will produce food that will subtly and invisibly orient others towards the roads divine. Many times in this life you will come across a food that will appear stale and poor in ingredients, and yet if it is made with a whole lot of love, it will bring more health than many foods that are made rich and versatile but with no devotion and loving care infused to it. Thus, with no explicit messages in the signs and deeds that we offer to the world, with only investing the shine of our heart into things that we do, we may truly enlighten the very same world. Caressing others has thus ever since been my passion, for I have believed that by seeing light of the great One in my heart while releasing my touches spontaneously, letting them flow like heavenly birds on the hairs and necks of those whom I cared for brings sparkles of the feelings divine to their heart and spirit. And so, I spend my days with eyes blinded by the divine light, deeply immersed into myself and yet delivering starry sparkles of grace and beauty everywhere around, with healing hands and glowing heart and mind, following the balance of meditative and prayerful inwardness and compassionate outwardness that the Way of Love has prophesied with every step I make.

After all being said, I can conclude that it is the context, a part of which is residing in the heart of beholder and a part of which resides in the spirit of the world, standing forth as the mother of the quality of any system in Nature.

Getting back to our apple, in the end we may realize that all that matters is the heart that savors the apple. For, “The battle is first won in thy heart”, as a Serbian martyr said to his army before one of the decisive battles of World War I, whereby old Sirach would have wittily reminded us that “the heart of fools is in their mouth, but the mouth of the wise is in their heart” (Sirach 21:26). The Christ, likewise, told us that what leaves our mouth, not what goes into it, stands forth as the golden key to our health (Matthew 15:11). If that is so, we could have the humblest diet in the world, eat sticks and stones, and yet be healthy and strong as a lion for as long as our mind spreads the golden rays of love and strength down to permeate every cell in our bodies and for as long as we are driven by intentions to live our life by telling an enlightening

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<sup>1132</sup> See Paul Trachtman’s *Cézanne: The Man who Changed the Landscape of Art*, Smithsonian Magazine (January 2006), retrieved from <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/cezanne-107584544/>.

story to the world. When we cease to eat, sleep, breath and workout while wishing to strengthen and beautify ourselves only and thus raise our value in contrast to that of the world, and when we start eating, sleeping, breathing and running for the world instead, we would realize that a divinest glow of spirit has been enkindled in us, ceaselessly sending echoes of deep prayer, of a monumental desire to do things that might benefit the world and a mountain-moving wish to save all, even the tiniest crumbles of it before they fall to the ground and become carelessly stomped on. With such a guiding star illuminating our mind, even the most self-destructive and self-depreciating things we could do would turn out well, instilling even more strength and might in us. For, there is no time for us to be obsessed with ourselves while the world awaits our message to be delivered thereto so as to help millions of souls reach the paths of salvation. “His body he considers accidental, yet his body stays protected. Does not he realize himself exactly because he does not live for himself” (Tao-Te-Xing VII), Lao-Tzu wondered about the miraculous fate of real sages in this life. After all, we can say that bright visions that we pose in front of our minds are what illuminates the way forward and opens the godly paths of Nature before our jiggly feet. Likewise, it is the shine of our heart that ultimately determines how good or bad the food we eat will be for us as well as how good or bad, in general, the effect of impressions of the world that we absorb with each new moment, and which are always partially constructed by us as the consequence of the co-creational nature of our experiences, will be.

As you could see, I have plucked an apple from the tree of knowledge, though I have done it for the sake of endowing us not with a sense of perfect and pretentious knowledge, but with a sense of humble and sacred ignorance, ignorance that opens the door to an endless inflow of starry insights to the spaces of our mind and heart. In that sense, this whole discourse is a simple reiteration of the message put forth by the prime Biblical writer from a few millennia ago, who realized and told us that plucking an apple from the tree of knowledge, an act which would make us wise and able to discern good from evil, is the one that makes us eventually fall from grace and become expelled from the Paradise. This writer, too, in my opinion, plucked that apple and bit into it, though only for the sake of warning us about the dangers of doing so, using knowledge as a tool for showing us the merits of unknowing. For, by thinking that we have known it all we merely close the gates to the inflow of new knowledge and predispose our beings to become blind to many wonderful insights that Nature strews us with at any given moment of our existence. On the other hand, by always being aware that there is a whole infinity of sensations that the Universe has in store for us and that there are more things in Heaven and Earth than we could ever squeeze into a tiny conceptual bottle of our mind travelling across the endless ocean of knowledge, we keep our spirits open, childishly juvenile and truly healthy. To use the tools of knowledge not to draw the perfectly stable and consistent towers of knowledge, but to topple them down, all until we arrive at the very foundations thereof and show that only if our knowing in this world becomes built on the power to love and live so as to heal others can we sustain ourselves in the long run. Walking in the footsteps of great poets’ minds, we may thus stumble upon the following lines by the Bosnian poet from the town of Mostar, Aleksa Šantić, which resonate here with colossal relevance and do so exactly because they stomp over their own relevance and point at something greater than themselves: “Do not trust my verse and rhyme when they tell you, dear, that I love you so, that every moment I pray for you and on tree trunks carve your name - do not trust!... Because true love knows not words. She just blazes, mightily, carelessly, paying no heed, dear, to write any verse”<sup>1133</sup>. Like Šantić’s poetry, these words have

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<sup>1133</sup> Personal translation to English of Aleksa Šantić’s poem Do Not Trust, that is, Ne vjeruj: “Ne vjeruj u moje stihove i rime kad ti kažu, draga, da te silno volim, u trenutku svakom da se za te molim i da ti u stabla urezujem

had the goal of discrediting the words *per se* and pointing at the music of the heart from which the words emerged as the key, notwithstanding that the ultimate purpose of the invocation of this music has been to point at the beauty of the starry silence concealed deep within its own very heart.



“I like your music very, very much because you give space to the listener”, says Björk to Arvo Pärt, as she touches her Minerva-Minnie-Mousey ET ears. “He can go inside and live there”, she adds, raising her arms as if at the same time wishing to lazily stretch oneself with casual jovialness and signify triumphant thoughtfulness<sup>1134</sup>, reflecting millions of messages and blinking with infinitely many lovable balances I have extensively written about in a tiny, tiny gesture of hers. Indeed, the Estonian composer whom she interviewed on this occasion has traveled through a phase of composing complex harmonies, then entered a decade of pure silence and eventually emerged with a music wherein “each note was being so lush and so resonant that you did not need 500 billion notes”, as Björk herself noted. The celebrated movie director, David Lynch likewise observed how space and mood emanating from the sounds, colors and lights are the most important elements of a movie<sup>1135</sup>, the ones that build a sense of reality of its own in the eyes of the watcher, which is something that many marvelous musical records, from the Beach Boys’ Pet Sounds to Marvin Gaye’s What’s Going On to Prefab Sprout’s Andromeda Heights, managed to achieve. Yet, while listening to such wonderful musical pieces one is often left to imagine a mere silence behind the notes, twinkling with only the sound of silent stars and yet letting the listener spread the wings of her imagination in that space, mysteriously sustained on the harmonies that palpitate in the background. To raise silence and empty spaces on their pedestal can thus said to be the mission reserved for the most masterful artistic pieces in this world. And what is essential in drawing such musical and visual spaces in front of the listener is exactly the ability to masterfully mix silence, stillness and empty spaces with notes, lines, shades and movements that shed meaning. Silence can thus be said to present an essential ingredient of every captivating act and the art of enchanting the millions with one’s performances is inextricably tied to deft infusion of silence and emptiness into one’s expressions.

Silence is thus inseparably related to music, and the most beautiful sounds can be said to be those that beautify this sea of silence from which they emerge and unto which they return. Or, as pointed out by Henry David Thoreau, who made it an oath never to write about music without touching on its silent foundations, “All sound is akin to Silence; it is a bubble on her surface which straightway bursts, an emblem of the strength and prolificness of the undercurrent. It is a faint utterance of Silence, and then only agreeable to our auditory nerves when it contrasts itself with the former. In proportion as it does this, and is a heightener and intensifier of the Silence, it

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ime, — Ne vjeruj! No kasno, kad se mjesec javi i prelije srmom vrh modrijuh krša, tamo gdje u grmu proljeće leprša i gdje slatko spava naš jorgovan plavi, dođi, čekaću te! U časima tijem, kad na grudi moje priljubiš se čvršće, osjetiš li, draga, da mi t’jelo dršće, i da silno gorim ognjevima svijem, tada vjeruj meni, i ne pitaj više! Jer istinska ljubav za riječi ne zna; Ona samo plamti, silna, neoprezna, niti mari, draga, da stihove piše!” (1891).

<sup>1134</sup> See Björk interviewing Arvo Pärt, available at <http://silentlistening.wordpress.com/2009/10/04/bjork-interviews-arvo-part/> (1997); an excerpt from the movie “Arvo Pärt: 24 Preludes for a Fugue” (2005).

<sup>1135</sup> See an interview with David Lynch, available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RhqvSEoiB7o&feature=related> (2006).

is harmony and purest melody”<sup>1136</sup>. The same ocean of silence in which we find ourselves suddenly immersed while listening to magical musical pieces can be said to be one of the greatest gifts handed to us not only by music, but by all other arts, the purpose of which can be said to be, in accordance with the Way of Love, taking us by the hand into a cosmic bubble of introspection lying hidden deep within us and simultaneously infusing our mind and heart with the star-dusty energy from which enchanting expressions will naturally flow, transforming us into a supernova of spiritual light, a divine messenger, a channel between Heaven and Earth. Or, as the American theologian, Ralph Harper pointed out, “Silence is the prerequisite for being present to oneself, which in turn is the preparation for being present to others”<sup>1137</sup>. And just as a prolific relationship between two creatures, being representable by the Way of Love, is an unbroken alternation between the states of (a) intimate unison in empathy and (b) separation due to meditative withdrawnness which makes deep reflections possible, so do perfect pieces of art embody a constant shift between (a) drawing hearts deep into them and (b) creating this wall of silence between them and the audience, which enables observations and absorptions of meaning to take place. It was, for example, exactly this benevolently bipolar trait that Andre Gregory recognized in Brecht’s plays, which he went on to praise for creating excitement that does not overwhelm, but rather allows the “distance between the play and yourself, which two human beings need in order to live”<sup>1138</sup>, and prevents the audience from merely sleeping comfortably in their course with spirits deadened and senses deafened, thus directly countering the mission on which creators of the most popular music and movies of the modern day obviously are. For, the world today is so saturated with information that the majority of consumers of arts have now completely given up on the idea of confining themselves in a dark room and listening to a record or a symphony or a concerto as a whole, which they would have done only a decade or so ago, thinking that time is left only for listening to and absorbing the energy of their most exciting excerpts. Climaxes of pieces of art are thus being embraced on the account of cutting all the quiet troughs in which they are based, through which they pass and where the precious space for reflection and assimilation of signs shed upon us like confetti during those exhilarating moments exists. However, without walking up and down across these hills and valleys and by only jumping from one top of the hill to another, not only do we risk to fall from the locus of grace in our mind and heart, but we also emerge from the moments of experiencing art more perplexed and sensually irritated than profounder and spiritually powerful, more like a disheveled soul spun around so many times that it has lost a sense of spiritual orientation and firm grounds to base enlightening action on and less like a ghostlike goddess floating over Earth. In such a manner, a global state of neurosis and spiritual confusion is contributed to, as we continue to drown deeper and deeper under the waves of the sea of sacramental signs that surrounds us from all sides, more than it surrounded any former generation on Earth, and all that simply because of neglecting the need to couple the instances of introspective quietness to those of overwhelming sensory excitement in a similar way as we couple exhalations to inhalations as we breathe.

In theater and films, as in life, this perfect meditative placidity which comes to present the center of the wheel of the most enchanting spinning of our incessantly dancing souls is induced via music and movement; sometimes, as in the wake of Laurie’s dancing scene in

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<sup>1136</sup> See Evan Eisenberg’s *The Recording Angel: Music, Records and Culture from Aristotle to Zappa*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT (2005), pp. 168.

<sup>1137</sup> See Ralph Harper’s *The Seventh Solitude: Man’s Isolation in Kierkegaard, Dostoyevsky, and Nietzsche*, The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, MD (1965), pp. 33.

<sup>1138</sup> *Watch My Dinner with Andre* directed by Louis Malle (1981).

American Graffiti, this effect is achieved amidst frenziedly rotating cameras, following the sounds of revving cars and adrenaline rushes of screaming, shouting and spray-painting adolescents; sometimes, as in the epilogue to Pan's Labyrinth, it is brought forth by the camera's gently flying by fountains, stone walls and paradisiacal gardens, evoking reflections on the seed of the self-sacrificial sentiment of the plot and enabling its enfoldment by the soft soil of one's spirit; sometimes, as in Visconti's Death in Venice, it is delivered on the wings of ethereal Mahler's music and memorable technicolor zooms in and out, opening gateways to the cosmic silence and distantness from the world that the mind of an artist resides in; and sometimes, as in Tarkovsky's Stalker, one of the movies that never fail to turn me into a mush, a mere blob of mucus that slides down the chair limply at its end, doors to this hallowed inner silence are opened with the key of unparalleled still and quiet, quite in accordance with the Serbian folk saying, "Wedge is best hammered out with a wedge". Then, in Theo Angelopoulos' gemlike movie with an ethereal title, Eternity and a Day, suggestive of the idea that a day is as long as eternity and proving both Cane's truism that "if I were to live for a thousand years, my whole life would fit in one day"<sup>1139</sup> and Bojan Pečar's wonder if "all the people, all loves and dreams last for one day only"<sup>1140</sup>, the creeping camera pans induce an equilibration between the watcher's being prompted to reflect on his own life and being immersed in and captivated by the watched, creating channels for the artwork to transmit something precious to the watcher and enrich his spirit thereby, alongside, as in this particular case, drawing a line through the middle ground between the dreamlike and the mundane, a middle ground necessary to be stood on if the artwork's aim is to demonstrate that life is a magical fairytale, a celestial fantasy, a divine dream enfolded by otherworldly beauties. And so, as I watched Bicycle Thieves in the Roxie Theater on the corner of 16<sup>th</sup> and Valencia and found myself plunged into the inner landscape of the soul, swimming amidst a prayerful silence of being, I became impelled for a second or so to recollect what great movies and colossal artworks in general ought to be like. Namely, when in the midst of examining a piece of art I discover **a precious moment of silence**, of captivating introspective emptiness, "of great stillness on Heaven and Earth"<sup>1141</sup>, I know I have encountered something of mountainous importance. "All things creative spring from silence"<sup>1142</sup>, a Serbian bohemian and a bard is known for saying, and, likewise, only when I find myself immersed in a sea of starry silence, be it during or after an encounter with a work of art, am I free to proclaim its genuine greatness, its acting as a seed for the birth and the sprouting of something blissful inside of me. A superb film critic as he has been, Jean-Luc Godard shut off the sound as his three protagonists in *Bande à part* decided to engage in a minute of silence and then made them stand up and spontaneously begin an on-and-off synchronized, falling-apart Madison dance routine, one and only in Godard's oeuvre, itself a critique and a step forward in their evolution from the days of Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly, perhaps to signify that such immersions into silence, inner or worldly, are the starting points for the emergence of the blissful and the divine and invite the watcher to search for the springs of the still and the quiet instead of the loud and the flashy in art and life alike. One of the earliest works of Martin Buber was a poetic musing over the polar nature of theatre wherein two characters, Leonhard and Daniel, converse as they just walked out

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<sup>1139</sup> Listen to Partibrejkers' Hiljadu godina on Partibrejkersi, Jugoton (1984).

<sup>1140</sup> Listen to Via talas' Ti on Ventilator 202 Vol.1 (1983).

<sup>1141</sup> Watch The Seventh Seal directed by Ingmar Bergman (1957).

<sup>1142</sup> See U svakom dobrom filmu dečaci igraju fudbal i pada kiša: an interview with Boža Koprivica, *Politika – Kultura, umetnost, nauka* (December 27, 2014), pp. 3.

of a theater<sup>1143</sup>. When Leonhard notices how Daniel appears “imprisoned in silence”<sup>1144</sup>, as if he had come not “from the theater, but from Eleusis”, the site of ancient Greek mysteries, he implies that the extent to which one distantly tiptoes through this veil of primordial silence after consuming from the grail of holy artfulness is directly proportionate to the extent to which one has become acquainted and genuinely moved by the given piece of art. The vision of Paulette Goddard listening mesmerizingly to the beauty of the silence created in the wake of Chaplin’s memorable speech at the end of the *Great Dictator* then springs in my head, so as to remind me that silence left following an artistic display of energy the only true place where its greatness can be read. A perfect song, thus, as I have always maintained, should leave impressions illustrated by the audience on Thom Yorke’s 2010 live performance of *True Love Waits*, a minimalistic masterpiece that emerged from the early oeuvre of the Oxford visionary, having been asked by the singer to sing along so as to remind him of the “f\*\*\*ing” words<sup>1145</sup>; they truly began doing so, but only until silence took over and they disobeyed Thom’s pledge, as if the sound waves created by his voice and guitar enwrapped each and every one into their own introspective bubbles floating throughout the electrified space in utter cosmic silence for interrupted seconds or minutes, depending on one’s ability to retain this inwardly oriented, meditative focus. The most beautiful songs, books and movies have this ability of clearing all the buzzing impressions around us and thrusting us into a splendidly silent space, suddenly enwrapping us with an untainted hush, in which we could float and be in touch with the essence of our being, uninterrupted by any external noises or circumstances. It is as if a pool of stars has opened in front of me on that night at Roxie, into which I could plunge, freely spread the arms of my spirit, look up and spin around in meditative ecstasy, feeling the sunshiny energy bursting from my heart and yet integrating it in its essence. This inner artistic landscape feels like an eternity found in a blissful moment, and I could dwell therein for a long time.

Thence, in the midst of an awareness of appreciation of the golden silence and stillness within the most masterful artistic creations, expanding in my mind like a colorful landscape, a flesh of thought reminded me how I have always inverted the main character of Einstein’s theory of relativity. Namely, although most people associate it with the relativity of spatial and temporal coordinates due to the relative movement of objects to each other, the heart of this theory lies in the proposed stillness and constancies, around which these common observations pertaining to movement and change revolve. Namely, the key hypothesis from which the entire theory of relativity emerged and which stands still like a Sun around which planets of numerous commonly observed insights circle, is the one claiming that the basic laws of physics, including the speed of light, are the same in each physical system, irrespective of whether it moves or not in relation to anything. Although properties of systems moving to or away from the observer will appear to the latter as modified compared to the static systems, the laws of physics in each of these systems, the observing and the observed, will be the same. All the popularly presented effects of this theory, from increased masses and elongation of objects that are seen from the observer’s frame of reference as approaching the speed of light to clocks ticking at a slower rate

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<sup>1143</sup> Read Martin Buber’s *On Polarity: Dialogue After the Theater*, In: *Martin Buber and the Theater*, edited and translated by Maurice Friedman, Funk & Wagnalls, New York, NY (1969), pp. 53.

<sup>1144</sup> “Then the curtain fell, the lights blazed up, a festive, well-meaning light, fit to mediate that of the street and that which had now disappeared I sat in the midst of the audience and found it difficult to know where I was”, notices Daniel at one point during their dialogue, to which Leonhard adds, “I know – I nodded to you, and you greeted me in return, but as if you did not know me”. *Ibid.*, pp. 57.

<sup>1145</sup> Watch Thom Yorke’s in-concert performance of *True Love Waits*, available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y80ubfmui6U&feature=related> (2010).

in such systems that pass us by at relativistic speeds, could be derived from this postulate of absolutism that lies at its heart<sup>1146</sup>. As such, in the sky of my mind this theory has always raised the image of Lao-Tzu's immovable center of the wheel in which the core of its usefulness resides rather than those of speed and inconstancy, which many 20<sup>th</sup> century artists took on as scientific inspiration, subsequently basing the approaches of whole artistic movements on the epithet of energetic volatility. As if finding inspiration in the Big Bang theory and the image of an infinitely expanding Cosmos that emerged from it, let alone the divisibility of atom into quarks, most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century artists have looked after reflecting the values of change and inconstancy in their works, although every once in a while we would come across artists who appeared as if they had recognized that the decisive sign in favor of this theory was a single diffuse tone in the middle of the microwave range, at the wavelength of almost exactly one millimeter, which Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson serendipitously picked from the surrounding noise and used to set forth the final proof of this cosmological cornerstone and win the Nobel Prize in physics, the inaudible tone that is now an unassailable epitome of simplicity in the scientific realm, reminiscent of that one and only tone a Zen master played on his flute to a king who wanted to hear the most majestic tune in the Universe. Some of these artistic spirits that immediately come to mind are the Serbian performance artist, Marina Abramović who went on to sit still for a whole month during her gig at the New York Museum of Modern Arts and gaze into the eyes of all those who wished to sit next to her, then Gilbert and George, the famous living sculptures, next to whom one could have occasionally found their five Laws of Sculptors, the final one of which was "The Lord chisels still"<sup>1147</sup>, and then, finally, the circle of progressive and artistically inclined psychologists centered around the idea of interconnectedness of all things advocated by the quantum theorist David Bohm<sup>1148</sup>, claiming that one has to break the tendency to go with the flow, block the natural movement and hold still if one is to reach the higher states of consciousness<sup>1149</sup>, a precept upon hearing of which most, if not all, yogis and Buddhists would have nodded their heads. Many classical Western artists would agree with it too, including the Venetian painter Paolo Veronese, whose most grandiose and famous work to date is the Wedding at Cana, depicting the Christ in the midst of delivering that legendary "mine hour is not yet come" (John 2:4) remark and thereafter making his first recorded miracle, that of turning water into wine at a feast, as the only immobile and speechless figure on the painting along with his mother, as if suggesting that locomotion and blabbering are but hindrances to the egression of divine thought and the performance of divine action. The central idea of this approach to intellectual and spiritual development is that, like Ellie Goulding's "lights that stop me and turn into stone"<sup>1150</sup> rather than impel to engage in an ecstatic dance, the most potent of all impressions ought to be absorbed and allowed to expand internally into an inner bliss in stony stillness of our gapingly awed beings if we are to acquire most, if not all, that they have to offer. Furthermore, these cognitive stances that accentuate the merits of suspended motion arose from Bohm's philosophy wherein an incessant flow was being seen as causative of every seemingly static and

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<sup>1146</sup> See, for example, Rob Knop's A Muddled Article on Relativity in the Oberlin Alumni Magazine, available at [scientopia.org/blogs/galacticinteractions](http://scientopia.org/blogs/galacticinteractions) (August 24, 2012).

<sup>1147</sup> See Rose Lee Goldberg's Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, NY (1988), pp. 167.

<sup>1148</sup> See David Bohm's Wholeness and the Implicate Order, Ark Paperbacks, London, UK (1980).

<sup>1149</sup> See David Bohm, Donald Factor, Peter Garrett – "Dialogue – A Proposal", available at [http://www.david-bohm.net/dialogue/dialogue\\_proposal.html](http://www.david-bohm.net/dialogue/dialogue_proposal.html) (1991).

<sup>1150</sup> Listen to Ellie Goulding's Lights on Lights, Polydor, UK (2010).

permanent quality of objects<sup>1151</sup>, demonstrating once again that movement and stillness, the relative and the absolute are indissolubly entwined around each other at all times and in all things. Therefore, it does not need to surprise us that, looked back upon, the 20<sup>th</sup> century could be seen torn and ravaged along the gap between the ideals of absolutism and relativism<sup>1152</sup>, from those embraced by the countless totalitarian and tyrannical regimes that reigned throughout its course to those causing “anything goes” nonchalance and apathy that plagued the immovably perplexed intellectuals of the modern age, respectively, and if this connotation of the theory of relativity, whereby absolutism is revealed to lie in the heart of relativism and *vice versa*, is to signify something, it is the wakeup call to base our stances on the middle ground between the two, which is exactly what the co-creational thesis, for one, with its balance between idealism and objectivism, wishes to attain. For, 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 wherefrom nothing fertile could originate, while on the other extreme we must pay attention not to be swallowed by the Charybdis’ whirlpools of passive relativism and deadening 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) After all, creative freedoms could flourish only within the boundaries of benevolently and imaginatively conceived and imposed laws, while the principles governing our knowledge and creation can evolve and be sustained only when ceaselessly infused with freedoms that enable their constant change in harmony with our constantly changing selves. Despite the incessant inclination of the young generations to overvalue freedoms and of the older generations to overvalue lawfulness, the secret of prosperity lies in the balance between the two, just as much as the secret of attaining a truly profound view of life lies in bringing the infantile and the experienced, the chaste and the seasoned together and providing grounds for the cross-fertilization of one another, whereby the former are being taught compassion and the latter are retaught naturalness, with the concoction of the two holding the recipe for some of the greatest outbursts of creativeness that humanity has ever seen. Therefore, when you come across a soul ready to drop the last guiding star from her pockets and deny every single law in the Universe, remind her that no questions could arise without their resting on a bed composed of presupposed answers and that no meaningful freedoms could therefore exist except through being streamed along the riverbeds defined by firmly embraced ideas and principles. For example, think of the political philosophy of democracy, an offspring of the broader philosophy of absolute relativism, which is to be blamed for the contagious passivity that plagues the modern youth and the intellectual elites alike, possessing the same dogmatic allure that religions and communism once used to have, with its correctness rarely ever being questioned in the modern milieu. As of today, however, it undergoes a massive decline in popularity in many parts of Europe, leaving an ideological vacuum in the wake of retreating traditionalists and democrats, serving as a powerful reminder of how the embracement of freedoms and freedoms only is bound to prove itself as toxic and unsustainable in the long run if it remains unbalanced with principles and laws, even if they be as changeable as weather on a May day in Chicago. Similarly, just as the serene sunshine lies in the back of even the most strident storm over the Great Lakes and just as every freedom has a set of restraints in its heart, there is no doubt that the diametrical opposite of the loudest, the starriest and the most bedazzling creation sits at its core:

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<sup>1151</sup> See David Bohm's Wholeness and the Implicate Order, Ark Paperbacks, London, UK (1980).

<sup>1152</sup> See Courtney E. Martin’s Do It Anyway: The New Generation of Activists, Beacon Press, Boston, MA (2010), pp. xiv.

silence and stillness. Lao-Tzu's words, "Stillness is the master of movement" (Tao-Te-Xing XXVI) and those that adorn Ch'ing Ching Ching, yet another monumental Taoist manual on enlightened living, also known as Cultivating Stillness, "Movement is the foundation of stillness"<sup>1153</sup>, are thus free to eternally reverberate inside of my head, side by side, reminding me of how stillness and constancy on one side and creative mobility and change on another are like two sides of a single coin, inseparable from each other, each providing the basis on which another stands. For, the heart of all songs, screams and acts that do not merely evanescently stir up the worldly appearances and leave but short-lived ripples and no lasting trace on the face of the Earth, but manage to weave some beautiful and unrelenting messages into it beats with some celestial silence and stillness, being reminiscent of a tranquil ocean that is the home to all the fast-flowing rivers around it. The inventors of the term "rock 'n' roll" may have known this secret, according to which the peacefulness and motionlessness of a rock are the center of creative movement, whereas as a counterbalance we could place the proverb that "a rolling stone gathers no moss" as well as the saying handed to us like white doves by the constructivist magician, Heinz von Foerster: "If you want to stay true to yourself, change"! Indeed, once we find a perfect equilibrium in our relationship with the world and it appears to us that our spirit is unstoppably soaring towards sublime heights of heavenly being, we should know that attempting to stay in it forever and resist any change is the recipe for swift loss of this inner state of harmony. On the other hand, listening to the advice given to Alice in Wonderland by the Queen of Hearts, "You have to run, and run, and run to stay where you are"<sup>1154</sup>, and making steps that seemingly take us away from this harmonious state is, strangely, the way to retain it. To jump into the sea of change and freely lose balance which we find ourselves holding is thus the way to keep abreast with the flow of inspiration within our hearts, lest we, of course, become like one of "these people who esteem a great imperfection to be alterable, generable and mutable and who thus deserve to meet with a Medusa's head that would transform them into statues of diamond and jade, that so they might become more perfect than they are"<sup>1155</sup>, as Galileo mused. Being open to change is therefore a vital precondition for letting that sacred stillness within us glaze and glow like the one described in the finale of the famous Led Zeppelin's song: "If you listen very hard, the tune will come to you at last, when all are one and one is all, to be a rock and not to roll"<sup>1156</sup>.

Since the times when Lucretius recognized that without emptiness extending between earthly bodies, no dancing movements of theirs through space would have existed<sup>1157</sup>, the lines of philosophical poesy that make us aware that neither would have the conditions for the shine of the celestial bodies and the thriving of the planets circling around nor of any stellar performances and the dazzled rays of human attention thirsty for inspiration revolving around them been made possible had there been no empty spaces that separate and set apart, have adorned the libraries of humanity. And indeed, this silence and emptiness were celebrated as the core meanings of artistic works by many before me. The founders of Constructivism in art, not cognitive science,

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<sup>1153</sup> See *Cultivating Stillness: A Taoist Manual for Transforming Body and Mind*, Translated by Eva Wong, Shambhala, Boston, MA (1992), pp. 23.

<sup>1154</sup> See Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), retrieved from <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/carroll/lewis/alice/index.html>.

<sup>1155</sup> The quote is from Galileo's *Dialogue on the Great World Systems* (1632) and could be found in Frank Wilczek's and Betsy Devine's *Longing for the Harmonies: Themes and Variations from Modern Physics*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, NY (1989), pp. 58.

<sup>1156</sup> Listen to Led Zeppelin's *Stairway to Heaven* on IV, Atlantic (1971).

<sup>1157</sup> See Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things*, Prosveta, Belgrade, Serbia (1<sup>st</sup> Century AD), pp. 21.

Antoine Pevsner and Naum Gabo, for example, claimed in their 1920 Realistic Manifesto that “the only way to liberate art from its impasse is to destroy compact mass and look for empty space”<sup>1158</sup>. Much earlier, Zen painters noted that “the emptiness of the canvas is where the true meaning of the painting lies”, as illustrated by the famous Zen story wherein the master sketches a bird with a few strokes on a blank piece of paper and then asks his disciples to guess what it is, with one saying “a bird”, the other saying “a seagull”, the third saying “an eagle”, and so on, before he surprises them by telling them that they were all wrong because it is “the sky with a bird in it, when you are only seeing the bird”<sup>1159</sup>. Many visual artists in the Far East, including generations of Japanese painters, from Tensho Shubun to Hiroshi Sugimoto, and Chinese filmmakers, from Tian Zhuangzhuang to Jia Zhangke, subsequently picked up on this ancient Zen view of the background, beginning to treat emptiness not as an inert surface to draw things on, but as a vital compositional element of the overall expression, as semantically potent as the wildest colors and lines visible to the eye. In the abstract works of art by Lucio Fontana, standing before which in the attempt to “prompt imagination to find more and more in them”<sup>1160</sup> makes us, as viewers, “feel the setting sense of depth (that) reaches out towards us and then beyond us into the space we regard as real and so the space created by our imagination begins to seem just as real as the space we are standing in and so we see that (the art) really demands a new way of looking from us to match the novelty of his methods”<sup>1161</sup>, one could always recognize an emptiness that drags one in, before spinning oneself in mysterious vortices and spitting out in a fresh form, with whole new sets of eyes to see the world in spiritually revived ways, the reason for which the critics have noted that “Fontana has spoken of the philosophy of nothingness behind his work, by which he meant the positive void charged with the energy on which the artist draws, but which he can never exhaust”<sup>1162</sup>. This brings to mind seven-year old Theo’s habit of bringing me a gift in the shape of matryoshka dolls, one inside the other and deep inside nothing, prompting him to say that he has given me love and me to conclude that he has given me a whole universe and more, the best gift of them all; likewise, getting hold of this emptiness from which holy action comes to life is the greatest reward for an artist in search of inspiration. In fact, if products of the abstract art could be seen as closest in the artistic domain to the features on the surface of rocks, those last destinations on the journey of the souls from humans to animals to plants to minerals envisaged by Pythagoras, which I could tumble in my hands and gaze at for an eternity and a day, it should not surprise that stillness and blank space are two of their greatest sources of strength. Of course, that finding solace and the source of energy in the void has not been the privilege of abstract art only can be attested by numerous works of art made prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. When it comes to Giotto’s paintings, for example, the most fascinating aspect thereof relates neither to the human figures nor to the perspective nor to the iconographic

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<sup>1158</sup> See Alan Gowans’ *The Restless Art: A History of Painters and Painting, 1760 – 1960*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, PA (1966), pp. 354.

<sup>1159</sup> See Donna Farhi’s *Becoming Who You Are*, In: *Yoga: The Essence of Life*, edited by Alix Johnson, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW (2004), pp. 1 – 24. Donna extends this analogy to conclude that “if you look at the sky what you tend to notice is the objects in it – the passing birds or changing clouds. The ordinary or habitual mind has a tendency to fixate and follow these transient forms without noticing the unchanging and ever present canvas of the sky. When we bring our attention to rest upon this canvas, we find that it is still, luminous, and silent. A mind filled with such awareness has become awakened to its true nature...we must learn to see the sky and to focus our attention on this unchanging background”.

<sup>1160</sup> Watch Lucio Fontana – *Concetto Spaziale* (1957) episode of *Masterworks* documentary series, Arthaus Musik (1988).

<sup>1161</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1162</sup> *Ibid.*

composition, but to the sense of space extending into infinity, the cosmically bluish vacuity of which draws the viewer in and momentarily liberates her from the earthly concerns and limitations. Giotto, who along with his contemporary, Dante, served as an early 14<sup>th</sup> Century precursor of Renaissance, was the first Western painter to create not only the striking sense of space between figures, but also the illusion of depth on a flat surface<sup>1163</sup>, the effects of which both fed on his ability to channel the observer into the void of infinity from almost every point in a painting, explaining why I - and not only I - found gateways to eternity in the cerulean walls of the Scrovegni Chapel in my favorite Italian city of Padua. Likewise, the most staggering and mesmerizing moments in Wagner's operas, most notably the Ring of the Nibelung, are the quiet sections, when the orchestra winds down and the actors sink into darkness, turn into still shadows or resemble statues planted on the stage. Hafiz, a poet that is the poetry that is the poet that is the poetry, correspondingly identified himself with "a hole in a flute that the Christ's breath moves through"<sup>1164</sup>, while architects and other artists of the ambient tuned to something more and beyond the materialistic features of their arts have called their admirers to sense the silence of the spaces that surround them, alongside exploring the visible and palpable outlines with their gaze and touch<sup>1165</sup>. For, each space, each creature and each deed in this world echo with their own, unique silence, which aural antennas of only the most sensitive beings can pick, amplify and let their spirits joyfully surf on. The renowned modernist and coiner of the phrase "less is more"<sup>1166</sup>, Mies van der Rohe therefore called for sensation of the space surrounded by the edges of a building as the one ceaselessly vibrating with "the will of an epoch"<sup>1167</sup>, or *Zeitgeist*, as some may say, while his predecessor, August Schmarsow saw architecture as "the creatress of space"<sup>1168</sup>, as it was enfoldment of the empty space by the tectonic constructions and giving this space a unique spirit thereby that he considered the ultimate aim, the heart of the art of architecture. These perceptions of space as the element central to visual arts creation are in agreement with Leopold Stokowski's saying that "a painter paints picture on canvas but musicians paint their pictures on silence", a statement that we could extend and arrive at the idea that understanding music well must be reminiscent of riding deftly on starry silence that is at its base. Thus, in my aural universe, when I listen music, I do lean my ears on the juxtapositions of individual instruments and harmonies traversing the space, but my soul lingers on the vibe of the silence underneath. And when my listening to a musical piece is over, it is the beauty of this silence that continues to live with me, ennobling my spirit far more than if I were focused on the elation of the senses by sound solely. For, I know that what makes music great is what lies beyond music, in that mystical silence on which its sounds float. For this reason, not objectively the best or the most elaborate songs, but those that have an unexplainable magic woven within this silence move people most, the recipe for the creation of which is, of course, none because it resides deep in the silence of the creator's soul and no amount of technical mastery or magic formulas on how to bind notes together can make up for it. In concert with this string of thoughts, Claude Debussy remarkably pointed out that "silence between notes is what truly

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<sup>1163</sup> Prior to Giotto, it is usually said that figures in paintings looked as if "they were cut out of paper and placed upon the picture". See E. H. Gombrich's *The Story of Art*, Fifteenth Edition, Phaidon Press, London, UK (1989), pp. 201 and 275.

<sup>1164</sup> See Hafiz's *The Gift*, Translated by Daniel Ladinsky, Penguin Compass, New York, NY (14<sup>th</sup> Century).

<sup>1165</sup> See Werner Herzog's *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, a documentary movie about the Chauvet Cave (2010).

<sup>1166</sup> See Richard Weston's *100 Ideas that Changed Architecture*, Laurence King Publishing, London, UK (2011), pp. 154.

<sup>1167</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 125.

<sup>1168</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 124.

matters in a musical piece”, while Gisèle Brelet deepened this claim by observing that “music is born, develops, and realizes itself within silence: upon silence it traces out its moving arabesques, which give a form to silence and yet do not abolish it”<sup>1169</sup>. The British conductor, Mark Wigglesworth noted the following in his discourse on silence in music, seconds after quoting John Cage’s aforementioned 4’33” and Sofia Gubaidulina’s *Stimmen... Verstummen*, an orchestral piece whose climax comes in the form of a completely silent movement during which the conductor waves his baton and signals an imaginary time to still players: “The music exists as much in the holes between the notes as it does in the notes themselves. Though its sounds describe the specific, its silences expresses the infinite. If a silence is truly heard, it wields enormous power. And if a performer engages in its potential it can express more than any audible note”<sup>1170</sup>. Rob Birch of Stereo MC’s wondered what makes one song have a catchy groove, while another, in spite of sounding very much the same, have it not before he came to conclusion that “you can make a rhythm out of anything, but what makes certain songs have the groove is in the rhythm, which is not necessarily in the kicks or the snare, but in something in-between the gaps; that is what gives the song that little atmosphere, the vibration that makes the groove, and the kicks are just holding it down”<sup>1171</sup>, with this art of infusing space with energy being, of course, alien to even its greatest masters. Thelonious Monk, moreover, revolutionized the jazz piano playing style by shunning the bebop idea that virtuosity is a necessity and demonstrating that to elicit a sense of rhythmical and harmonic liberation in a highly effective manner one need not storm down the keyboard à la Art Tatum or Bud Powell. Rather, one can, as Monk did, introduce a whole lot of empty spaces<sup>1172</sup>, both within the lines and as suspenseful, prolonged periods of rest, demanding, like Picasso, that the observer invests an active effort in filling them with her imagination. When this peculiar feature is added to Monk’s trademark aural stroll full of deliberate fallacies, resembling a wobbly walk composed of notes played one by one and sounding as if the pianist has just sat by the piano for the very first time, it becomes self-explanatory why this piano pioneer was avoided for twenty years by night club owners, the reason allegedly being his overt “bizarreness”<sup>1173</sup>. One of his successors, the jazz pianist McCoy Tyner, known for his characteristic right-hand staccatos and broken chords where individual notes would be interspersed with silent gaps, concordantly observed the following: “A long time ago, a lot of the piano players used to lock, close everything up. Play all the notes in a chord. They left no space. But I’m finding space, and the spaces between the intervals are just as important – more important sometimes – than filling the chords up”<sup>1174</sup>. The legend says that nothing inspired Miles Davis more in Ahmad Jamal’s playing style than “silence between the notes of his solos”<sup>1175</sup>; it is this silence, as some critics say, that the popular prince of darkness

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<sup>1169</sup> See Mickey Hart’s and Fredric Lieberman’s *Spirit into Sound: The Magic of Music*, Grateful Dead Books, Novato, CA (1999), pp. 106.

<sup>1170</sup> See Mark Wigglesworth’s *The Rest is Silence*, retrieved from <https://www.markwigglesworth.com/writing/the-rest-is-silence/> (2020).

<sup>1171</sup> Watch Stereo MC’s - Connected | The Story Behind The Song by Top 2000 a gogo, YouTube (September 17, 2020), retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSLrQbTLHM4&feature=youtu.be>.

<sup>1172</sup> “Monk’s space” since then became a phrase used to describe many other displays of “less is more” philosophy in jazz orchestration. See John Litweiler’s *The Freedom Principle: Jazz After 1958*, William Morrow and Co., New York, NY (1984), pp. 19.

<sup>1173</sup> See Stanley Crouch’s *Considering Genius*, Basic Civitas Books, New York, NY (2006), pp. 87.

<sup>1174</sup> See Ashley Kahn’s *A Love Supreme: The Story of John Coltrane’s Signature Album*, Penguin Putnam, New York, NY (2002), pp. 110.

<sup>1175</sup> See Ashley Kahn’s *Kind of Blue: The Making of the Miles Davis Masterpiece*, Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA (2007), pp. 203.

transmuted into modal jazz on *Kind of Blue*, an epitome of the sip of coolness in this musical genre. Somewhere along the same stream of thought, Kahlil Gibran noticed how “only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing”<sup>1176</sup>, while the Russian-American conductor, André Kostelanetz claimed that “one of the greatest sounds of them all is utter, complete silence”<sup>1177</sup>. Proficient orators and storytellers know about the importance of silent gaps in their speeches, moments when they let the messages delivered reverberate among the audience, and utilize them like a most precious tool in getting their points and sentiments across. They know that silence, which “can be more emphatic than a shout”<sup>1178</sup>, is absolutely vital for capturing the listeners’ attention that, as ever, tends to wander off with each one of their heartbeats. Well-timed pauses increase the tension that sucks the attention of the audience and makes it more receptive to the message of the talk, alongside enriching the value of the words by standing in the way of piling them up unnecessarily through extensive blabbering, the mistake most enthusiastic lecturers on the podia of science regularly commit. Nina Simone, therefore, compared them to a tool for “mass hypnosis”<sup>1179</sup> and considered silence a key musical element<sup>1180</sup>, owing her magnetic performances largely to the rhythm of the pauses she would create. Whether pauses are employed to herald a mountainously powerful utterance or to let the weight of the expounded message sink in, the crossroad wherefrom their embracement and avoidance splinter off in two different directions is where orating pros that incite the listeners’ passion and imagination diverge from sheer amateurs that hang on to a dull monotone. This is why the theatre theoretician, Gordon Craig dedicated his most popular work to date, *On the Art of the Theatre*, to the imaginary young actor who “has learned that the sudden drop in the voice from forte to piano has the power of accentuating and thrilling the audience as much as the crescendo from the piano into the forte”<sup>1181</sup> and who knows that sinking slowly into silence can be at times more expressive than hollering like a banshee in trying to get the point across. This is also why Igor Stravinsky, having recognized the precise poetic metrics in the pauses at the end of the lines in W. B. Yeats’ recitations of his poems, ruminated out loud that “articulation is mainly separation”<sup>1182</sup> and went on to teach musicians to actively play every quaver of rest rather than passively wait for it to roll by. After all, from the grounds of the proposition that music underlies each and every aspect of our existence, it could be, first of all, inferred that without properly developed musicality no truly moving orations could be delivered, and then, given that the rhythm, one of the essential musical elements, is composed of alternating beats and pauses, the necessity of emphasizing pauses between words as much as words *per se* is naturally implied. The mastery in employing moments of silence in verbal communication can thus be said to be directly proportional to our ability to inspire the surrounding souls with the spoken word; or, as the 19<sup>th</sup> Century English poet, Martin Farquhar Tupper claimed, “Well-timed silence hath more eloquence than speech”. This is why it is questionable whether Martin Luther King’s address in

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<sup>1176</sup> See Kahlil Gibran’s *The Prophet*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY (1923), pp. 81.

<sup>1177</sup> See Mickey Hart’s and Fredric Lieberman’s *Spirit into Sound: The Magic of Music*, Grateful Dead Books, Novato, CA (1999), pp. 144.

<sup>1178</sup> See Gilbert Highet’s *The Art of Teaching*, Vintage Books, New York, NY (1950), pp. 105.

<sup>1179</sup> Watch Nina Simone, *La Legende* directed by Frank Lords (1992).

<sup>1180</sup> See Roger Nupie’s *Dr. Nina Simone: Biography* (2013), cited on the Wikipedia page on Nina Simone: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nina\\_Simone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nina_Simone) (2017).

<sup>1181</sup> See Edward Gordon Craig’s *On the Art of the Theatre*, Edited by Franc Chamberlain, Routledge Theatre Classics, New York, NY (1911), pp. 5.

<sup>1182</sup> See Robert Craft’s *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky*, Doubleday & Company, Garden City, NY (1959), pp. 136.

front of the Lincoln Memorial in DC would have reached such a magnificent proportion had he not inserted a long pause after pronouncing the legendary “I had a dream”<sup>1183</sup>. Just like performers of Arvo Pärt’s music are taught how to literally “play silence”<sup>1184</sup>, an essential creative element of the performed piece, so it is with lecturers *par excellence* who creatively employ silence in their repertoire of expressions: rather than leaving it mentally unattended or, even worse, panicky avoiding it by all possible means, they consciously use every second of it to deliver their message. In musical compositions that rely on silent breaks, the way in which silence is approached and ended, softly lifting the notes out of the sea of silence or abruptly drowning them in it, as well as its duration and gestures exhibited on stage while it lasts, are what endows it with meaning, and so is with pauses deployed in a masterful orator’s speech: by instinctively controlling all of these elements that define how striking silence will be, they are often able to stun and almost hypnotize the audience by the way silence they employ is being “played”. From centuries of insight into the nature of logical statements we know how definitions of anything implicitly describe the opposites of the objects defined: every confirmation thus hides a negation within itself and every assertion that distinguishes what is beautiful simultaneously outlines what ought to be considered as ugly, or as cleverly told in a Hawaiian folk song, “If in the word is life, in the word is death”<sup>1185</sup>. Similarly, every sound sent out to travel through the air speaks not only about itself, but about the silence which stands forth as its aural antipode. Away from the semantics and into the meaning of life lived, not merely blabbered about, we come across Andre Gregory and his encountering in tears the remark from Ingmar Bergman’s *Autumn Sonata*, “I could always live in my art, but not in my life”<sup>1186</sup>, at a turning point in his life, after which he reportedly became so alive that he began to feel connected with literally everything, the corollary of which was, however, that he could not get away from being equally intimately tied to death at the very same time. “Love is the bridge between life and death”, someone has said, alluding to Rainer Maria Rilke’s verse “Life and death: they are one, at core entwined”, and along the same line of thought we can argue that the most creative performance is such that it appears as a bridge suspended between the ocean of silence and fireworks of exciting movement, both of which accentuate the beauty and meaning of each other as the colorful carousel of our expressions spins and spins. Needless to add, quite often we come across expressions that spring from a fear of the statics of silence and by running away from it fall into the very traps they were evading in the first place: namely, sheer dreariness and insipidity. “I came to know you, but all you do is hide behind words”, says Marilyn Monroe to Albert Einstein in Terry Johnson’s play *Insignificance*, offering words that denounce words and praise wordlessness as a route to the human soul. In 1995, when R.E.M., who had by that time been on a hiatus from touring for six years, went back on stage, they wanted to hide themselves behind their sound and so they made it trashed, glam-rock-like and really, really loud, creating in the process their least valuable record to date, *Monster*, the main use of which was that its throwing the band to a state of depression resulted in a masterwork as its sequel, namely *New Adventures in Hi-Fi*; likewise, when we wish to hide our heart before others, the best way, as this musical example shows, is to evade silence and talk excessively loudly and

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<sup>1183</sup> See the web page of Westside Toastmasters, *The Science of Silence*, available at [http://westsidetoastmasters.com/article\\_reference/physical\\_technique.shtml#bodylang](http://westsidetoastmasters.com/article_reference/physical_technique.shtml#bodylang) (2012).

<sup>1184</sup> See Paul Hillier’s *Arvo Pärt: Oxford Studies of Composers*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY (1997), pp. 199.

<sup>1185</sup> See Ted Gioia’s *Healing Songs*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC (2006), pp. 18.

<sup>1186</sup> Watch *My Dinner with Andre* directed by Louis Malle (1981).

rather endlessly. For, in the end, we do not reveal, but rather conceal our essence by talking and talking, affectedly, out of a dreadful sense of obligation and “embarrassment of being in the world”, as Jep Gambardella named that murky shield sprawled like some gargantuan spit over the glow of our divine spirit in his final line of *La Grande Bellezza*, adding also the following: “This is how it always ends. With death. But first there was life, hidden beneath the blah, blah, blah. It’s all settled beneath the chitter-chatter and the noise: silence and sentiment, emotion and fear. The haggard, inconstant flashes of beauty”<sup>1187</sup>. Therefore, lest “word get in the way”<sup>1188</sup> of souls colliding, merging and cross-pollinating one another, their encounters better be enwrapped in silence, as magical as it can be when the moment is right. Remember, in that sense, Mungo Thomson’s magnificent appropriation video artwork titled *The American Desert* (for Chuck Jones) and created by erasing Wile E. Coyote and Road Runner from the eponymous cartoon. By doing so, the author revealed the soothing and sublime beauty of an authentic southwestern American landscape “pocked by deep gorges, stone spires and precipitous mesas”<sup>1189</sup>, otherwise masked by the unceasing blah-blahs and erratic wanderings of the animated bird and coyote, and posed a question to the watcher: how much more beautiful America would be if we could sense its underlying energy, unspoiled by the garbage words and garbage gestures of its peppy people. Also, Fritz Lang’s thrillers made during the transition from the silent film to the sound film eras would not be considered so revolutionary if it was not for their going against both the silent era premise of adding music to every scene and the sound era premise of flooding scenes with their natural sounds; rather, the Austrian director employed silence as a source of suspense, often deliberately leaving out the natural sounds, such as that of cars rushing through the street or footsteps in the quiet night, intercepting them with, say, jingle of the keychains or a puddle splash surrounded by seconds of complete silence. Think, then, of the final scenes of Abbas Kiarostami’s *cinéma vérité* classic, *Close-Up*, wherein the director comes up with the idea to mimic the breaking up of the microphone catching the conversation between the protagonist and his alter-ego as they finally meet and ride through the streets of Tehran on a motorcycle and its providing but a fragmentary sound to the director’s crew following the motorcyclists in a truck with a cracked windshield, thus producing a thrilling effect on the viewers using the simplest tool of them all: silence<sup>1190</sup>. By keeping the memory of this remarkable cinematic moment wherein truth is glimpsed through the prism of deceptions<sup>1191</sup> and dreams become reality after passing through the dark passages of exhaustive trials and tribulations in the angle of my mind’s eye, I

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<sup>1187</sup> Watch *La Grande Bellezza*, movie directed by Paolo Sorrentino (2013).

<sup>1188</sup> Listen to Luna’s *Still at Home on Rendezvous, Jetset* (2004).

<sup>1189</sup> Quoted is the description of Mungo Thomson’s 33’45’’ long *The American Desert* (for Chuck Jones) video (2002) at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Arts (2018).

<sup>1190</sup> The general belief that this scene, along with most other scenes in this docufictional account of real life events, including the protagonist’s trial, are veritably documentary in nature is, in fact, untrue. As noted by Godfrey Cheshire in reference to this scene, “Kiarostami’s camera being ‘hidden’ is an unnecessary device that slyly converts a documentary technique to dramatic purpose. And there is this: the ‘sound problems’ caused by that bad mic on Makhmalbaf are also fake, applied to the soundtrack after the fact (Kiarostami does something similar in his documentary *Homework*). This little trick, it would seem, is crucial to the film’s final impact. After straining against the annoyance caused by the in-and-out sound, the viewer inevitably experiences an emotional surge when the beautiful theme of *The Traveler* suddenly overwhelms the mechanical dissonance”. See Godfrey Cheshire on *Close-Up*, New York Press (December 29, 1999), retrieved from <http://www.slantmagazine.com/house/article/godfrey-cheshire-on-closeup-abbas-kiarostami-1990>.

<sup>1191</sup> Abbas Kiarostami is known to have said that “we can never get close to the truth except through lying”. See Godfrey Cheshire on *Close-Up*, New York Press (December 29, 1999), retrieved from <http://www.slantmagazine.com/house/article/godfrey-cheshire-on-closeup-abbas-kiarostami-1990>.

often wonder how a little bit of silence could magically replenish earthlings' esprit and sprightliness as well as how sometimes subtracting from an overabundance leads to an ever greater abundance of beauty to pour out of the things in question. This was exactly the point made by the Uruguayan filmmaker, Germán Tejeira in his movie, *A Moonless Night*, where a sudden power outage immerses the characters in pitch darkness, but inspires a number of human relations to become more intimate and humane than they would have been had there been no blackout. This film director came to the idea to use this as a movie plot after attending a concert where a 40 minute blackout created a magical experience, learning only later this was one of many so-called faux blackouts that performance artists all across Uruguay had used as a part of their performance<sup>1192</sup>, once again demonstrating how less can be more. Countless are, therefore, records, including *Be Here Now* by Oasis and *Let's Get Out of This Country* by Camera Obscura, that would have sounded way better than they do had there been willingness to minimize the burden of instrumentation and make things more minimal on behalf of their creators. On one hand, I love to say that if I were a music producer, I would chase 10000 Maniacs circa 1987 with a hammer and a muffle so as to undulate the waves of their music and let it breathe, like Big Star's *Third*. With a stick and a lasso I would run after Morrissey and his gang, too, as they were entering BBC studios in 1984 to record *Hatful of Hollow*, which could have become their chef-d'oeuvre had they only de-smoothened it and made it sound like rough seas, sweeping the listener with one wave after another, all until in its indolent roll and accentuated ups and downs it began to resemble Neil Young's *Tonight's the Night* more than a soft elevator disco. With the minimalistic gem of Massive Attack's *Blue Lines* ringing in my ears, most music of the modern day, in fact, I would not iron and streamline, but hammer down and break with gazillions of pauses in an attempt to make it more exciting for the soul. On the other hand, though, the very same principle of promoting more silence and empty spaces in today's voluminous conversations so as to romanticize and beautify the communications of the modern day, wherein real life stays "hidden beneath the blah, blah, blah", is what I feel I am on a mission to accomplish every morning when I wake up. "Only unfulfilled love can be romantic", says mysterious Maria Ellena before she has, symbolically, even appeared in Woody Allen's *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*, the story about transcendental Love being more powerful than the body or the barbed wires posed around our aura by the hindrances of our mental makeup, capable of flipping our personalities upside down when it wants so and when it simply comes near us, softly and imperceptibly, and distantly, far above the farthest horizons, touching vivaciously the luminous saying, shining like a burning star, that "we are not bodies that 'have the soul', but souls that have the body instead". And when James Brown, the Godfather of Soul, was asked what it takes to make one a soul singer, he said, "It's the word 'can't' that makes you a soul singer"<sup>1193</sup>, this and nothing else, perhaps wishing to hint at all the places never seen and things never done because of various roadblocks set on one's path as those that bring about a soul in man. In fact, if we were to implement Marie Ellen's remark in every aspect of our lives, we would soon find ourselves gaining fortunes by subtracting, lest we, conversely, become a beggar by piling. "As I simplify our family life, my child has space to just be"<sup>1194</sup>, says an SF

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<sup>1192</sup> See Jose Solís' interview with Germán Tejeira on "A Moonless Night", Uruguay's Oscar Submission, *The Film Experience* (November 10, 2015), retrieved from <http://thefilmexperience.net/blog/2015/11/10/interview-german-tejeira-on-a-moonless-night-uruguays-oscar.html>.

<sup>1193</sup> Watch *Mr. Dynamite: The Rise of James Brown*, a documentary directed by Alex Gibney (2014).

<sup>1194</sup> See Rhye St. Julien's *Simplicity: The Power of Enough*, *Golden Gate Mothers Magazine* (March 2014), pp. 14-15.

mom as she picks up the plethora of toys from her apartment floor and suddenly fills it with emptiness through which the waves of divine energy could roll and tumble uninterruptedly, hinting subtly at the treasures of the soul that are to be gained if we only learn to let go off things, tokens and afterthoughts. Here is where we may summon up the message of Ted Dewan's book for children about Crispin Tamworth, "the pig who had it all"<sup>1195</sup>, the room of whom was filled with every toy in the world while he was sullen and bored all of the time, but then a Christmas gift came to his door, with a tag saying that it was "the very best thing in whole wide world"; alas, when the pig opened the box, it realized that there was nothing in it, and so he discarded it, though only to be found by his neighbors, who quickly turned it into a source of a very spirited game, which engrossed them all, the pig included, all until the sunset, meaning that the empty space, a total absence of stimuli, when we are immersed in an overabundance thereof, can be the best stimulus of them all. Hence the outstanding appropriateness of my Mom's habit of subtly interrupting the ongoing conversation and saying, "Let us all listen to some silence now", thus echoing her favorite poet, Jovan Dučić's saying that "there are silences memorable more than the finest of words"<sup>1196</sup>, alongside the spirit of Godard's *Nana* and her wondering, "Why must one always talk? One shouldn't talk, but live in silence"<sup>1197</sup>, generating a swoosh of magic through the air thereby, spurring our senses and expanding everyone's angelic wings of imagination and creativity, both of which tend to be harmfully hampered by the empty talk that dominates our daily lives. For, hers was a state of mind of perpetual enchantment by Creation, shared by artless Henriette in Jean Renoir's idyllic *A Day in the Country*, an homage to the golden days of impressionism, in a scene in which she rides a boat with her beau and declares that "it's so quiet here that it seems wrong to make any noise, to break the silence"; "Silence? With birds chattering away?", responds the unromantic young man, to which Henriette whispers delightfully, "Their song is part of the silence", hinting at the immersion into silence, as far from the sapless clamor of mundane conversations as it could be, as the closest path to the nearby hearts. A strategy I, myself, have employed to inconspicuously convert a chatty but vacant social setting into a silent and truly enriching one is to add a long line of silence before each comment I make or an answer I give; not only does this allow me to reconsolidate my behavioral impulses and avoid desensitizing automatism, but it also implicitly speaks to the clique in favor of silence as the ultimate destination toward which all illuminative languages should lead. After all, what is talking, sometimes I deem, but coordinated bouncing of the tongue off the palate in the mouth, an act infinitely less significant than footsteps, dancing moves, shoulder swings, hugs and any other gestures made in space and time as well as than the silent languages of the heart and of the radiance of the spirit, which is an insight upon the understanding of which the will to continue to be stubbornly involved in verbal clashes of opinions dwindles instantly, opening the room for a truly cosmic consciousness to dawn upon one. At that point all languages become more trivial than a flap of an autumn leaf in a gust of air and silenced by the music of being lying far beyond it, in the sphere of spirit, dance and touch, and one becomes freed from enticement by the fiend of the flaring tongue of which Frank Zappa talked when he disparaged our attachment, as a culture and a civilization, to language: "The problem with lyrics stems from a primitive belief in this country that there are certain words in our language that would corrupt you instantaneously the moment they are released into the atmosphere; it's like animism and is stupid that an idea

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<sup>1195</sup> See Ted Dewan's *Crispin: The Pig Who Had It All*, Doubleday, London, UK (2000).

<sup>1196</sup> See Jovan Dučić's *Letter from Italy - Rome*, In: *Gradovi i himere*, Rad, Belgrade, Serbia (1940).

<sup>1197</sup> Watch *Vivre sa vie* directed by Jean-Luc Godard (1962).

like that persists in an industrial society”<sup>1198</sup>. Of course, this ruthless dismantler of linguistic locks imprisoning our infinite minds into something terrene and finite, this breaker of the spell and banisher of long shadows language casts on the sunlit, indubitably nonverbal territories of the human mind, to this very day stands as one of rare San Franciscans who has done a fair share of martyring day to day to liberate the existential essence untainted by Word to the surface of our beings. And today, whenever I listen to one of my Mom’s favorite foreign records, *The Trinity Session* by Cowboy Junkies, an album recorded with a single microphone in a church in downtown Toronto in whose shadow I gave a lecture on a fine summer afternoon, hearing the modest musical qualities therein and an infinite depth of the silence on which it floats, as if it is this magical space playing the instruments rather than the latter graciously filling the former, the space whose listening enchants me every time, I arrive at the same conclusion over and over again: when our heart is at the right place, anchored to the bedrock of the sea of love that freely wallows our being left and right, then the technique, the talents and the amenities matter little; it is the invisible spirit that conquers the world, even when it sends forth its waves from the deepest trenches of reality. Although she, “a miner for gold”<sup>1199</sup> like no other I have been blessed to meet in this life, is no longer with me, nowhere before was an absence of something being such a loud sign of the presence of that very same thing, in this case of her divine spirit guiding me imperceptibly with her gentle hand through this dark and enchanted forest that life seen through the eye of my heart is. Likewise, what this long spiel about the significance of silence in our lives points at is this miraculous nature of life wherein only by cutting down impressions and expressions timely do we have the chance to allow their essences to remain to live forever, an insight over which the unmovable and soundless Buddha, like the full Moon, seeing God, the very essence of experience, after eliminating every single detail of this experience through meditation, smiles in nirvana.

Therefore, as we see, just as earthquakes along the Ring of Fire are caused by the oceanic waters entering the deepest seabed of the Pacific, so do great narrators use prolonged moments of silence in their verbal discourses as those during which a powerful momentum is built. They know that it is with such resting on the deepest bottom of the sea with their insides that the most powerful collisions of I and Thou are reached. The momentum of these collisions can occasionally be as immense as the one of underground tectonic spasms that had driven today’s India all the way from the southern hemisphere to its current place on the map of the planet and pushed the ocean floor to the top of the world thereby, building the tallest mountain range on Earth, nowadays known as the Himalayas. At times, thus, it could be powerful enough to raise the quiet seat of our soul from which the expressional starburst of our being originates to the tops of the world, the evidence for the possibility of which we have in the tallest mountain peak in the world, Mount Everest of the Himalayas, which, as noted, once lay at the bottom of an ancient sea, before it was pushed upwards in the collision of two tectonic plates: Indian and Eurasian. In such a way, mysterious energies that swirl across the deepest orbits of these talented artists’ consciousness become propelled to the most prominent surface of their being wherefrom they become able to water many thirsty souls standing at the bottom of this mountainous appearance of theirs, just like the Himalayas do today for almost a half of the population of the Earth. Firstly, these masterful performers know that meditative submersion into the deepest spheres of our

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<sup>1198</sup> Watch Frank Zappa on Dick Cavett, Public Broadcasting Service, retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoxaBSBIvU>.

<sup>1199</sup> “Can’t you feel the rock dust in your lungs? It’ll cut down a miner when he is still young”, says Margo Timmins in *Mining for Gold*, the opening track on Cowboy Junkies’ *Trinity Sessions*, RCA (1987).

consciousness is required to commence an enchanting performance during which the glow of our spirit will emerge to the surface of our being and the world. Secondly, they know that had these precious pauses in their speeches been missing, no cracks in the edifices of their talks could have been made, through which the sunlight of divine thought could penetrate the minds of others and wash them away on the tsunami-like waves of their beauty. Skillful lecturers also often use pauses in their speeches to awaken the audience from an absentminded slumber, demonstrating all in all how silence can sometimes reanimate one more than thousands of words can and thus be louder than the loudest screams, tempests and thunders, as an old poet might have noticed. Felix Mendelssohn understood this thunderous strength of silence and one of his favorite stories, which he did not only repeat over and over again but also turned into a type of greeting with a particular companion of his<sup>1200</sup>, was about a guileless Gaul mistaking a motionless assembly of Roman senators sitting in deathlike silence for stone statues, plucking the beard of one of them and immediately being cut down by a sword, purposefully warning the ignorant audiences against poking pauses impatiently, lest they be crushed by their dormant powers. Remember, then, when the prophet Elijah stood on the top of Mount Horeb, waiting for a sign from God, the latter appeared neither as a rumbling earthquake nor as a whipping wind that broke rocks to pieces with a deafening noise nor as a blazing fire which all passed carrying no divine signs; rather, it came in form of a “still small voice” (Kings I 19:12). Andrew Wyeth, who roamed around the Mid Coast Maine hills and meadows at summertime in search of painterly inspiration, always trying “to leave myself very bland”<sup>1201</sup>, utterly empty-minded so as to remain “very open to catch a vibration”<sup>1202</sup>, thus “often said that he thrived on Cushing, Maine, not because of the romance of the sea (which he rarely painted), but because of its ‘nothingness’”<sup>1203</sup>, despising cities because they, in his opinion, bred “watered-down human beings”<sup>1204</sup>. Yellowstone Park rangers would readily remind you that glimpsing a sweet little cub in front of you, quiet and pensive, is much more dangerous and prone to cause “the twilight of gods in the head”<sup>1205</sup> than seeing a big bear, and I, yet another catcher in the rye holding an imaginary sheriff’s star of devotion to the earthling close to my heart, am telling you that little things in life carry much more precious signs, be they propitious or ominous, even though most ears around us are set to detect only the blaring and thunderous ones. In search of the example of one such little thing that quietly and imperceptibly guards a far more colossal one, we need to look no further than the bright metallic Moon levitating above our heads, the astral body that does not only express its immense devotion for the Earth around which it revolves by, spectacularly, always facing it, but has also verily lived up to this image of celestial care by standing in the way of dangerous asteroids zooming through the Solar System for eons, protecting us from collisions with them and thus acting as a cosmic shield without which life on Earth would have never evolved into its present forms. Despite this, of course, it is the Sun at best and mundane things and events widely discussed in the public at worst that the attention of the middling majority will always be paid to, even though we should be taught that with every turn of its focus away from the silent and the small and towards the big and banging, we are being robbed by a bit more of that precious sensitivity to find exquisiteness in the littlest and commonest things, without which, we know,

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<sup>1200</sup> See Norman Lebrecht’s *The Book of Musical Anecdotes*, The Free Press, New York, NY (1985), pp. 131.

<sup>1201</sup> See Wanda M. Corn’s *The Art of Andrew Wyeth*, New York Graphic Society, Greenwich, CN (1973), pp. 45.

<sup>1202</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1203</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 102.

<sup>1204</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 77.

<sup>1205</sup> Listen to Bajaga i Instruktori’s *Francuska ljubavna revolucija on Sa druge strane jastuka*, PGP-RTB (1985).

the radiant consciousness of the Little Prince in us cannot be brought to life. The train of our being will thus naturally head in the direction of blindness to the beauty of the little things whenever our heartbeats begin to seek spiritual solace and satisfaction under the flashy banner whose words cry for “bigger, louder, faster”, while ignoring the Sufi advice that “worshipping has 10 parts, of which 9 are silence”<sup>1206</sup>. In view of all of this, my favorite response to the world in which the louder is the more appreciated and in which the power of silent tones and music that sends forth waves of quiescence, for which Confucius claimed to be the most beautiful of all music in the world<sup>1207</sup>, is terribly underestimated lies in a simple T. S. Eliot’s verse: “This is the way the world ends: not with a bang but with a whimper”<sup>1208</sup>. Noise escapees, head-bangers, trashy talkers and all those waiting for the world to end with a judgmental big bang are thus reminded that fulfillment of their yearnings for spiritual satisfaction in life will come from small things in life rather than from grandiose and groundbreaking ones. And these small things arise from silence, subtly and inconspicuously, everywhere we look with the eyes of an open heart. Yet, the laurels of wrath may still be reserved for those who combine the silence of distantly twinkling stars and the Earth moving with a lazy cosmic hush on one side and the banging sound of a moving train and the loudness of an exploding superstar on the other, as in accordance with the already elaborated dialectical perspective on touching pieces of art.

From this point of view, the purpose of arts can be seen as endowing empty spaces with patches of meaning, with splendid little oasis of beauty floating like stars through the cosmic void of nothingness, which is wherefrom the ideals of minimalism may start to bloom and dawn on us. On the way to their glorious vistas, before we reach the purity of mind intrinsic to the review paper titled “Nothing”<sup>1209</sup> or its predecessor, the masterwork paper titled The Unsuccessful Self-Treatment of a Case of ‘Writer’s Block’<sup>1210</sup>, as cheeky as a single-color or a 1x1 Rubik’s cube, having not a single word inscribed in them, or one of Bruno Munari’s picture books for children<sup>1211</sup>, having not a single picture in it, we ought to start patiently, by subtracting one thing at a time from the clutter of our consciousness and our expressions, more often than not driven by habit and convention rather than by the soul in us. “To refrain from an act is no less an act than to commit one”<sup>1212</sup>, the English neuroscientist, Charles Sherrington is known to have observed in the early days of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and, indeed, quite often in our artistic expression we realize that by subtracting we gain, thus proving the minimalist maxim according

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<sup>1206</sup> See Annemarie Schimmel’s *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC (1975), pp. 172.

<sup>1207</sup> See Svetozar Brkić’s *Lao-Tzu, Confucius, Chuang-Tzu: Chosen Works*, Prosveta, Belgrade, Serbia (1960).

<sup>1208</sup> See T. S. Eliot’s *The Hollow Men*, available at <http://aduni.org/~heather/occs/honors/Poem.htm> (1925).

<sup>1209</sup> See Veli-Matti Karhulahti’s *Nothing: A Review*, *Humanity & Society* (in press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0160597620932891>.

<sup>1210</sup> See Dennis Upper’s *The unsuccessful self-treatment of a case of ‘Writer’s Block’*, *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* 7, 497 (1974). This paper, albeit completely empty, does contain a note and a comment from “Reviewer A”, the former stating that “portions of this paper were *not* presented at the 81<sup>st</sup> Annual American Psychological Association Convention, Montreal, Canada, August 30, 1973”, and the latter stating the following: “I have studied this manuscript very carefully with lemon juice and X-rays and have not detected a single flaw in either design or writing style. I suggest it be published without revision. Clearly it is the most concise manuscript I have ever seen - yet it contains sufficient detail to allow other investigators to replicate Dr. Upper’s failure. In comparison with the other manuscripts I get from you containing all that complicated detail, this one was a pleasure to examine. Surely we can find a place for this paper in the *Journal* - perhaps on the edge of a blank page”.

<sup>1211</sup> See Pierpaolo Antonello’s *Visible Books, Unreadable Books: Bruno Munari’s Iconotextual Playground*, *Italian Studies* 74, 331 – 351 (2019).

<sup>1212</sup> See Jeffrey M. Schwartz’s and Sharon Begley’s *The Mind & the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force*, V. B. Z., Zagreb, Croatia (2002), pp. 45.

to which “less is more”. In Michael Cimino’s *Deer Hunter*, letting a thing, that is, a deer, go is an immeasurably more powerful act than that of capturing it, which is to remind us that the power of the unsaid should never be underestimated, or else we risk that a potential perfection in our hands turns into triteness. Like the Atlanta rapper, Young Thug, who first showed up to the lavish set for recording the video for his song Wyclef Jean ten hours late and then “wouldn’t get out of the car”<sup>1213</sup> and drove away, never even appearing on camera, yet creating one of the most splendid music videos of 2017, to abstain from saying a thing or making an act often stands for the most impressive statement and an act makeable at the moment. When Radiohead declined to include the potential instant pop hit, *Lift*, on *OK Computer*, fearing that the song’s inclusion would make the band sell even more records and become the best in the world in the traditional, commercial sense of the word<sup>1214</sup>, this exclusion ended up contributing to the creation of an album that did make the band the best in the world, once again demonstrating that not saying a thing can have a more powerful effect on disseminating the given thing in the world than saying it. In fact, very often, as I think about this song and play it in my head, I imagine how well it would fit right after *No Surprises* in the released version of *OK Computer*, and yet the band opted to disrupt this supposedly smooth flow of the sound by pulling the song from a place where it would have fit really well and declining to release it for the next two decades, all in order not to become “the greatest-hits band”, but rather a “quietly adventurous album act”<sup>1215</sup>. This direction chosen by the band was reflected in the response given by the Radiohead guitarist, Ed O’Brien in reference to their previous record, *The Bends*: “Everyone said, ‘You’ll sell six or seven million if you bring out *The Bends Pt. 2*’, and we’re like, ‘We’ll kick against that and do the opposite’”<sup>1216</sup>. When it comes to expressions that abstain from making a point in order to make that very same point resonate more powerfully, next in the line is Mitski pulling a face with neither an eye nor a nose nor lips nor cheekbones on it<sup>1217</sup>, using the insinuation of expressionlessness to impel the viewer to start making faces that reflect the Universe in their gestural richness, faces capable of lighting up stars with every blink of their eyes floating on the waves of such a mysterious energy. Speaking of featureless faces, another example that comes to mind is the portrait of Virginia Woolf resting on a deckchair by a Bloomsbury artist, Vanessa Bell, where the featurelessness was used to denote the impatience under scrutiny and an ‘elusive mobility of expression’<sup>1218</sup>, in other words quite the opposite qualities of the static and silence that the complete absence of features might be taken for at the first sight. After all, when we find abundance in nullity, when we realize that a divine personality that enchants the world with the subtlest of the gestures is awakened inside one from the ultimately egoless sense of being “nobody, nobody”<sup>1219</sup>, all things existing could be realized as shining with the most celestial beauty conceivable. This is why the quintessential Upanishadic seeker of sacred knowledge, young Shvetaketu was taught by his father, Uddalaka Aruni, to cut a fruit from a nearby tree to

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<sup>1213</sup> Watch the video for Young Thug’s *Wyclef Jean* directed by Ryan Staake (2017), retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_9L3j-IVLwk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9L3j-IVLwk).

<sup>1214</sup> See Marc Hogan’s *Why Radiohead Finally Releasing “Lift” Matters*, *Pitchfork* (May 2, 2017), retrieved from <https://pitchfork.com/the/pitch/1504-why-radiohead-finally-releasing-lift-matters/>.

<sup>1215</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1216</sup> See the Wikipedia article on *OK Computer* retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OK\\_Computer#cite\\_note-12](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OK_Computer#cite_note-12). The quote was a part of an interview Ed O’Brien gave to *Q* magazine for its January 2003 issue.

<sup>1217</sup> Watch the video for Mitski’s *Nobody*, retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qooWnw5rEcI> (2018).

<sup>1218</sup> See Richard Shone’s *The Art of Bloomsbury*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (1999), pp. 99.

<sup>1219</sup> Listen to Mitski’s *Nobody* on *Be the Cowboy*, *Dead Oceans* (2018).

half and look at the empty space in its center, after which he was told that “the nothing you see is the impassable from which the entire existence has emerged; and that impassable, of which this whole great world is, is the reality, is the soul, is You”<sup>1220</sup>. Or, as Paul Hillier, the author of a study on the music of Arvo Pärt, the composer<sup>1221</sup> gifted with the art of “drawing music gently out of silence and emptiness” and thus highlighting the beauty of the everpresent quiet surrounding us, noticed in the opening lines of his work, “All music emerges from silence, to which sooner or later it must return. At its simplest we may conceive of music as the relationship between sounds and the silence that surrounds them... When we create music, we express life. But the source of music is silence, which is the ground of our musical being, the fundamental note of life. How we live depends on our relationship with death; how we make music depends on our relationship with silence”<sup>1222</sup>. Possibly the most influential art critic of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, John Ruskin insisted that a piece of art has to draw a thread with an envisaged infinity, or as he, himself, had it, “Perhaps the very first thing we should look for, whether in one thing or another – foliage, or clouds or waves – should be the expression of infinity always and everywhere, in all parts and division of parts; for we may be quite sure that what is not infinite, cannot be true”<sup>1223</sup>, and we could be certain that the gateways to this infinity lie exactly in the patches of silence, stillness or any other nothingness interspersed through the field of expressions that an artistic work is. Just like the illuminative insights that provide ascending steps in the development of a child coincide with rare and brief moments of soundless stillness that strike it suddenly, so does our penetration into the luminous sea of infinity that enfolds us all occur through the aura of invisible silence surrounding the perceptible movement. To withdraw our attention from the objects of our spiritual union and into the divine locus dwelling in our hearts, starry and silent, is thus the key to becoming merged with the magnificent world around us, in bliss and harmony, as paradoxically as it seems. Or, as put forth by the pen of the contemporary Serbian poet, Zlata Kocić, “Enchantment with the angelic existence, before which we grasp that the first and the last step to it would be piscine muteness, refers to spans, ideally present in every effort to reach or evoke anything. A perfect image is the one outpoured from whiteness: it has enfolded it, yet it shines it forth by its very self. To arrive at self-annihilation as a complete readiness for the blessings of fulfillment, of utterance of the unutterable, to reduce oneself to a holographic point from which the world could be renewed, as every part remembers the whole, to be a shoot that thinks, but through which the wind sings”<sup>1224</sup>. And with the center of our being tuned to this immaculately still silence that underlies our existence like a marble podium made of stars, our spirit would become blessed by the voice divine, the one of Amon, whom the ancient Egyptians endowed with the epithet of King of the Gods, Lord of the Silent, and only then would the surface of our being start to spin like a carousel of ethereal beauties that glow with the sparkly light of perfection and mysteriously inspire the entire world, sometimes by enchanting it in its wholeness and sometimes by enchanting its tiniest members. Keeping in mind a Taoist wheel whose spinning is conditioned by the perfect stillness of its center and the roaring winds of a hurricane whose eye is calm and breezeless at all times, we should know that only insofar as we

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<sup>1220</sup> See Béla Hamvas’ *Anthologia Humana: 5000 Years of Wisdom*, Dereta, Belgrade. Serbia (1948), pp. 32. See also *Katha Upanishad*, In: *The Upanishads*, selected by Juan Mascaro, Penguin Classics, London, UK (1965).

<sup>1221</sup> See Paul Hillier’s *Arvo Pärt: Oxford Studies of Composers*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY (1997), pp. 140.

<sup>1222</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1.

<sup>1223</sup> See Susan Stewart’s *The Open Studio: Essays on Art and Aesthetics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL (2005), pp. 102 - 103.

<sup>1224</sup> See an interview with Zlata Kocić: *Težina koja se ne meri tegovima*, *Politika* (December 18, 2014), pp. 13.

actively nourish this inner meditative silence would we be able to engage in truly creative expressions that propel the starry train of our being and the Universe towards some wonderful new horizons along the tracks of our mutual @evolution. Concordantly, “be real quiet in a shout”, concluded a song programmed to play from the speaker of Theo’s baby computer whenever the button with the digit 8 inscribed on it, the one whose toppling yields the sign for infinity, was pressed, as if secretly telling us that the expressions so powerful that they may be able to move mountains always originate from the soothing stillness adorning our most intimate insides, as if their impulses gain energy by traversing the empty space within, like in a vacuum-filled subatomic particle accelerator, that our being, in a way, has to be like a Taoist room whose value lies in the emptiness it holds within, and that, perhaps, an exact opposite of the impression that we wish to leave on the world may have to be impressed in our deepest core if we wish to succeed in such an endeavor: the meditative placidity of a quiet sea if we aspire to live up to Émile Zola’s vision of the artist who has “come here to live out loud”. This is why Bob Dylan spoke no nonsense when he uttered that memorable “It is always silent where I am”<sup>1225</sup> during the legendary press conference in the early December days of 1965 in San Francisco, knowingly or unknowingly hinting at the necessity of maintaining the silence and the still of the eye of a hurricane inside of one if the streams of energy that howl, deafen and blow minds away are to be given birth to all around one with one’s expressions. After all, ever since Parmenides attempted to kill the hypothetic concept of nonbeing as a contrast to that of being and realized that he would have to sacrifice life thereby, philosophers all over the world have based their worldviews on an entwinement of the two of one form or another, from Democritus’ realization that movement could be imagined only on the backdrop of empty space to Hegel’s celebration of negation as one of essential actions that spin the wheels of history forward to Schopenhauer’s worship of the virtue of “will” mainly because it did not cease to have its powers in his eyes even when negating itself to Paul Tillich’s quietly exposed belief that “being has nonbeing within itself as that which is eternally present and eternally overcome in the process of the divine life”<sup>1226</sup>. And since being and nonbeing, the enlightening exuberance of life and the stillness of the sea of the soul support and accentuate one another as they evolve towards ever greater emanations of theirs in genial togetherness, we ought to be sure that feeding both, that is, ceaselessly learning how to express ourselves in ever more dazzling and illuminative manners on one side and how to still our spirit through inner quietude and meditation on another is the balancing act that the acrobat of our self is obliged to perform on its way to the stars.

And so, if I am driven to sense this great emptiness in a piece of art, the vibe of *mu*, as Zen Buddhists would have called it, or “the eternal silence of infinite spaces”<sup>1227</sup> praised by the pen of Blaise Pascal, a sense of void from which an infinite bliss and boundless potentialities emanate, I tell myself that the mission has been accomplished; the work of art has attained the peaks of true greatness. It has lived up to the great ideal posed by an anonymous shadow: “Do not speak or act unless you believe you can beautify the silence”. For, “you talk when you cease to be at peace with your thoughts”, as Kahlil Gibran reminds us, and only the bravest and the most masterfully crafted voices from now on could be seen as predestined to be those that edify the silent sea of divinity on which sketches and silhouettes of our spirits are but a foam. Robert Fripp, who claims to have been tone deaf when he began to play guitar and who later commented

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<sup>1225</sup> Watch Bob Dylan: San Francisco Press Conference, retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AItVYkznnTc> (1965).

<sup>1226</sup> See Paul Tillich’s *The Courage to Be*, Yale University Press, New Haven, MA (1952), pp. 32 - 34.

<sup>1227</sup> See Blaise Pascal’s *Pensées*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK (1669).

that “music so wishes to be heard that it sometimes calls on unlikely characters to give it voice” is thence accredited for saying that “music is the cup which holds the wine of silence”, raising awareness of the role of music not in providing a route for a temporary escape from the horrors of silence and nothingness, but in beautifying silence and turning it into a gate for the entrance of our mind into the heavenly reigns of blissful feeling and thought. Knowing that this starry silence is the ultimate feeling that the most marvelous pieces of art are to deliver to others brings us straight to the golden door of the Taoist perfect virtue that is said to leave no trace in its wake. For, once we produce a gaping awe, an intellectual punch that shatters the towers of one’s rigid beliefs and dull preconceptions, awakening one in the midst of a starry space breathing with an eternal love and wonder, we should know that our acting out there, on the stage of life, has been indeed fulfilling. This thought invites me to summon up a visionary cloud that popped up in my daydreaming in celebration of the oratorical silence of which I gabble here, silence that cannot be only talked about, but has to be silenced about as well, lest we turn into a sheer hypocrite on the stage of life. In it I went a step farther and gave an almost completely silent talk, that is, a postmodern anti-talk or a talk against the talk, if you wish, to bedazzled listeners. Wishing to draw back on Saint-Exupery’s story about the Little Prince as a metaphor in elucidating the benefits of systemic thinking and multidisciplinary approaches to research, I asked people in the audience if they were familiar with the story and, amazingly, realized that none of them had read it<sup>1228</sup>. And so, in quite an impromptu manner, I picked up my stuff and left the podium and even to this very day I proudly proclaim that this silent seminar, the talk that I have never given, still stands unsurpassed in terms of both boosting my future confidence and inspirational potential as a presenter and converting the listeners from the right path, the path of dogmatism, self-righteousness, conformity and self-possessive phlegm, to the left path, the path strewn with question marks, wonder, positive rebellion and wide-awakeness. It was with one such repugnancy to modern-day television and revolt against “the dizzying cut and the disorienting edit, to the message of fragmentation, to the flicker and pulse and shudder and strobe, to the constant, hivey drone of the electroculture”<sup>1229</sup>, where the more silence is masked by the trashy chatter, the better, that the tireless amuser of children, that holiest of all professions, Mr. Rogers, stepped on a podium to receive Emmy’s Lifetime Achievement Award and then, as a sign of sweet and loving protest, delivered ten seconds of silence, telling the audience beforehand that “the people who have helped you become who you are”<sup>1230</sup> would come to them, uninvited, spontaneously during those ten seconds, dropping in their midst onto the crowd of “soap-opera stars and talk-show sinceratrons... the jutting man-tanned jaws and jutting saltwater bosoms”<sup>1231</sup> a whole deluge of tears, using silence and silence only, albeit precisely timely and timed.

The most masterful lecturers and playwrights know that producing a moment of silence every now and then is vital for the watchers to absorb and consolidate the impressions which they were strewn with. Similar patches of silence, of sketched, imperfect contours permeated with an immobilizing emptiness could be found engrained in all spiritually stimulating expressions and pieces of art. Yet, criteria using which the mainstream production conducts the

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<sup>1228</sup> This indeed happened during the talk *My Way through the Web of Science* that I gave at the University of South Dakota in Sioux Falls in April 2013. As a matter of fact, it turned out that one girl, sitting on the edge seat of the most distant row, shyly, almost unnoticeably, raised her hand.

<sup>1229</sup> See Tom Junod’s *Can You Say... Hero?* *Esquire* (November 1998 issue), retrieved from <https://www.esquire.com/entertainment/tv/a27134/can-you-say-hero-esq1198/>, or watch *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* directed by Marielle Heller (2019), where the ten seconds of silence became a whole minute.

<sup>1230</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1231</sup> *Ibid.*

creation of modern artistic works spring from the roots of insistence on filling every single empty space with impressions, condensing them into bombastic and information-packed forms which often hardly leave any space for the wings of meditative, introspective insight to spread and take the watcher on a journey to the essence of his spirit. Rather, the aim is to produce loud and captivating works that entrap the eyes of the mind staring at them without giving them space to wiggle around and look back into themselves, an act vital for the encountered expressions to take hold in the space of one's mind and fertilize it with their subtle powers. For, the aim of arts should not be merely to amaze and astound, but to sift the seeds of divine ethics and aesthetics over the soil of human minds. Yet, it appears that this mental sowing act can be performed by none other but the mind itself; no one can forcefully inculcate minds with ideas that will be rooted within the foundations of their mental microcosms other than the subjects themselves. We can hand over signs to other people, but it will always be up to them to find a way to read, interpret and use them to navigate themselves to the horizons of enlightened being. To promote conditions for this, however, empty spaces, silence and stillness are required, depending on whether we have visual, audio or performance arts in mind, respectively. Nature thus endows human beings with free will in order to set grounds for their ascent to stars through spiritual learning on this planet, and the same undoubtedly applies to the divine approaches to education and arts. The cranky mainstream consumers of modern arts would though still cry at the first sight of slow and silent scenes, such as those ornamenting the celluloid tapes of many movie masterpieces, such as *Stalker*, *Death in Venice*, *La Notte*, *The Dead*, *Three Colors: Blue*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Eternity and a Day*, *Werckmeister Harmonies* or *Noriko Trilogy*<sup>1232</sup>, irritated by their boringness and demanding a constant friction and satisfaction of their senses, without understanding that such spacey slowness and expressional emptiness offer a vital room for an implosion of our spirits under the force of wonderful artistic impressions experienced. Of course, the demands of these stereotypical consumers tend to be satisfied by the artistic mass production of the modern day, which explains why popular arts are more about entertainment and immersion into an orgasmic state of oblivion than about enrichment with divine ethics and aesthetics. As a result, the consumers are made passive and dependent on these works, like drug addicts of a kind, rather than infused with creative spurs that reach the profoundest levels of their psyches and encourage them to act in an enlightening manner. Being surrounded by pieces of art that celebrate constant action and pompous bombardment of the observer with impressions that aim at flooding his consciousness without leaving space for their introspective digestion and slow treading into the inner space of one's mind with the insightful treasures collected along the way is consistent with the prevalence of objectivity in the world on the account of the suppression of its subjective counterforce from the perspective of co-creation. Namely, when we are inclined to the objectivist terminus of the co-creational balance and crave to have our mind's eye subdued to impressions of the outward realm, we naturally aspire to things that make us feel fully immersed in and enchanted up to the point where the touch with our inner essence, vital for our ability to act creatively, has been thoroughly lost. Co-creational acting, on the other hand, opens space for the acts of another to blend with our own acting in harmony with the divine music on blissful waves of which our spirit meditatively floats. It thus naturally awakens an eye for empathy in our mind, which then vividly fluctuates between its insides and outsides, conceiving gorgeous actions while being deeply withdrawn in meditation and at the same time expressively opening up and freely releasing this energy collected through an inward focus of

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<sup>1232</sup> *Noriko Trilogy* is my personal name for three Yasujiro Ozu's movies starring Setsuko Hara as Noriko: *Late Spring*, *Early Summer*, *Tokyo Story*.

our attention. Combining silent and mysterious withdrawnness and sun-like bursts of energy, such acting is clearly built on the balance between the quiet, placid and meditative on one side and the exuberant and expressively explosive on the other. It is a reminder that a reverse switch has to be open and a door unbolted in the back of our minds, allowing one to sink deep into oneself, toward that fetus immortalized in Radiohead's *How to Disappear Completely and Never Be Found*<sup>1233</sup>, cocooning into which is a prerequisite for building a colossal polarity between the inside and the outside, thus endowing our words and acts with a magical momentum that touches and inspires another in mystical ways. Thereupon, just as dances have to engrain moments of inexpressive passivity in order to allow for the creative movement and elevation of spirit of the person one dances with, impressive pieces of art are obliged to leave silent spaces in the wake of their thunderous rolling forward; for, it is these silent spaces that will offer introspective oceans in which watchers will plunge and find pearls of beautiful and deepening insights. Or, as a duo of New York Times critics who stood in defense of calm and slow movies claimed, "Faced with duration not distraction, your mind may wander... in wandering there can be revelation as you meditate, trance out, bliss out, luxuriate in your thoughts"<sup>1234</sup>. Hence, as could be insinuated from the tenets of the co-creational thesis, which is all about opening space for the creative input of another side in the midst of our utmost creative efforts, sending forth waves of silence as much as those of enthralling beauty is the way to wash and beautify the grimed and spiritually soiled faces of the world.

The point of all our artistic and philosophical expressions would thus be to weave notes, paintbrush moves, words and threads of reasoning all until we reach silence such as that awaiting us in the most majestic pieces of art and epitomized in the final words of Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent"<sup>1235</sup>. Earlier in the book, this philosopher who stood against the philosophical method, a rebel in its own domain who used to give his lectures over to reading Tagore's poetry while facing the wall, the thinker who tried to show us how the essence of our beings cannot be placed into words, but can only be shown, thus wishing to return us to the preverbal state of a toddler and help us regain the existential paradise lost with our embracement of the demonic power of Word, the thinker who had thus resolutely cut off the branches on which he had been nested, the task that all creatures enwrapped in starchy ethics of being do, observed how "it is clear that ethics cannot be expressed; ethics are transcendental (ethics and aesthetics are one and the same)"<sup>1236</sup>, prompting us to rethink the beauty of silence and the incredible richness of ineffable information that it conceals in each and every of its moments, caring little about the word and more about the movement all the way through. In that sense, those who tend to produce buzz in the wake of their expressions may be merely similar to those whose hearts leap whenever laughter or ovation as an approval for their acting well on stage arrives, so as to uplift them and carry them on their noisy wings, are different from the genuine artists who tend to fill the frames of the paintings, the sea of silence on which the waves of music arise and the eternal contexts that surround our words with the beauty divine, to enchant the observers and make them not be absorbed in these pieces of art but face away and realize an immense beauty that rests in every detail of their worlds, leaving the

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<sup>1233</sup> A line from the song, "I'm not here, this isn't happening" is the advice Michael Stipe of R.E.M. gave to Thom Yorke on how to deal with the pressure of the desire to give a divine performance under the intense exposure to public and press.

<sup>1234</sup> See Manohla Dargis' and A. O. Scott's *In Defense of the Slow and the Boring*, *The New York Times* (June 3, 2011), available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/05/movies/films-in-defense-of-slow-and-boring.html>.

<sup>1235</sup> See Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Routledge, London, UK (1918), proposition 7.

<sup>1236</sup> *Ibid.*, proposition 6.421.

creator of these works forgotten and behind the scenes. In the intro to his homage to anonymous artistic achievements of the common man and an implicit criticism of the human tendency to base art history around only a handful of pedigreed artists endowed with the status of reality stars of a kind, *Architecture Without Architects*, Bernard Rudofsky boldly stated that “architectural history... amounts to little more than a who’s who of architects who commemorated power and wealth; an anthology of buildings of, by, and for the privileged – the houses of true and false gods, of merchant princes and princes of the blood – with never a word about the houses of lesser people”<sup>1237</sup>, concordantly paying our attention to the fact that the most important artists and the most valuable pieces of art, carrying the evolution of humanity on their wings, are not indexed in textbooks or in posh galleries, but are instead present everywhere around us. Muses, therefore, whose minds dive into the ocean of bliss and surf ethereally on the waves of otherworldly spiritedness, are never famous and worshipped by the masses; rather, they are akin to Paula, the table-waiting angel from Fellini’s *La Dolce Vita*, or “the country girl” whose innocence and purity served as an inspiration for the one caught in the clutches of fame and fortune in a song by Belle & Sebastian, going “LA to New York, San Francisco back to Boston”<sup>1238</sup>, or to the blithe beau, the “true love”, whom Morrissey “touched at the soundcheck”<sup>1239</sup> and who was to guide him away from the spotlight packed with “sycophantic slags” and “sickening greed” and into the darkness of anonymity behind the curtains where truer stars, wholly unknown to the world, reside. From this standpoint, fame becomes the first and the foremost thing to which that famous saying, “Beware what you wish for because it just as well might come true someday”, applies. Hence Plutarch’s account of Cato’s indifference to stardom and preference for the shadow of attention rather than the spotlight: “Upon some of Cato’s friends expressing their surprise, that while many persons without merit or reputation had statues, he had none, he answered, ‘I had much rather it should be asked why the people have not erected a statue to Cato, than why they have’”<sup>1240</sup>. This is the point where we can also remember the monument to Tommie Smith and John Carlos giving the Black Power salute from atop the medal podium at the 1968 Olympics at the campus of San Jose State University, showing an empty spot at the place where the silver medalist, Peter Norman, was supposed to be. He, who suffered greatly due to ostracism in his homeland, Australia, for simply wearing the barely visible Olympic Project for Human Rights badge as a sign of solidarity with his fellow black athletes and who, like myself for writing these words here, was forcibly kept unemployed until he descended to depression, consciously chose not to be a part of this monument so that the visitors could stand at the place where his statue was supposed to be and take photos with the two protesters<sup>1241</sup>. Likewise, an enlightened soul leaves a holy hole in place of the demonic craving for approval, cordially living up to Lao-Tzu’s premise: “The holy man perfects, but asks for no recognition and because he asks for no recognition, the recognition cannot be taken away from him” (*Tao-Te-Xing II*). Stars, therefore, gravitate toward darkness, away from the limelight, and in doing so their shines become ever brighter. Simultaneously, the greatest artist I envisage is the one who knows that the Sun at dawn need not emerge from behind the horizon

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<sup>1237</sup> See Bernard Rudofsky’s *Architecture Without Architects: An Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY (1964), pp. 2.

<sup>1238</sup> Listen to Belle & Sebastian’s *The Boy with the Arab Strap* on *The Boy with the Arab Strap*, Jeepster (1998).

<sup>1239</sup> Listen to the Smiths’ *Paint a Vulgar Picture* on *Strangeways, Here We Come*, Rough Trade Records (1987).

<sup>1240</sup> See *London Encyclopaedia: Or, Universal Science, Art, Literature and Practical Mechanics*, Thomas Tegg, London, UK (1829), pp. 251.

<sup>1241</sup> See Riccardo Gazzaniga’s *The White Man in that Photo*, Films for Action (October 15, 2015), retrieved from <https://www.filmsforaction.org/articles/the-white-man-in-that-photo/>.

and make itself visible to the world to bring light to every corner of it. Rather, he remains hidden behind the curtains, unexposed to the masses obsessing with fame and predestined never to be strewn with flowers, bravos and ovations, finding solace for his soul only in the soft and silent smiles of the Sun and the Moon levitating above his head. Such enlightened artists on the stage or behind the pages of books or deep inside the cone of radio speakers stay incessantly immersed in the starry silence of their beings, from which they deliver fascinating words, ideas and acts to the surface, but remain untouched by approvals, praises and applauses of the world, knowing that it is only the silent praise of divine Nature that one should be receptive to. This praise, we know, resides in the subtle music of our spirits and the quiet voice of Nature that permeates all the details of the world that surrounds us and which “cannot be expressed” but merely shown in starry and graceful silence of our beings, as the great Viennese philosopher might have reminded us.

Yet, we should make sure that this inner silence in which the essence of creativity of all things around us flows is not sheer nullity and negation, a black-hole-like emptiness and indifference, such as that described as “the death in one’s heart” in a song by the Brooklyn band, Telepathe<sup>1242</sup>. Instead, it is a shingly golden and all-fulfilling silence revered by the Zen priests as a sunlit mindset in which oneness with the whole world is centered, and from which magic and inspiring incentives that drive our thoughts and acts in the world originate. Zazen, the practice of opening the layers of mind, as if dissolving many clouds of prejudged, presupposed and *a priori* processed thought that guide our perception in habitual ways and determine the states of our consciousness, but oftentimes block the shine of the sun that resides at the center of our mind and constantly shines forth with some celestial energy, is how one achieves this enlightened state of mind in the Zen tradition. In the mystical tradition of Christianity epitomized in the apocryphal Gospel according to Thomas, a similar advice is ascribed to the Christ, showing us how erasing and subtracting rather than collecting and piling up images and ideas is sometimes the way to open the channels for an outflow of a magnificent energy hidden within: “When you take your images without being ashamed, and place them under your feet to tread on them as the little children do - then shall you behold the Son of the Living-One, and you shall not fear”<sup>1243</sup> (Thomas 37). This numinous thought subtly reverberates with the old and canonical Christian message that “blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3), yet another guiding star that points us in the direction of earning infinite spiritual rewards by giving away all that one is and has. The ethics and aesthetics of poorness, of giving more than one has and thereby gaining the whole world in return, can thus be said to be deeply engrained in all the religious teachings of the world, from Taoism to Buddhism to Christianity.

One can, therefore, argue that the crowns of music and dancing lie in perfect silence and stillness, respectively. The peak in the act of listening to music may be said to lie in stunning the listener with the beauty experienced, all until he is brought to his knees, as if engaging in a deep prayer so as to silently express thankfulness for Nature shedding such astonishing beauty over one. Similarly, one could infer that dancing reaches its climax in the moments in which moving cedes its place to pure stillness, when vivacious glimmer of our movements reaches placid and still waters. The unforgettable moment when a dancer, a wild actor on the stage puts a final touch on her lively performance by standing still and with a blank expression on her face gazes at the audience, which stands entirely thrilled at those moments, reminds us too of how stillness is the peak of all movement, so to say. One of those who had known that motionlessness can potently

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<sup>1242</sup> Listen to Telepathe’s So Fine on Dance Mother, IAMSOUND Records (2009).

<sup>1243</sup> See Gospel according to Thomas available at <http://www.metalog.org/files/thomas.html> (1st Century AD).

accentuate motion, just as silent pauses are an essential strengthener of the messages uttered, were the so-called grandmasters in dancing, Maggie and George, regular attendees of Belgrade parties in the late 1950s, known for their habit of dancing for no longer than a minute and keeping the audience in suspense for the rest of the party time<sup>1244</sup>. This interspersing of crescendo and action with the moments of silence and inaction are essential for the preservation of the inspirational potential of our expressions. Like David Bronstein's frequently beginning a chess game by taking more than 15 minutes of his clock time to draw the first move<sup>1245</sup>, keeping the spectators in suspense during that time, while raising their awareness that something great will soon start rolling before their eyes and increasing their receptiveness to the invariably poetic questions that this rebellious dreamer by the chessboard was going to start asking in no time, so may we utilize silence and deliberate, well-planned inaction as sources of transmitting messages louder and more active than any words or gestures can be. To that end, one should not fear the pause during grand oratorios, including such that may be not only literal, but also substantial, that is, acting as a connective tissue, a "darkness between stars"<sup>1246</sup>, remembering all the while Emil Cioran's maxim that "nothing bores the senses/intellect as the monotony of exceptionality"<sup>1247</sup>. Hence, remember that the silence or the absence of a profound message are vital for the absorption of the latter as much as the expression of a deep thought is necessary for the magic of silence to be absorbed. Or, as Béla Hamvas noticed, "The subject of sculpture is always the movement or, which is the same, stillness"<sup>1248</sup>. For, the two are, like light and darkness or breathing in and out, mutually indissoluble since one without the other could not exist and only through the balance between them can we reach the mountainous heights in the expression of either.

Dancing in harmony with the Way of Love is all about letting one side of our mind reach into this untainted inner silence of our being, while another side of it reaches outside, imploding in meditation and exploding in boundless love at the same time, just as the Sun does with its balancing the inwardly pulling force of gravity that tends to collapse it under the pressure of millions of fragments of mind on one side and outward explosions of loving energy that send light to feed the surrounding planets and tend to dissipate and send into space the entire creative body of the star on the other side. Just as a star would disappear from the face of the sky if this balance between empathic expressivity and meditative inwardness were to become disrupted, the same would happen to our being in the world should one pole of the Way of Love prevail over the other. The evolution of the world is neither solely Lamarckian, that is, all about the facility to adapt to environmental constraints, nor merely Darwinian, that is, proceeding from the inside with absolutely no connection with the outside environment; rather, it engrains something from both, demanding from the creatures to be adaptive and cooperative as much as original and innovative. Likewise, merely identifying with the impressions and ideals of the surrounding world and going with their flows while never delivering our acts self-centeredly, from the core of our being, ignoring to listen to the voice divine that reverberates along its colorful walls and

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<sup>1244</sup> See Aleksandar Raković's *Rock 'n' Roll in Yugoslavia 1956 – 1968: A Challenge to the Socialist Society*, Arhipelag, Belgrade, Serbia (2011), pp. 276.

<sup>1245</sup> See Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam's *The Day Kasparov Quit: and other chess interviews*, New in Chess, CSI, Alkmaar, Netherlands (2006).

<sup>1246</sup> Reference is made to R. S. Thomas's poem quoted in Keith Ward's *God: A Guide for the Perplexed*, Oneworld, Oxford, UK (2003).

<sup>1247</sup> See Muharem Bazdulj's *Dok u sabah čekaš šejtana*, *Vreme* (August 13, 2015), retrieved from <http://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=1319864>.

<sup>1248</sup> See Béla Hamvas' *Arkhai*, Čigoja štampa, Belgrade, Serbia (1942), pp. 6.

make our acts gently flow on it towards the surface of our being would make us reminiscent of a star that dissipates its creativity more than it integrates its inner powers within, becoming lighter and paler with each new day, all until its shine becomes completely extinguished. On the other hand, acting in the Darwinian way only and producing ideas that seem innovative but are in no way related to the needs of the world around us, while never trying to empathically embrace the latter with our loving acts, failing to find enough drive to live so as to hand these inner treasures that enlighten our insides to others, living in light but never sharing it with those around us would predispose the star of our spirit to become all imploded and equally fainter and colder with each tick of the cosmic clock.

Embodying the Way of Love while dancing is about finding a perfect synchrony between empathizing with the music we hear, embracing it with untainted candidness and letting it live through every segment of our bodies, through naturalness of a newborn, so that it flows through us unrestrictedly on one side, meditatively enter that starry centerpiece of consciousness wherein we dwell and wherefrom we let all our moves originate, untouched by the side of social expectations and influences on which the energy of these moves will emerge in waves that wash over the gates of fear barricading the surrounding spirits and invisibly purify them. In essence, the key lies in combining a perfect silence and detachment with the empathic, naively trustful going with the worldly flows, the reason for which the Way of Love could be renamed any day into the Way of the Full Moon, given its devoted following the Earth and facing it unceasingly with its bright side, while the dark one remains infinitely mysterious and hidden from view, albeit equally real as the former. It is as if one part of our mind merges in empathy with everything it sees, like that meek and trustful soul that helplessly “cries at a good film”<sup>1249</sup>, that loses itself in sympathizing with austerities and blessings of humanity, while the other part of it resembles the female attendee of the cinema projection in Edward Hopper’s *New York Movie*, gazing neither at the screen nor at the people, but being lost somewhere in the Daedalean depths of one’s inner world. With one such harmony between detached inwardness and empathic receptiveness permeating every piece of our bodies and minds, we could say that we live up to the two famous commandments which the Christ handed to his disciples as the ultimate keys to supremely creative being in this world (Matthew 22:36-40). The first one is related to listening to God who sends forth the music divine to travel within our heart and acting while floating on it and it only as we deliver our enlightening punches and gingery flows of graceful movements to the world, while the other one reminds us that we ought to always act while loving others as much as ourselves, sympathizing with each and every pair of eyes around us, speaking their languages and devotedly reaching out to them with every creative act we conceive, endowing our existence with a single purpose only: to act so as to open the roads to spiritual salvation in front of all of these wondrous souls of the world. The Way of Love is nothing but spreading the inner relationships, touches, strings that pervade our entire being between these two poles, one of which is meditatively pushing us inwardly and the other one is opening us in expressive empathy, thus crucifying ourselves from the inside and accomplishing the seemingly impossible, that is, being perfectly withdrawn inside and yet completely open and receptive at the same time. For, in such a way we will make a divine harp out of ourselves and let each and every movement of ours shed stardust of celestial love and grace all around us.

Cinema wizards have regularly applied silence and stillness to accentuate the aesthetic and semantic richness of galactic scopes of the littlest visual details, sounds or moves. Be it Ozuesque serenity and tenderness hinted at by a wave of an autumn wheat spike, the unbearable

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<sup>1249</sup> Listen to Radiohead’s *Fitter Happier* on OK Computer, Parlophone (1997).

weight of silence placed on the human soul by ticks of a wall clock in an Ingmar Bergman's movie<sup>1250</sup>, the finest panning movement of the camera in a film by Andrei Tarkovsky or Bela Tarr, or the slightest changes in its distance in a mesmerizingly touching tracking shot by Theo Angelopoulos, examples of such "illumination of the insignificant", if we were to resort once more to the ideal that guided Frank Lloyd Wright in his architectural endeavors, abound in cinematic pieces of art that use still and quiet as an irreplaceable tool for expression. The Way of Love pertains to the same principle of sinking deep into stillness within so as to create conditions for the emergence of impressions and expressions with an inspirational potential of stunning proportions. Thus, once reached, not only would the harmony of the Way of Love enable us to be driven to tears of divine devotion and the edge of enlightenment by looking at the most miniscule details of reality, but it would also predispose us to be able to shed sheer magic and seed the stardust of Wonder and Love with each and every moment on the dance floor of our lives, knowing that there will always be millions of tiny little moves that could be pulled out of the essence of our being, each one of which is analogous to von Foerster's act of shrugging one's shoulders that redirects the fate of the Universe, so as to enchant and enlighten the world around us. For, such memorable and stunningly beautiful moves that stay impressed in human minds for a long time after they have been glimpsed, inspiring them down to their cores, need not be exceptionally intricate or engrossing; rather, we should know that for as long as wonder and love illuminate our heart and we let this magic blend be freely released to the surface of our being, even when we are ninety nine and ready to sail away from this world and off to another one on in this endless cosmic fable of our sunshiny spirits, a tiny little move lies out there, deep inside of us, and if let flash in the right space and time, it will launch millions of spaceships of lovable attention from the starry podiums of human eyes, glistening with love and twinkling with wonder, into boundless spaces far above our heads, into infinitely beautiful and sublime skies of being.

As we stand on the stage of life, having reached the balance of the Way of Love, with wonder and love enlightening our mind and heart, it would feel as if a golden aura surrounds our being, reminiscent of the stage lights shed upon us, and thence we would not need to make a move or say a word to send a splendid glister that enchants and glorify the world all around us. Yet, a true star out there knows that only by redirecting those lights of wonder and love that glow within us to the audience, so that they illuminate those who watch us, people in our vicinity, the wonderful shine radiating from our hearts can be sustained. The balance of the Way of Love, in fact, tells us that an enlightened mind is the one who is partially withdrawn inside, building a shine around one and consciously dwelling inside of it, whereby incessantly sending that shine outwards, so that it bestows upon others. Similarly to a burning star that experiences an inward pull of gravity that fuses the elements in its core and thereby produces the shine that it emits towards great cosmic distances, the mind of a star exerts an incessant meditative pull inside, sending its rays of attention beneath the deepest layers of consciousness and anchoring them into the spiritual sea where the waves divine splash and angelic sirens swim, directing one's prayers thereto so as to bless one's being with the love and beauty divine and dress one in a celestial glow of wonder and love, turn one's body into a gleaming constellation of starry twinkles and make a true star of spirit out of one, which typically leaves an impression of mysterious withdrawnness that spontaneously and magically captivates and attracts the attention of the dazzled audience. Yet, as the Way of Love dictates, this inner meditative and prayerful pull is

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<sup>1250</sup> Watch, for example, the movies *Silence*, *Hour of the Wolf* or *Winter Light*, in all of which the ominous and excruciating sounds of a ticking clock repeat themselves.

balanced with a great desire to enlighten the world, which channels this inner shine outwards, blessing the world thereby with genuinely beautiful expressions and making one serve as a guiding star for the world that spins around one, all the way knowing that “if I honour myself, my honour is nothing” (John 8:54). In such a way, the balance between the gravitational pull inside caused by the meditative and inwardly focused energy and the explosive push outside caused by the shine radiating from the core of a star and sustained by aspirations to endlessly give to the world, the one that every star we could find on the night sky exhibits and which the Way of Love simply copies onto the social domain, can be built inside of one. Gazing at the Sun around which all of us born on this planet circle around has thus stood as a greatest and the simplest ideal which Nature implicitly invites us with every new day to reflect within ourselves and reach similarly inexhaustible and divine emanations of creativity, such as that demonstrated by a few highly enlightened creatures from the history of humanity, including the Christ. And I, I have only quietly walked towards this great ideal of the Sun, knowing that sooner or later I will plunge into the bliss of perfect oneness that it stands for and may even begin to shine to the world as a true spiritual star. Unlike many other creatures travelling along the same road, it has been my decision to write down my insights as I journey along so that all those who would come after me may use them as guidance for avoiding common mistakes that make us depart from that road every now and then. In that sense, note that it has been essential for me to deviate from this road that leads to our becoming a star in order to come up with insights that comprise this and other books of mine. For, only then have I glimpsed valuable guiding stars of thought that would return me to the right path and could be inscribed in words. Had I incessantly traveled along a correct path without ever losing the balance, there would be nothing to learn and nothing to say. Had the Stone Roses not faked the power failure during their first television performance<sup>1251</sup>, the band may have never become famous and reached as many people as it eventually did and had Morrissey not stormed out of the rehearsal for the Italian television premiere performance in May 1985 after finding the set too kitschy<sup>1252</sup> and folded his arms on a departure gate at Heathrow in April 1984, saying “I’m not getting on the plane; I don’t want to do the rest of the tour.”<sup>1253</sup>, forcing the band to cancel the tour in Germany and causing a major outrage of the managers and the media, alongside inspiring Noel Gallagher to do the same during the first American tour of Oasis ten years later, the legacy of the Smiths may have never taken off into the skies of perennality. On a similar note, had the members of Duke Ellington’s big band not dispersed and ventured who knows where prior to the beginning of the performance at Newport Jazz Festival in 1956, forcing the remaining members of the band to start playing without them, this concert might not be considered today as one of the greatest live performances in the history of jazz. Or, had Bobby Fischer not skipped the second game of his world championship final match against Boris Spassky in Reykjavik in 1972, attempting to board the plane to who knows where and leave everything behind, he might not have emerged as the winner of this match and become the undisputed world champion in chess. Likewise, neither would our minds ever gain the chance of entering sublime states had it not been for their perpetual slips and stumbles on the road to divinity. To fall from grace and lose the balance rather than to be a perfect follower of the deific road all of the time is a way of becoming an enlightening storyteller and a deliverer of cherishing news, which is what, as many of us may know, Gospels stand for. Having brought the

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<sup>1251</sup> See Simon Spence’s *The Stone Roses: War and Peace*, St. Martin’s Griffin, New York, NY (2012), pp. 146.

<sup>1252</sup> See Tony Fletcher’s *A Light that Never Goes Out: The Enduring Saga of the Smiths*, Random House, New York, NY (2012), pp.428.

<sup>1253</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.340.

evangels to mind, I am finally free to offer an example that illuminates my conviction that perfect balances bear bleak prospects for our ascents to more sublime states of consciousness and, in fact, produce quite miserable conditions for the thriving of our spirits in the long run. It comes from the fact that the world dominated by the ethics of reciprocity, a perfect balance unequivocally streamed to, naturally yields suspicion, mistrust and self-centeredness, all of which are mental burdens that drag our spirits down, towards the mud and soil of the Earth, rather than lifting them up, into the clouds of heavenly grace, while breaking of this Judaic eye-for-an-eye equality (Leviticus 24:20) by acting like a Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) and giving more than one has, being generous like the Sun that never asks for anything in return for the light that it washes the earthly souls over with, is the way to create a world in which roads for our evolution as humankind and steps that lead to heavenly ways of being for each one of us will stand cheerfully chalked on each corner of our experience.

Be that as it may, after this divergence from a carefully drawn thread of thought, we will slowly return to the point of poetizing on how the silence inside and the poorness of our spirits are essential ingredients of divine creativeness in life. As it were, by falling and returning to the straight line from which we fell, we learned something new and were able to propel ourselves forward, which would not have been possible had we occupied a state of static balance all of the time. In such a way, we may have resembled a person standing before an audience, a bit like Giulietta Masina playing the clown in Fellini's *La strada* and a bit like Renee Zellweger playing Bridget Jones, charmingly baffled, starting multiple sentences with competing thoughts all at once, although still thrilling the viewers and leaving them enchanted, personifying all the while Alexander Pope's vision of angels who fear to tread and pushing the fools who rush in off the cliff of her consciousness, making us ponder over whether perplexed, spontaneous and mistake-committing-on-every-step creatures such as her are like angels of this world, as rare as diamonds in the dust, while fools, those who are fully robotized and with no errors or hesitation deliver their points, still sadly dominate it. In the preceding paragraph, we too have stood on the stage, facing an enthralled audience, when our thoughts turned into a runaway train and took us onto a sideway track of the starry aureole of our mind. We have thought for a second about how sending lights shed on us to others is the key to becoming a star on the stage of life. Yet, imagining others surrounded by an aura of angelically pure and protective light, while living up to the Christ's advice that the highest ideal of a friendship is to sacrifice oneself for a friend, to serve as his shield against harmful things of the world, may be only the first, intellectual step, a rapid thought streamed through my mind. The next and an even more crucial one is finding touch with the honest language of the heart which lies beyond words and conscious thoughts, on thoroughly different, more spiritual and far less effable planes. Attaining mastery in using this language, which could be recognized only by a subtle shine radiating from our hearts, is, of course, a vital precondition for ingraining a true star of spirit within our chests so as to bless the world with its light. However, to achieve so, constant questioning, doubtfulness and wondering, an incessant readiness to step out of the balance and look at how well we stand and how awesome the state of the seeming balance that we currently occupy is, are required. After all, every stance of ours conceals innumerable blind spots as features of our being that are inaccessible to our perception and, as such, unrecognizable by us. We may realize them only by bravely stepping out of the safety of the actual balanced state and looking at it from a new angle. This is why separation is the best and sometimes the only way of learning how good a given relationship is rather than ceaselessly gazing at the person we relate to. This also explains why leaving a place that we have occupied for too long is the best way of reassessing how great it is

for our continuous dwelling therein. To leave home is thus the way to find home too, as some may notice. As a matter of fact, the human evolution into the most supreme form of life on this planet is thought to have been vitally contributed to by the fact that instead of predatorily moving towards other creatures while chasing them, humans have developed while moving away from them and escaping from their aggressive grasp<sup>1254</sup>. In that sense, running away from the hands that try to hold us down and suffocate can be said to be much more beneficial for the growth of one's intellect than hunting others down, which is, by the way, compatible with the dichotomy between the rebellious forces that always crave to differ and adventurously run where no humans have set their feet before, and the forces that tend to bring everything down to a monotonous equilibrium, an ordered state governed by an immaculate rule of law. Be that as it may, what the only strategy for avoiding the blind spot effect, that is, moving away from a balance so as to temporarily lose it and thereby increase our flexibility and ability to regain it in a more stable and superior form later, implicitly teaches us is the importance of giving up things in life in order to gain much greater things in return. To sacrifice our earthly life in order to build a greater life amongst the stars of spirit is, after all, what the sacred teaching of Christianity, of dying in beauty and love for the creatures of the world, has been pointing at ever since the Christ walked across the fields of the Earth, with his heart filled with the guiding star of the following norm: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (John 12:24-25). For, only after we start living for the salvation of the world with every breath of ours do we get a chance to fully live up to the divine potentials enrooted within our hearts and eventually inscribe our names somewhere among the eternally abiding stars, as the parable of the crucifixion of the Christ, of dying within one's mortal, biological self, but gaining the life divine and everlasting in return, may indicate to us.

In this context of beautifying nothingness and erasure of things, of painting zero on a hero's hand<sup>1255</sup>, the blind spot effect also shows us how shining of our spirits may make us blind to it, which is why it is often claimed that some of the greatest stars, sadly, reside in darkness most of the time. Dwelling in the constant shine of our spirits would predispose us to become "blinded by lights", and although we may partially realize the extent of this glow should we be able to step out of our self, orbit us from afar and gaze at us from a new panorama of thought, this is rarely possible due to our being helplessly anchored to a set of basic presuppositions that guide our thought processes along the deeply settled tracks of cognitive habits that typify our character. Nevertheless, even when we are able to catch a glimpse of this immaculate shine of our spirits, we should be aware that "it is bad believing in our incessant dwelling in light", as Giordano Bruno noticed<sup>1256</sup>, as well as that "there are two types of man: righteous who believe that they are sinful and sinful who believe that they are righteous"<sup>1257</sup>, as Blaise Pascal held, or as an old Serbian poem goes, "a pretty poem is a poet's pride; pull the plug on the poem and the poet alike"<sup>1258</sup>. For, unlike self-adoring weaklings in the literary realm, to whom every scribble appears impeccable and worth endless self-promotion, the writer that gets closer to transmitting the divine word is akin to a mind dwelling in the center of the Sun, blinded by its very light and

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<sup>1254</sup> Ben Parcher, Personal Correspondence (2011).

<sup>1255</sup> A reference is made to Sonic Youth's Teen Age Riot on Daydream Nation, Enigma Records (1988).

<sup>1256</sup> According to Umberto Eco's Foucault's Pendulum, Random House, New York, NY (1988).

<sup>1257</sup> See Béla Hamvas' Anthologia Humana: 5000 Years of Wisdom, Dereta, Belgrade, Serbia (1948), pp. 147.

<sup>1258</sup> In the original, "Lepa pesma pesniku je dika, izeš pesmu, izeš i pesnika".

thinking that it resides in pitch darkness, or, as Maurice Blanchot would have put it, “Who writes is in exile from writing. That is his own country, in which he is no prophet”<sup>1259</sup>. Then, as we erase all the malign mental traits that crave to satisfy our ego, the thirst for fame and reputation, threatening to irrecoverably spoil the spotless shine of our egoless spirit, we could also bring to mind the memorable phrase from the Coen brothers’ cult coming-of-age movie, *The Big Lebowski*, “The dude abides”, a reminder of the need to ceaselessly question the bogus identity of our personality that the world of grownups tries to impose on us through its greedy runs after material wealth, in order to, well, abide in bliss and prosperity, as it were. May this celebration of namelessness be also the meaning of the final shot of Noah Baumbach’s *Frances Ha* showing a Frances Halladay squeezing her name spelled on a tiny piece of paper into the name slot of her mailbox, but having to cut it down to Frances Ha, all with a smile on her face, and coinciding with a lucky streak that has come her way and with her dormant creativity finally beginning to flourish? An even more memorable instance where declaration of namelessness had a lifesaving connotation comes from the ancient epic of Odysseus and the moment when the Greek hero, prior to stabbing the Cyclops in his eye with a spear, announced himself as “nobody” to the Cyclops. Then, when other Cyclopes heard their companion crying in the cave closed with a boulder and asked what happened, the Cyclops said, “nobody hurt me”, after which the other Cyclopes disbanded and allowed Odysseus and his friends to escape from the cave and sail into the open sea. However, as Odysseus and his crowd embarked on their boats and sailed away from the island of the Cyclopes, Odysseus yelled his name to the angry Cyclops who tossed large rocks from the coast into the sea, which caused the curse of Poseidon, the Cyclops’ father, to befall upon him and follow him all until his arrival to Ithaca and Penelope’s embrace ten years later. What the Greek poet wished to tell us with this storyline must have been that freeness from the attachment to names, of oneself and of any of the things that comprise reality is truly lifesaving, while enslavement by them is equivalent to attracting the curse of gods onto us. Paul Valéry correspondingly claimed that “seeing is forgetting the name of the thing one sees”, which brings back the memory of the Nigerian student from Lorraine Hansberry’s play *A Raisin in the Sun*, entering the Younger family home and, after a short quarrel with the young lady he wooed, telling her that “the most liberated women are not liberated at all - you talk about it too much”<sup>1260</sup>, and prompting me to coin the following saying, quite complementary to Paul Valéry’s one: “If you say it, you are far from it”. Walking through the earthly realms nameless, enlightened by knowing that naming things is not the prerequisite for knowing them, but rather the precondition for unknowing them, free from the burdens of rank and class and completely unattached to the merits of ego equaling walls raised between us onto which most humans lean due to insecurities enkindled in their souls at the very thought of flying through the world like a truly liberated spirit, is thus the way to ensure opening of the gateways of eternity in front of our sandaled feet. For, as I said in an interview I gave to a Chicago journalist as a young university professor in 2015, “Whenever we let the name come before the thing named, we shall find ourselves in a problem. For example, I have a theory that modern music is in a relatively sucky state because it is predominantly created by musicians who want to be in the band first and only then wonder what kind of music they should be playing. Eventually, good music does not become a determinant of what will reach the pole position on the market, but rather how pushy, networked and talented for marketing and self-promotion the musicians are. In one such

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<sup>1259</sup> See Edmond Jabès’ *The Book of Margins*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL (1993), pp. 176.

<sup>1260</sup> The student here refers to the American women and it is quite possible that the playwright intentionally used the word “liberated” instead of “liberal” to reflect the student’s imperfect use of English language.

corporate climate, bands like the one immortalized in a Dead Kennedys' song<sup>1261</sup>, who "wanna be prefab superstars" and "make big money", who think that they "need no soul" and "ain't no artists but are businessmen", who "have no ideas on their own" and who "won't offend or rock the boat" become popular, as opposed to bands who have a real inspiring message and music to convey, but never reach the ears of the public because they are neither business-minded enough nor are apt at self-promotional whoring. Logically, the same effect we witness today in the sphere of business: businessmen want to be businessmen first without often having a slightest idea of the products that they will deliver and the cultural value that these products will promote. They know that even thin air could be sold and made money on with the proper advertisement campaign and, logically, given their goal of making revenue, not really saving the world, begin to prioritize marketing over R&D, a strategy that has grown particularly lucrative in today's globalized neoliberal economy. In a way, it is as if the concept of propaganda, the same one that largely pushed the 20<sup>th</sup> Century into unthinkable agonies and the one I felt on my own skin, having grown up surrounded by the regime-controlled mass media in war-stricken Yugoslavia of the 1990s, sees its revival in this flawed approach that the new generation of entrepreneurs follows. And the results of treating the quality of the content as secondary to how well this content is being advertised and promoted we know: markets saturated with products that have a devastating effect on our body and spirit and that, in effect, corrode our culture instead of enriching it. In science, the effects are the same: namely, the inventiveness of research declines as the flow of money increases because people who prioritize the short-term financial gain over fundamentally beautiful and creative expression, which is usually such that its intensity is inversely proportional to the potential to achieve such monetary gains, have taken over this domain and begun to control it, squeezing the romantic spirits careless about the budgetary aspects of science out. "What set Bach and Haydn apart among the composers of serviceable music was the thought they put into their music, and the way they challenged themselves to be formally inventive and emotionally daring when their noble employers would surely have been satisfied with something merely pretty"<sup>1262</sup>, a music critic noted once, and yet the great majority of people in all professions under the sun, including science and art, are such that they have owed their success to creating something "merely pretty" for the sake of ensuring steady revenues and pushing down the ladder of success those who strive to innovate and produce something otherworldly progressive, mainly because such strivings are perceived as signs of dislike of the mediocrities that these mainstreamers have willingly embraced. Even more critically, when eyes are kept on money before anything else, these aspirations to innovate are perceived as the instances of sheer lunacy whenever they are unmarketable in the short term, which is always the case with ideas that lie way ahead of their times. This string of animosities toward the innovator leads to his being gradual shunned from the pack, a fate that has been striking me on and on in the academic circles, whose boundaries I have challenged and crossed ever since I was an elementary school pupil rebelling against the authoritarian rule of the instructor. Still, whereas the goal of the majority of people in disciplines where work is monetarily satisfactory, including science as of recently, is to create as much money from as little knowledge, my goal and the goal of the most creative individuals, as I am tempted to believe, is the opposite, namely to create knowledge of such a progressive character that it brings

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<sup>1261</sup> Listen to Dead Kennedys' Pull My Strings on Give Me Convenience or Give Me Death, Alternative Tentacles (1987).

<sup>1262</sup> Ted Libbey's The NPR Guide to Building a Classical CD Collection, Workman Publishing, New York, NY (1999), pp. 297.

not even a cent to the creator, even though it would mean millions to future generations. For, as pointed out by Arthur Schopenhauer, “To be useless and unprofitable is one of the characteristics of works of genius”<sup>1263</sup>. Hence my sympathy with Toma Zdravković, a singer and a bard who compensated his poor singing skills with his personality, which owed its magnetism not only to Toma’s considering *kafana*, the Serbian version of saloon, as a shrine, addressing it with a capital *She*, the way sailors called their ships, but even more importantly to Toma’s being a rare kind of person to whom “money meant nothing”<sup>1264</sup>, as illustrated by his giving the entire honorarium he earned for singing at a wedding for a single rose sold by a gypsy flower girl outside the venue and then saying that he underpaid it<sup>1265</sup>. Hence also a whole lot of understanding I have for Yves Klein’s throwing half of the gold he received for selling empty space to the Seine in front of the buyers and using the other half as a raw material for the first in his revolutionary series of monochromatic paintings that represented the unseen and nullified the painting *per se* as the form. For, being aware of the corruptive effect of money on the creative core of scientific work, I have vowed never to cease to aspire to create new knowledge by paying not even a smidgeon of attention to its monetary character. Stemming from the belief that the artistic and the corporate stand in such a fundamental opposition to one another that whatever stands as a quality in one world is a detriment in another, my stance is exactly that of Morrissey when he kicked his manager, Ken Friedman out of the studio with the following words: “I’m in the studio trying to create art and you’re here trying to talk business with me. It’s messing me up. I can’t do both. Get out”<sup>1266</sup>. Although I am often being told by my more senior colleagues that money and money only is the gateway to success in this corporatized academia where each faculty member is a “salesman on commission”<sup>1267</sup> and instructed to write as many grants as possible, following the way of successful principal investigators thereby, who at any given time have half a dozen or more grants submitted and under review, I see one such approach as inherently toxic - perhaps as toxic as the pressure to publish whereby the act of publishing is implicitly prioritized over the quality of science that is being published. “Do I need to remind you that grants here are more important than papers”<sup>1268</sup>, the grubby piece of advice given to me by one of my former department chairs I often recall in this context of ceaseless wonder over how come people fail to recognize the corruptive effects that such a prioritization of means over goals, that is, of financial revenues over the enrichment of human knowledge, the definite purpose of science, has. Verily, how much greed and shallowness does it take to pervert one’s

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<sup>1263</sup> The quote was found in Philip Freeman’s *Running the Voodoo Down: The Electric Music of Miles Davis*, Backbeat Books, San Francisco, CA (2005), pp. 205.

<sup>1264</sup> Watch *Kvadratura kruga: Toma Zdravković*, retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efr1Zg7RJI4> (2011).

<sup>1265</sup> The story was told by the accordionist, Zlatko Krstić and can be found in Dejan Ćirić’s *Toma Zdravković – 68 neispričanih priča*, Novosti, Belgrade, Serbia (2014). It was also pasted in a comment by zilekg at <https://forum.krstarica.com/threads/toma-zdravkovic.38070/page-3> (2009).

<sup>1266</sup> See Tony Fletcher’s *A Light that Never Goes Out: The Enduring Saga of the Smiths*, Random House, New York, NY (2012), pp. 593.

<sup>1267</sup> See Kevin Drum’s *Is Academic Science Hopelessly Corrupt?* *Mother Jones* (February 7, 2016), retrieved from <https://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2016/02/academic-science-hopelessly-corrupt/>.

<sup>1268</sup> Reza Mehvar, the Head of Department of Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences at Chapman University, Irvine, CA (Personal correspondence, 2017), a man looking strangely similar to the hangman captured just right of the Yugoslav partisan, Stjepan Filipović, as he lifted both his arms into the air, victoriously, and shouted the timeless phrase, *Smrt fašizmu, sloboda narodu*, that is, Death to Fascism, Freedom to the People, with a rope tied around his neck, seconds before he would be hanged, on May 27, 1942, coincidentally exactly 77 years before the day on which this footnote is being written.

mind to such an extent that it becomes complacently ignorant about the fallacy of advocating the acquisition of funds to engage in a search for discovery as more important than the discovery *per se*? Soon after these words resonated in my ears, I, the martyr for justice and love of all things lyrical and beautiful in science and the herald of New Romanticism in this coldblooded, cutthroat, corporate, capitalist culture that science has turned into, became expelled from its corrupt nidus. How shocking it was to be expelled from academia and kicked out to the street after wishing to encourage the poor dreamers of this world by showing them that great science could be done with meager funds and deliberately letting a \$1 million research fund be blown into the wind, never to be renewed, and then learning hard-way that my academic power, that great poison for the mind and an altar before which the students, the administrators and the colleagues had bowed, was not rooted in my knowledge or creativity, but in the money that I was bringing in to the institution, filling its leaders' pockets with and securing the safety of their posts. While searching for the next academic post, a "shelter from the storm"<sup>1269</sup>, as it were, I met with dozens of highly ranked professors as potential employers and not a single one of them said, "Let me see what kind of knowledge you create", bothering not even to flip a single page of any of my papers, but every single one of them said, "Let me see what kind of funding you bring". The bluntest among them asked me about funding only before ending the conversation right there, without even waiting to hear how I got literally robbed of it in a scholastic snake pit, while more sensible among them smuggled the same question somewhere in the middle of the conversation, shyly but equally obtrusively to my ears, insinuating the same point: what matters today in science is \$\$\$ and not how beautiful, meaningful or, god forbid, revolutionary the knowledge one creates is. But, "by this prioritization of the acquisition of funding rather than of knowledge", as I pointed out in a portion of an interview on the role of nanotechnologies in coronavirus research that eventually had to be erased, "a negative selection is being made at the university levels, as the scientists at heart cede their tenure seats to what I love to call 'traveling salesmen', that is, people who are more skilled at selling their science than doing it. And with skilled merchants, you know how it is: they will be successful in selling any product, even when it is of poor quality, while our scientist at heart will struggle to sell even the best of the best products because (s)he has been taught to doubt everything. But to love science for science's sake and be negligent about its mercantile aspects, as my example shows, can have devastating effects on one's career today. That has to change if we want to reveal a more humane side of science and create grounds for science capable of launching an effective collective response in times of emergency"<sup>1270</sup>. Further, "to be given a space and opportunity to apply for funding, the universities request grant money, which can be obtained only if given the opportunity to apply for funding, and this is a catch-22 difficult to resolve for a well-established lab", I pointed out in another erased portion of this interview in the context of this request for money by every single university official from which the employment initiative could originate in the days of my being lost at sea, jobless and broke, but transforming first the garage and the freezer and then the backyard and the neighboring streets, parks, ponds and ocean shores into the best lab that the world has ever seen. And while I was on the mission to demonstrate that poverty can be the source of the most inventive scientific thought, which is more often than not put to sleep under the conditions of extreme abundance of expensive tools and technologies, the academic world moved with each new day toward ever harder monetization and plutocratization of science. However, every time I drove down Michelson Drive in downtown Irvine, the street that the only

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<sup>1269</sup> Listen to Bob Dylan's Shelter from the Storm on Blood on the Tracks, Columbia Records (1975).

<sup>1270</sup> An interview with Lucy Chard, The Nano Med Zone (July 2020).

Serbian Orthodox Church in this city was located on, I would think of Albert Michelson after whom this street was named, the scientist who spent more than 50 years of his career trying to nail down the speed of light to the most accurate decimal digit through the use of grandiose experimental setups<sup>1271</sup>, but, symbolically, went down in history as the conductor of the world's most famous failed experiment, namely that of trying to detect the presence of ether. Hence, I find it not surprising that Michelson Drive does not intersect with a nearby avenue named after another famous American physicist, Robert Andrews Millikan, who derived another fundamental physical constant, namely the elementary electric charge, in his inventive oil drop experiment from around 1910 but did not obsess with measuring this constant with a superb precision, which was just under the 0.5 % error margin relative to the current value of  $1.602 \cdot 10^{-19}$  C, and was more interested in following the trail of qualitative significance left by this finding, the major one of which, as we know today, was a hint at the quantum nature of electric charge. In my head, Michelson's contorted fate has been a perpetual reminder of the relative pettiness of research whose only goal is to demonstrate power via the attainment of an ever greater quantitative precision with the use of instrumentation that is the privilege of the wealthy and of the greatness of research stemming from imaginative approaches in face of destitution and adversity. But how alone I was in pursuing this ideology of poverty in a culture where money equates to power became obvious to me on day-to-day basis, as when I learned how faculty positions would be offered to me had I had enough research money to pay for them<sup>1272</sup> or how schoolchildren whose parents paid most in yearly donations would get to lead the school instead of the principal for a week<sup>1273</sup>. Over time, this has become like a burden tied around my neck that required ever greater flights of a graceful spirit unattached to any material goods to counteract its downward drag of spiritual gravity. Alas, I was aware that as my spiritual training was going on, the culture was sliding toward ever greater proliferation of greedy, money-loving and exploitative entrepreneurs that can be best described as excuses for scientists at heart. To this category of blunt moneygrubbers who have led academia toward these bleak destinations belonged the applicant for the position of an associate professor in my old department at University of Illinois in Chicago, who put the drawing of a tree with dozens of apples on the first slide of his interview presentation, each of which represented a major, R grant from the NIH, some of which expired and began to fall on the ground, while others, red and glossy, like the ones from the Tree of Knowledge, which were "a delight to the eyes" (Genesis 3:6), were ready to be bitten into to the presenter's fiendish sound of self-satisfying saliva clicks; 'tis the tree that springs in my mind very often as I ruminate over this unfortunate state of affairs, where money corrupts the creativeness and surface eclipses the essence. Very often, these blemished advisors would warn me that the one who does science and science only, like myself, is "bound by fate to remain a postdoc forever", a remark interpretable in the light of its reflecting the capitalistic, exploitative model of the new science - where a principal investigator is expected to primarily market/advertise his/her research and gather the investors' money for it and only secondarily, if his spare time permits it, be creatively involved in directing this research - and supposedly encouraging me to turn into a grant-writing machine that is completely careless about where the

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<sup>1271</sup> His partner in this most famous of all failed experiments in the history of science, Edward Morley busied himself with similar matters, having spent over a decade measuring the exact atomic weight of the oxygen atom alone.

<sup>1272</sup> Zoran Nenadić, Chair of the Bioengineering Department, University of California at Irvine, Personal Correspondence (2020).

<sup>1273</sup> Christine Pearson, Principal of Stone Creek Elementary School, Irvine, California. Announcement at the kindergarten class held at 11 am on April 30, 2021.

money received from the investors goes, so long as it continues to trickle. My usual response to this morally sketchy and myopic guidance is that only when an idea arises in me, which, I feel, has a chance to revolutionize science, will I go ahead and seek funding for it and even then my commitment to one funded project at a time will be complete, like the one of a filmmaker during the making of a film, never divided between writing more grants, the habit which is not only customary but requested for survival in today's academia. When I exposed my approach to acquiring funding for research to one of my earlier department chairs<sup>1274</sup>, criticizing the greediness of the stereotypical successful scientists of the modern day, obsessively seeking funding and finding in it the ultimate goal of their work, when "my aim is true", if I were to quote Elvis Costello, in a sense that I hesitate to apply for research grants that are not absolutely necessary and that I do not perceive as valuable and worthy of social investment, she warned me of the immanence of the fall from academic circles that one such attitude bears, but I stopped not. I kept on explicating the disastrous consequences of this dangerous shift in priorities and warning the headmasters of the scientific community of the day instead about the immanence of the fall that science and humanity will undergo if they only continue to pursue this flawed corporate trend. For example, I have warned about Theranos, the so-called Silicon Valley's Greatest Failure, as the herald of the fate awaiting any scientific enterprise, academic or industrial, that finds grant money acquisition more valuable than science that this money is supposed to fund; namely, it would turn into a scavenging bubble that sooner or later bursts and reveals itself as a hoax. The sad fact that this prioritization of funding acquisition over inventive and effective funding utilization is a daily practice among scientists of today's corporatized universities should remind us that the case of this company, like that of everyone who has fallen from grace in this world, is not to be used as a moral cleanser by those who have been spared from these falls, but as a mirror on which the purity and fate of social values embedded in every member of a current era could be read with relative precision. And, ideally, if read well, the morale of the story of Theranos as well as Valeant Pharmaceuticals and countless other biotech companies that took on the Edisonian premise that "the vehicle of business", not knowledge or, God forbid, love, "provides the greatest tool to change the world"<sup>1275</sup> and based their successes on focusing on investment acquisition, marketing and legal operations, while ignoring inventive research, the foundations of it all, is to instruct the readers that these warped values can only lead to downfall, like that of the Evangelical "house built upon the sand", which fell when "the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew", and "great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:26-27). Also, in the paragraph I wrote for my father's editorial note in the Book of Abstracts for the 2018 edition of the YUCOMAT conference that I have helped him organize year after year since its inception, I stated the following: "Materials science and engineering is a highly applicative field and a number of technologies presented at this conference are directly translatable to marketable applications. On top of this, we could wonder if the economy of a country could ever grow beyond a certain level if its basic science and industry remain as disconnected as they are in today's Serbia and most other countries of this region. Oh well, but how do we simultaneously promote state-of-the-art basic materials science, whose applications may be decades ahead, and industrial research, which in this particular setting would feed best on more modest concepts, some of you might ask and there is no easy answer. Aside from learning

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<sup>1274</sup> Tejal Desai, the Head of Department of Bioengineering and Therapeutic Sciences, University of California, San Francisco, CA. Personal correspondence (January 2016).

<sup>1275</sup> The premise comes from the quote by Elizabeth Holmes, the CEO of Theranos, Inc. Watch *The Inventor: Out for Blood in Silicon Valley* documentary directed by Alex Gibney (2019).

from some of the best examples, including the Korean and the Taiwanese success, which we will hear about in the respective satellite symposia, palpable ideas are needed on how to bridge this gap between basic science and industry in the region with many of the limitations and challenges that are no longer relevant in the developed world. As we do succeed in bridging this gap, there will be, as ever, other challenges to cope with and some of them stem from today's rather ambiguous relationship between science and money. Midway through the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, science was a place attracting true aficionados of knowledge, who paid no heed to finance, but this is not so anymore in the developed world. There, science has become a lucrative business to many and being indifferent to money is these days, sadly, a secure way out of the scientific profession. The general opinion of youth in science today, especially in this region of the world, where funding is meager, is that lots more money would solve all their problems. It would enable better and more numerous experiments to be conducted, thus increasing the quality of science, and it would also bring about the comfort of professional and private lives to the scientists. However, the other side of the coin is often overlooked. In the United States, for example, I witness firsthand the extent to which money spoils this very science that it helps grow. How? One reason is that scientific institutions, increasingly adopting aggressive business models, have begun to prioritize the acquisition of funds over the creation of new knowledge. It goes without saying that these two are tightly related, but the problem is that most such institutions, in academia and industry alike, would prefer employing a hypothetical scientist who brings tons of funds but creates little knowledge over a scientist who is modest when it comes to appeal for funding and who wishes to create an enormous amount of knowledge out of very little funding. This flawed prioritization has been creating negative selection, especially at the level of junior scientists; namely, those who are very smart and cunning when it comes to acquisition of funds, knowing how to sell their ideas well, even when they are not so inventive, push out of the scientific pyramid those who are not so skilled at selling their science. Like in the business world, the quality of packaging and marketing has taken over the quality of the product. As if scientists have fallen into the trap of idolizing Ray Kroc's food franchise, McDonald's, where the surface design of the product and its delivery service features have born more weight on the financial success of the company than the essence of the product delivered and where the exploit is owed to the Kroc way of transforming products that are unique, unrepeatable and subject to a lifelong improvisation into the lifeless monotony of a factory line, the most successful among them have started to value all the aspects of the scientific profession that surround the essence of high-quality science more than this very essence, in a way that is more machinelike, emotionless and soulless than ever in its history. As science evolves on top of these flawed premises, it becomes a cutthroat, big-fish-eat-small-fish business where not the most benevolent and inventive are retained, but rather those who are the most talented entrepreneurs. And just like in the world of business, where company managers may get rich from a business model based on huge investments into marketing and meager investments into innovation and product design, but the quality of the product will inevitably suffer, so does science founded on self-promotion and politics pave way for research that is insufficiently imaginative and comparatively unoriginal in form and content. Moreover, this entrepreneurial model of science very often feeds on an exploitative environment, careless mentorship and, perhaps most critically of all, superficially conducted science. For, science conducted on the premise that material wealth and prolific resources are all that matter sooner or later becomes akin to a conveyer belt, a factory that inertly produces knowledge with not even a zest of creativeness. After all, we know from decades of research in history of science that mind rules over money when it comes to the conception of creative ideas and that 'adequate funding

for science is not sufficient for organizations to make numerous major discoveries over time if the organizations are embedded in an institutional environment which severely limits their autonomy and flexibility'<sup>1276</sup>. Therefore, what I urge the young scientists in this region of the world and abroad to do is to be aware of this rampant materialism and the dehumanization of science that it bears and take a stand against it when their time to change the science policies for better comes. As far as this region is concerned, inertly following in the footsteps of the developed world when it comes to creation of these policies is an error and every country should find a model that is suited to it, uniquely. It should also watch out for inevitable mistakes committed by the more developed countries and, like a frog, leap over them, thus accelerating its progress and, one day, maybe even transcending those who are way ahead of them right now. After all, if this region of the world has been historically known for something, it is the ability to rebuff the imperialistic rules while showing that the power of the mind rules over matter and that ideas should drive technologies and not the other way around. What better time to elicit this bold stance in the sphere of materials science and science in general than today"? My own example in this story is that of an unsurpassably productive scientist, but, in the spirit of the stereotypical scientist from the Balkan Peninsula, careless about money, perceiving it as a corruptor of creativity, the reason for which I was expelled from academia by the corporate powers that be. For, ever since I began to do science, one thing especially important to me thanks to my upbringing in poverty, but completely disregarded by the funding agencies and the academic authorities when they evaluate scientific success, has been the cost-to-benefit ratio: while I have tried my best to create as much relevant knowledge with as little of funding, as humbly as this attitude can get, my department chairs have cared only for the amount of funding that would flow into their institutions through my research grants. And whenever I said that I had enough funding and that this sufficiency is what makes me rich, the holy semantics I aired would get pierced by the arrows of disbelief fired by these rapacious carriers of today's torch of science, who would let this creature that swore by humbleness, that classical trait of a genuine scientific intellect, go down the drain and be squeezed out of the lifeless pipes of a system controlled by the greedy, the greedy who recognize greed and greed only as of value to them and the system itself. The extent to which humbleness, that closest companion of the scientific mind throughout the history, is being exorcized thereby, only for insatiable voraciousness to take its place, sending the mind who would strive to take as little as possible from the society, but give a whole world in return to the past and installing the one who would rather garner millions and produce nothing than create something out of nothing in an act of magic, is being ignored and no heed paid to the disastrous effects that this exorcism of humility, once a virtue and nowadays a nuisance, will have in the long run. "What would I do with one more \$1 million grant? Hire more people and turn the lab into an exploitative factory, without being able to properly mentor them? Turn into a principal investigator whose entire work boils down to using grant research time and money to write more grant proposals instead of diving deep into the problematics of the ongoing research, as fraudulently, yet acceptably as it is these days? No, my goal is the opposite because I want to be the nucleus of the people's, poor man's science, of science exercised in poverty, but producing tons of creative ideas nonetheless, echoing with a voice of hope for all those sidelined by these corporate, mercantile, money-centric governors in science through hills and valleys, hopefully one day reaching those who will be touched by it. After all, to do impactful science with lots of funds is easy, but how cooler it is to create revolutionary knowledge from little or no funding? Wouldn't it be the triumph of knowledge and spirit over matter rather than the

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<sup>1276</sup> See Rogers J. Hollingsworth's Factors Associated with Scientific Creativity, *Euresis* 2, 77 – 112 (2012).

confirmation of sheer materialism that these moguls and entrepreneurs in science today do when they turn their multimillion dollar labs into a Nature publication? Moreover, since whoever got rich throughout the history did so on someone else's back, my loyalty to this ideology of poverty ties to my desire to remain an anarchist in the philosophical sense of the word, a person who renounces the role of an authority that manipulates with the opinion and behavior of others to feather one's nest. It is thus that I challenge the rotten capitalism that is so pervasive in today's academia and where, as in every capitalist system, fundraising, marketing and managing people are the key to success, way ahead of the true creative substance of the scientific work", I remember I said to my former department chair, creating one of those silences louder than the thunder in the wake of these words, leaving her speechless, yet fuller than ever of the conviction that one such stance may be true, but is a secure way to be pushed off the cliff by the pushy, the grabby and the money-hungry who have taken on the peer and the governing positions in the sphere of science alike, expelling the romanticists like myself into gulags and country farms, far beyond the limits of their Alphaville. I knew that the punishment for confronting "the death voice, the voice that means business"<sup>1277</sup> that has taken over academia in the recent years with a voice that speaks poetry, that spreads the breadth of renaissance and that draws on philosophy, all those things that science and institutions that aspire to create and disseminate knowledge should embrace in a perfect universe, had to be severe and would most probably result in my dismissal from multiple university posts. Yet, despite these pending penalties, I vowed with all my heart to retain the attitude of Archimedes as he drew circles in the sand and uttered that timeless "*noli turbare circulos meos*" before the Roman soldier who slayed him in an instant and of the one who would prioritize the quest for the Kingdom of God, for the essence of it all, rather than the pettiness lining up the surface of things, regardless of the repercussions that this would have on one such superficial concept as "career", that "wall we build"<sup>1278</sup> is. For, what has always interested me is to do science that exposes the deepest natural secrets and ignites human wonder thereby, but also benefits humankind with its biomedical or other potencies, worrying not even an iota along the way about the awards that precede or supersede these findings. As Vd, the last syncopation drummer in Belgrade new wave and postpunk bands and the first one to switch to the rhythm machine, a relentless innovator at heart<sup>1279</sup>, said upon summoning up the early days of Šarlo Akrobata, "We were craving genuine musicianship. We realized it was healthy. We did not give a shit about records, or the name. We wanted to sneak into a hole and play as much as possible. That is how it all began. That is how things should develop, not only for us – that should be the key for all"<sup>1280</sup>. Therefore, not only did I not care a slightest bit about earning a PhD degree, focusing instead all my energies on research and research only and hoping that only when my research has born sufficient fruits would this degree be bestowed upon me,

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<sup>1277</sup> See Laurie Halse Anderson's and Emily Carroll's *Speak*, Farrar Strauss Giroux, New York, NY (2018), pp. 58.

<sup>1278</sup> See Naveen Reddi's answer to the thread titled I Lost Everything in Life. What Should I Do? Quora (2018), retrieved from <https://www.quora.com/I-lost-everything-in-my-life-What-should-I-do>.

<sup>1279</sup> An anecdote from the Belgrade music scene from the early 1980s says that Šarlo was so disliked wherever they played early on that it was customary for some attendees of their concerts to walk past Vd in the middle of the song and either shove him in passing or steal his towel or cymbals. Vd would occasionally turn to see what happened. The legend says that it was the only time Šarlo looked at somebody's back (See Ivica Vdović (1961 – 1992.), YouTube video, retrieved from <https://youtu.be/62Oi9Y-gSJg> (2017)). It may be for this reason that they showed their backs on the front cover of their only record, *Bistriji ili tuplji čovek biva kad...*, albeit facing a child, that ultimate destination that they - as it was declared in their songs - had set for themselves.

<sup>1280</sup> See Hronika BG talasa (3. deo) – Šarlo akrobata – Milan, Koja, Vd: Nas trojica smo van utabanih staza, Džuboks (March 27, 1981), retrieved from <http://www.yugopapir.com/2014/04/hronika-bg-talasa-3-deo-sarlo-akrobata.html>.

and not only did I not care about tenure either, having resigned from my first assistant professorship and thrown around \$1 million in research and salary funds into the wind, graciously, in style, but my tireless roaming around the Ivory Tower and its broke backyards, bouncing between the least expected of places on its map, crookedly, served the purpose to confuse and bedazzle the tracers of my path, but also stick a finger in the eye of a system that, like every institutionalized, rigorously hierarchical organization, an antipode of holy anarchy, has taken a precious idea that discovering new knowledge and sharing it with humanity is and spitted it out in a rotten, corrupt and wholly inhumane form, having turned infinite benevolence and into infinite viciousness. This, in short, is why I tell my students to erase any ideas of degrees, tenures, fellowships or any other rewards from their minds. They only spoil the purity of their approach to research or any other creative things that they attempt to do while in academia. Do your science well and all other things will come to you naturally, just like all the things necessary for one's survival will come to those who focus on seeking none but 'the kingdom of God and his righteousness' (Matthew 6:33)". When my colleagues ask me why I care not to apply for academic tenure in spite of being, in their own words, more accomplished than many full professors, my answer is that to be concerned with tenure or pay even the slightest attention to it is to block the sight of the whole with the veil of narrow-minded submission to local, university-wide expectations and rules, the reason for which, all through my writing and engagement in the classroom and beyond, I communicate not only with my fellow colleague down the hall, but, first and foremost, with scientists and thinkers from the distant future as well as with those who set the foundations of and then laboriously laid bricks on the tradition dating centuries in the past, thus substituting human praise, always biased, corrupt, shallow, partial, inaccurate and favoring cronies over groundbreakers, with divine praise - inestimable, impalpable and out-of-this-world. On some other occasions, if I am being asked by my academic supervisors and other authorities what my professional goals are, I may tell them, in the very same spirit, that "I care not for tenure nor for grants, awards, degrees, prestige and reputation; my only goal is to do something precious and beautiful in this life, a mission I know nothing of, but which I inquire about across the deepest depths of my heart every single day, the accomplishment of which would make *stabat mater*, the sufferings of my mother, that ethereal fount of love and life, who had boldly decided to bear me despite the poor prognoses regarding my health and prospects to be born as a normal infant and who had held my hand to guard me *dum pendébat Filius*<sup>1281</sup>, even while shaking for an hour at a time from seizures with a deadly tumor growing inside her head, be not in vain; this and this only is what I care for". "I would prefer being the shadow of Holly Golightly, sitting on a balcony with a hole in my shoe and an old guitar in my hands, but with dreams of crossing moon rivers illuminating my heart than the most reputable academician who sold his soul, tainted the purity of his heart and lost divine presence to suits and ties, phony smiles and banknotes sinking down his pockets, let alone the ominous power of authority pressing down on his shoulders", I may say on another day in defense of the mindset floating through the world in a manner that is wholly inert to the attractors of fame and fortune, the mindset that I, who have confused a whole generation of my academic contemporaries with the professional decisions I have made in the present and past, from routinely turning down offers for higher ranks to leaving more renowned and better funded institutions in favor of their poorer analogues to even intentionally losing jobs so as to test my survival skills, can gladly call mine too. "I care to continue this dialogue with Nature carried out using the language of science, to continue to ask questions that reveal 'where we come from, what we are, and where we are

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<sup>1281</sup> See Jacopo da Todi's Stabat Mater (circa 1300 AD), retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stabat\\_Mater](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stabat_Mater).

going', as Gauguin questioned with his art, whereby any conception of tenure or any other social rewards and recognition would act as a mere distraction and crosstalk in this communication with the divinest depths of Nature that I try to establish through my science", I may utter on yet another day in this Universe wherein I, as a temporary visitor, a cosmic tourist of a kind, have vowed never to answer a question the same way twice, regardless of the setting, casual, formal, you name it, in just about the same way as I have vowed to report in papers and books, completely and selflessly, with no material benefit in mind, on all the findings arrived at in the course of this sacramental dialoguing. In other words, annulling any sense of accomplishment that we might be tempted to keep close to our heart, scattering our rewards in the wind, identifying with the cosmic consciousness and returning onto the sacred road of searching, lightly and gracefully - like the Little Tramp seconds after he crumpled the image of a star and threw it into the dust in his brief adventure as a clown in a circus troupe<sup>1282</sup> so as to show that the real spiritual star does not crave to be a star and rather feels anchored to the rockiest bottom of life, destined to reside in the darkest alleys of human being – is, alongside the selfless strivings to bring light to the world of another, the way to retain inexhaustible sources of inspiration and unceasingly engage spirits in angelic flights of fancy from the seat of our soul. Relentlessly giving up what one has had or achieved, moving from light to darkness and from Heaven to Hell where the light of ours could illuminate the many nights of the soul and feed the thirst of those who are in true need of it, while shining forth fully, without ever confining anything inside, streaming to reach perfect nothingness and thereby always rediscovering new balances portrayed by the Way of Love is the means to gain the whole world in return and build the greatest shine ever witnessed on this planet from the star of our heart and mind.

The reasons for which a creative mind keeps one of its poles immersed in cosmic silence, while the other one spins fireworks of colorful visions soaked up in enlivening emotional juices are indeed many and almost impossible to count. One of them is the contrast provided to the active part of our brains, with respect to which the products of the latter are endowed with a fascinatingly impressive character in the subject's eye of the mind. Another reason is that this silence within provides us with an open door behind which a meditative thread is found, whose following delivers us straight into the essence of our being where sources of the most exciting acts conceivable dwell. As the Way of Love dictates, our creative capacities directly depend on our ability to extend a string between this meditative centerpiece surrounded by stillness and peacefulness on one side and the volcanically eruptive expressional surface of our being on the other and let gorgeous melodies of inspiring thoughts, feelings and acts be spontaneously played on it. For, well synchronized introspectiveness, the space for which is supplied by this still and silent hemisphere of our mind, and expressiveness, the drain and the drive for which lie in the immaculate beauty that is all around us, is what underlies the mental grounds for truly fulfilling living from the perspective of the Way of Love. Then, inspired by Meno's question, "How will you go about finding that thing the nature of which is totally unknown to you", the San Franciscan writer, Rebecca Solnit came up with her personal answer to it, which demanded from her to "leave the door open for the unknown, the door into the dark; that's where the most important things come from, where you yourself came from, and where you will go"<sup>1283</sup>. Yet, ours are times of systematic erasure of any forms of terra incognita off the maps of human visions of the world by the malignant powers of pretense, judgmental attitudes and toxically high levels of self-assurance that freeze the innate sense of wonder in us and turn it into an interlocked

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<sup>1282</sup> Watch the Circus directed by Charlie Chaplin (1928)

<sup>1283</sup> See Rebecca Solnit's *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, Penguin, London, UK (2005), pp. 4.

network of self-protective gates that, sadly, most grownups, having allowed themselves to be made up of not questions, but answers, have become. Hence Brian Wilson's pouring his heart out into an aural distillate of an adolescent nostalgia for childhood and for playrooms brimming with toys that *Pet Sounds* is by means of a unique compositional technique governed by the resistance to resolve the chord progressions and yield to answers, as it were. Rather, even when he did resolve the progression, usually after a long series of diminished, dominant and subdominant chords<sup>1284</sup>, he would do so by sneaking a harmonic question into the cadence, if not resolving in the transposed tonic, without the bass line playing the root of the chord, all so as to keep the tensions going, making the listener, whose ears crave to hear a cadence, cry more and more for the long anticipated resolution, which never comes completely. This, as it could be argued, was his way of tying the quest for the innocence of childhood with searching for a mindset that is all about wonder and questions, and in which the only answers are those taking the form of even more beautiful questions to questions asked in the first place. This is to say that it is sweet uncertainties and the blushing of the soul that we must reembrace in lieu of arrogant confidence if we are to find the way to the Paradise of childhood, which we got expelled from after spending too much time interacting with adults and becoming just like them: calculating, competitive, condemnatory. In fact, the point that any utterly lively, inspiring and curious creature that inhabits this universe is subconsciously aware of is not to judgmentally narrow down the limitless ocean of infinity waving at us from within each natural system in order to make it fit the tiny bottle of our preconceptions. Rather, the triumphant plan is always to leave the room for constructive ignorance, the sacred unknown and angelically aerial nothingness inside of one hemisphere of our minds, while the other one is busy imaginatively processing bits and pieces of our experience and assembling them into blissful jigsaw puzzles of ideas and visions. For, only in such a way does one enable a constant influx of the flickers of otherworldly beauty from the observed to the observer, while the stellar energies arising from our shifting away from tediously predictable behavior to acting in fascinatingly creative manners become transferred in the opposite direction: from the observer to the observed. Thus, what Rebecca managed to insinuate by her response to the question posed by the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher was that our development into starrier forms of being is inescapably conditioned by the degree to which we face the unknown, while, needless to say, making sure not to completely fall into its chasms, but rather keep on being anchored to the coasts of generally and/or personally affirmed knowledge to some extent. Namely, comprehending what constitutes knowledge, that is, fixed and solid statements about the nature of our experiential realities, is conditioned by our grasping it on the basis of prepossessed relations that connect certain fields of reality into a coherent ontological scheme. In other words, knowledge can be apprehended only from the grounds of similar knowledge. In contrast, to develop wholly unforeseen physical and cognitive features and deliver effects that may seem totally inconceivable to our imagination and senses is contingent upon our leaving room for the ceaseless facing of the unknown in the space of our mind; in other words, silence and emptiness ought to fill our insides as much as music and substance do. Or, as Robert Oppenheimer remarked, "Live always at the edge of mystery – the boundary of the unknown"<sup>1285</sup>. To succeed in this mystical endeavor, it is required from us to unceasingly fight the devilish forces of habit and safety that tend to push us into routine ways of being and expel from us the power of cosmic Wonder and its immanent questioning of it all on the account of

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<sup>1284</sup> See, for example, Tom Polk's *What Makes Pet Sounds So Appealing? Brian Wilson's Harmonic Techniques*, retrieved from <http://www.tompolk.com/writings/petsounds.html>.

<sup>1285</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5.

instilling in us vulgar prejudices, the spirit of certainty about it all and arrogance, trying to transform us into a preacher rather the sacred seeker of truth, truth that could be found only insofar as it is constantly being sought.

This viewpoint that praises the room for nothingness in the space of a celestial mind indicates that perfect knowledge is, in part, perfect ignorance too. For, if we ever appear to ourselves and the world as if we know it all, neglecting to nourish the space for unknowing in our head, that is, “the interstices in our knowledge, the darkness between stars”<sup>1286</sup>, as the Welsh poet, R. S. Thomas would have put it, we would end up unresponsively walking forward, without receiving a precious feedback as to where we are actually heading to. To live up to the ideal of an utmost smartness, we need to go against the very smartness and substitute some of the intellectual links fervently drawn in our head with a meditative silence through which vital intuitive insights and waves that carry feedback to our visions conceived and steps made would enter our being. This explains why the most progressive thinkers have never been those who’d come to think at a supersonic rate, who possess 20/20 hindsight, who are certain about everything and “are kind of all-knowing, all is clear to them” (Tao-Te-Xing XX), as Lao-Tzu defined common men, but those who appear a bit obtuse, unusually slow in thinking, “blunt and perplexed” (Tao-Te-Xing XX), as Lao-Tzu saw himself and quite possibly all the exemplars of a sublime intellect that he could envisage. For, “slow is the experience of all deep fountains: long they have to wait until they know what hath fallen into their depths”<sup>1287</sup>, as Friedrich Nietzsche pointed out, proposing the direct correspondence between the degree to which we slowly sink into the meditative depths of our mind and the profoundness of our cognitive apparatus. After all, it does not take more than the commonest reason conceivable to realize that only if we know not can we ask ourselves questions and proceed cautiously through the forest of human being and knowledge, step and step, carefully inspecting each, one at a time. Intuition, in the end, a powerful complement to our knowledge can exist only on the grounds of not-knowing. Without these empty spaces of ignorance in the scruffy cosmos in our heads, any scientific research adventures of ours would likewise cease to exist, for the lanterns of Wonder would have then become snuffed out in us and no questions, the starting points of all scientific inquiries that aim to produce something innovative, fundamental or practical, will ever again arise in us. And that this meditative emptiness of the cups of our minds and hearts is essential not only for arriving at exciting new panoramas of thought, but also for producing authentic expressions in our dancing through space is illustrated by the teaching of the acting instructor, Jacques Lecoq, who insisted on his tutees’ awakening “a state of unknowing, a state of openness and availability for the rediscovery of the elemental (whereby) the individual becomes a blank page and everything is erased so he can start from scratch, seeing things for the first time”<sup>1288</sup> in order to be able to shed forth moves improvised in the midst of the moment and endowed with a potential to enlighten the world with their wizardly pertinence and magical resonance with the energy landscapes of the space-time continuum through which they travel. Alluding to this nothingness that underlies the creative state of “‘armed neutrality’ from which all movements are equally possible”<sup>1289</sup>, and in which “availability, openness, readiness, acceptance”<sup>1290</sup> are all blended in the pot of our spirit

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<sup>1286</sup> See Keith Ward's *God: A Guide for the Perplexed*, Oneworld, Oxford, UK (2003).

<sup>1287</sup> See Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, translated by Thomas Common, retrieved from [eserver.org/philosophy/nietzsche-zarathustra.txt](http://eserver.org/philosophy/nietzsche-zarathustra.txt) (1883).

<sup>1288</sup> See Anthony Frost's and Ralph Yarrow's *Improvisation in Drama*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY (2007), pp. 228, 156.

<sup>1289</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 196.

<sup>1290</sup> *Ibid.*

wherefrom creative expressions thence begin to brew, the Stanford University professor of performance arts, Peggy Phelan observed how “performance is the art form which most fully understands the generative possibilities of disappearance”<sup>1291</sup>. Being based on the premise that “anthropologically and anatomically, movement precedes language” and that the aim of the most masterful performance art teaching is therefore “to return students to that situation where they discover emotion and meaning through gesture”, Lecoq’s method initially calls for the performer to “forget”, all so as to be able to “find the gesture of the word, the actions for the verbs in the profound silence in which they were born”<sup>1292</sup>. Since inspiring movements arise from the impulse of Wonder, the same one that impels the newborns to reach out with their limbs and explore the world, reinstating the mindset of a celestial naïveté whereby one indeed partially resembles a tabula rasa open to it all, born into a world full of surprises, from each angle of which twinkles of divine signs that capture one’s attention originate, is a vital factor that enables one to naturally and effortlessly deliver ingenious beauty in the wake of one’s moves. And if the fact that movement and stillness are so inextricably tied to each other in the realm of performance arts tells something to the systemic thinker in us, it is that whenever we are handed a quality of life as a thing worth pursuing, we ought to know that, sooner or later, an indispensable place for its diametrical opposite will become evident too in the domain of its application. After all, whatever we come to celebrate in the sphere of our knowledge, be it knowledge itself or any other qualities of life, we should be sure that there ought to be room left for the placement of their opposites on the pedestal of glory as well. Moreover, by being preoccupied with knowledge only, an immense potential exists for our involvement in conflicts of opinions. For, in this absence of emptiness in our heads that allows for flexible adjustments of our worldviews to take place in a matter of seconds, all the expressions of our being will come to radiate with stiff demands to obey our creeds rather than to engage in fruitful dialogues in the course of which both sides would be able to co-evolve into something greater than what they had been prior to them. To convince others that we are right will thus naturally occupy a higher place on the ladder of significance than loving them, a process that always asks for sacrifices to be made on our side, both epistemologically and physically. In that sense, for as long as knowledge conquers the mental territories that are to be possessed by meditative ignorance, the world will resemble the one from which the dreams of the infamous cabinet of Dr. Caligari<sup>1293</sup> emerged, where the patients see their doctors as madmen and *vice versa*, blaming, rather than healing, one another. Finally, even our thinking processes would be wholly crippled without these patches of emptiness interspersed across our mental screen; for, remembering is a much more pathological activity than forgetting, as Speed Levitch pointed out during a stunning monologue he verbally danced off on the Brooklyn Bridge in the movie *Waking Life*, reminding us of how most mental illnesses are due to too much knowledge and an inability to erase the fixed ideas that then begin to roam around our head like fugacious and fast-flying phantoms, while the ability to easily forget and, in essence, forgive, as those who see the Christian ethics as a metaphor of it all would have told us, is an essential trait of all beautiful minds. To place even more emphasis on the merits of emptiness in the rooms of our consciousness, the Serbian Father Tadej of Vitovnica might have noted how “it can be precarious to swim in a suit”<sup>1294</sup>, wishing to tell us that the less of the prejudged and presupposed stuff our brain carries everywhere with it and the more in turn

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<sup>1291</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 208.

<sup>1292</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 89.

<sup>1293</sup> Reference is made to the 1920 movie *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, directed by Robert Wiene.

<sup>1294</sup> See *The Precepts of Father Tadej*, Srpska pravoslavna crkvena opština Linc, Linz, Austria (2003), pp. 18.

it becomes plastic and able to empathize with different perspectives at life, the more graceful the streaming of our spirit through this world will be. Hindu theologians and mystics would now add that to become a lotus flower in the spiritual domain, the traditional symbol of divine being on Earth, we need to be rooted not in the muddy soil of firm and permanent precepts, but in the waters of factual fluidity, allowing to be gracefully touched by the flows of change at all times. To succeed in this, the cognitive core of our minds has to be light and airy, just like the root of this aquatic perennial. The contents of our minds thus ought to be indeed like night skies, mainly composed of empty spaces, though sprinkled here and there with starry ideas, whose delightful dazzle, of course, would not have been made possible had it not been for these nebulas of sheer nothingness, just like the creative thinking process could not occur if no empty spaces on the canvases of our minds had been drawn side by side with lively lines and figures. To erase is, therefore, a vital action carried out by our intellects in the course of its ascension to ever more stellar evolutionary realms. Moreover, like the person realizing that the process of recovering partially broken neural connections in the brain, as through various pharmaceutical treatments, leads to a loss of inspiration that fuels creative thought, so it may happen to a work of art to lose its ability to inspire people when everything in its semantic structure has become perfectly connected and devoid of gaps. For, deep down it is the balance between connects and gaps in the fabric of our thoughts and in works emerging from them that hide the secret to elicitation of godliness from ordinariness in souls befriending these works and their creators and absorbing their messages, articulate and, most importantly, inarticulate.

Empty spaces and erased links between thoughts and ideas can oftentimes serve to inspire and actively guide their interpreters along the right ways, whence presenting too much and explicating it all would make them become passive absorbers of the supplied intellectual stimuli. “Separate in order to be recognized, the words have no tie to one another except this absence”<sup>1295</sup>, wrote Edmond Jabès, and having recognized this elementary necessity of silent emptiness in verbal communication, we are free to wonder over countless other aspects of the products of our creativity where systematically posed patches of nothingness are equally essential to make our expressions intelligible and inspiring. To erase and cut, to make things more minimalist and simplistic than grandiose and pompous can be thus said to be an art like no other. Comic books have, for example, always presented a particularly fascinating form of art compared to movies and paintings because of the blank spaces invoked in the reader’s mind as he shifts from one frame to another. It is these blank spaces that are essential in giving the lively rhythm to the comic strip, as much as montage, an often underestimated aspect of cinematic storytelling, is a vital artistic element of a movie that gives a rhythm to it with its effect of modulating different camera perspectives. Pier Paolo Pasolini would have gone a step further in this correlation between empty spaces in-between comic strip frames and film editing cuts by proposing the idea that, resultantly, death, being “comparable to montage... does determine life... once life is finished it acquires a sense; up to that point it has not got a sense; its sense is suspended and therefore ambiguous”<sup>1296</sup>; likewise, sudden cuts into silence and emptiness are oftentimes essential in endowing the images of life with stellar meanings. Roy Lichtenstein was aware of this effect, for which reason his paintings depicting single frames of comic books,

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<sup>1295</sup> See Anthony Frost’s and Ralph Yarrow’s *Improvisation in Drama*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY (2007), pp. 174.

<sup>1296</sup> See Pasolini on Pasolini: *Interviews with Ostwald Stack*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN (1969), pp. 55.

appearing to have been taken out of their mysterious narrative contexts<sup>1297</sup>, present delicate musings on the eternity and all its chasms and charms, leading the viewers to insights that go beyond what comic books on average achieve. A similar effect of gaining by losing, creating by subtracting and finding by missing is used by poets to ensure the captivating rhythmical nature of their poems whenever they hop from one image to another in seemingly disconnected ways, demonstrating how links lost and ties untold can boost the inspirational potential of our poeticizing rather than diminish it. “A good story has a beginning, a middle and an end, although not necessarily in that order”<sup>1298</sup>, the French filmmaker, Jean-Luc Godard is noted to have said once, and the act of wittily shuffling a perfectly arranged array of dominoes of thought, thereby creating semantic gaps, missing links and cracks for our attention to slip in, can be a rarely rewarding task that often leads to unexpected boosts in the inspirational potential of our creations. Having in mind the intensive tension produced by mysterious, vaguely anticipated events in movies, which may though never arrive on the screen, also prompted Dudley Andrew to observe how “the power of the unseen and the unframed is attested to by every audience”<sup>1299</sup>. Roland Barthes pointed out that the art of striptease is based on a paradox wherein the stripper is stripped off sexuality at the moment when she is stripped naked<sup>1300</sup>; film, choreography, poetry and all other arts are similar in that sense – only insofar as they resist to reveal the mysterious source of the sense of suspense they build in the viewers do they succeed in exerting artistic blows on their minds. This is, of course, so because each “photograph is only a provisional limit, its content refers to other contents outside the frame”<sup>1301</sup>, as the film theorist, Siegfried Kracauer pointed out; one can then claim that those who bring most of this context that surrounds and co-defines the qualities of the system *per se* to life, quite in the spirit of the systems science and holism, will produce the most intensive and moving images, still or moving depending on the visual art medium in question. Now, a special and unique feature of comic strip art forms is the swift change of perspectives that makes the reader almost dizzy at times. If we were to imagine a movie in which these images were connected into a single stream of events, the impression would not be the same; needless to mention, these moments of silence and nothingness that separate individual frames are essential in producing this “dizzying” impression while reading a strip. Molière offered us a message of an utmost ethical significance when he noticed that “we are held responsible not only for what we do, but also for what we do not do”, making it obvious that nothing in life more often than not presents a strikingly meaningful something, and comic strip as an art form makes it readily obvious how interspersing continuous actions with blocks of nothingness can enhance, rather than diminish, the reader’s impression of the depicted events. The silent and empty spaces in comic books can thus be seen as essential in producing the exciting feelings of the action flow, and this is partly so because our imagination only cursorily draws the links of action between individual images. Producing an animated cartoon from still

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<sup>1297</sup> Watch Roy Lichtenstein – Girl with Hair Ribbon episode of Masterworks documentary series, Arthaus Musik (1988).

<sup>1298</sup> Watch Sarah Kay’s TED talk: If I Should Have a Daughter..., available at [http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah\\_kay\\_if\\_i\\_should\\_have\\_a\\_daughter.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah_kay_if_i_should_have_a_daughter.html) (March 2011). I, however, cannot think of any Godard’s film that shuffled the past, the present and the future, but great examples that come to mind are Igor Torkar’s *Pisana žoga* and Harold Pinter’s *Betrayal*.

<sup>1299</sup> See Dudley Andrew’s *Film in the Aura of Art*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (1984), pp. 41.

<sup>1300</sup> See Roland Barthes’ *Striptease* (1957). In: *What is Dance?* Edited by Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen, Oxford University Press, New York, NY (1983), pp. 512.

<sup>1301</sup> See Siegfried Kracauer’s *The Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (1960).

comic book frames thus often substitutes the reader's subconscious dance of sympathetic attention around them with a prefabricated series of moving images, predefining the stream of our imagination instead of spurring its ability to fancifully color the ghostly empty patches of blankness present all around us, not revitalizing our aesthetic senses thereby but dampening them most of the time. Thereupon, when I am immersed in a comic book, what I love to dream about is not only enlivening the expressions of characters depicted in individual frames, but imagining what they would have behaved like as characters in-between frames, in more natural settings. Finally, what these gaps in the stream of events drawn on a piece of paper distantly remind me of is the vital importance of things unsaid for ensuring the liveliness of any storytelling endeavor of ours. It is now that I can bring to mind the words with which a fellow poet described the literary style of Nelson Algren and let them echo across these semantic spaces of the soul, as smoky as that envisioned aurally by DJ Shadow<sup>1302</sup>: "His stories are so powerful and moving because there is something that is not said that could be said that would help so much... In this novel, she looked for something from him, a word, and he wanted to say the word and he couldn't. It's that gap that is one of the key notes, this distance of little things that could connect and won't. It's that alienation, one from the other"<sup>1303</sup>. For, to leave a key link missing and throw the key for unlocking it into the darkest ocean depths is the key to producing magic in our works, like Midlake singing of a You that "never arrived"<sup>1304</sup> and a We that "pass by for the last time"<sup>1305</sup> and thus creating the vision of a seascape, the most moving of all, strewn with the shadows of the petals of that rose from the story about the Little Prince, to whose missing all the beauty in the universe could be traced<sup>1306</sup>. Thus, despite my propensity to draw a connection between each and every star of thought, especially if they are sequential to each other, I have come to realize that broken links between ideas explicated in a discourse can be the fountainheads from which the water streams carrying the flows of colossal impressions into the reader's heart can originate. In them I have occasionally seen vistas posed along the very edges of two coasts separated by a fjord, offering the views of the sea in all its inexplicable glory and igniting the vision of a golden bridge spanning it, all of which comprise the sources of great epistemic enrichment for the reader.

Hanging out with my Little Bear's bro who would sit in silence for the whole night long and would still lively follow every second of the conversation, I helplessly tried to communicate with words. But what I would face seemed to me as a wall of silence: flowery and soft, but still quite impermeable, like a barricade of a kind. And then, in a moment of an enlightening insight, I realized where the catch lay. To communicate well with talkative people, one has to, well, talk with them. But to communicate well with the silent ones, one has to be silent well. For, if there are a million types of talks, there are, sure, a million types of silence as well, or even more, given that silence in the world outweighs speech by an infinite amount. This insight of mine brought to mind the case of a Quebecer helping at-risk young moms take care of their children<sup>1307</sup>. One of them was a woman who used to play Nintendo without saying a word every time she was visited, with eyes ceaselessly focused on the TV screen, while her children were crying for food around her and rolling in poop. After failing to get through to her verbally, the helper came to an

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<sup>1302</sup> Listen to DJ Shadow's What Does Your Soul Look Like (Part 4) on Endtroducing..., Mo' Wax (1996).

<sup>1303</sup> Watch Nelson Algren: The End is Nothing, the Road is All directed by Mark Blottner and Ilko Davidov (2015).

<sup>1304</sup> Listen to Midlake's You Never Arrived on The Trials of Van Occupanther, Bella Union (2006).

<sup>1305</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1306</sup> See Antoine de Saint-Exupery's The Little Prince, Mladost, Zagreb, Croatia (1943).

<sup>1307</sup> See Michel Rabagliati's Paul Goes Fishing, Drawn & Quarterly, Montreal, CA (2008), pp. 126 – 129.

exciting idea: connecting with her using the language of Nintendo. And so she practiced at home for days before she finally felt confident enough to show her Nintendo skills in front of her client. Surprisingly, it worked, and that is how the doors to a healing communication between the two opened at last. Likewise, whatever the cognitive system we wish to upgrade and improve, we need to speak its own language and only after we connect to it thereby, the process of its infiltration with messages from which we feel it will benefit can begin. Silent souls thus require wordless communication in order to be related to. Thereupon, in the spirit of the great Ludwig Wittgenstein's message with which he ended his masterful tractate, "what we cannot speak of, we must pass over in silence", I spent the rest of the night not talking, but silencing with my newly made friend. No wonder then that another Ludwig, van Beethoven, composed his greatest pieces only after he became deaf and able to reside in starry silence of his being interrupted only by the gracefully twinkling notes he played to himself, it occurred to me as I sat there, silencing and opening my mind to a plethora of astonishing perceptual details and the divine signs that they bore, which mere talking would have made me ineluctably blind to by putting its veils of ignorance and pretense over the all-illuminating eye of my mind. At those moments, I also realized that silencing, as analogous to talking, can also take different nuances: it can be strenuous, tiring and pressing, or relaxing, refreshing and beautifying, just as a talk could be. A New England lady is thus said to have been so inspired by nothing other but Nikola Tesla's silence that she wrote in a letter to him in August 1900, "You are as silent as only you know how to be"<sup>1308</sup>. A mysterious 17-year-old girl named Meera who was thought to be an incarnation of the Divine Mother never exclaimed a single word. She merely sat in silence, being herself, establishing "union in silence with all Being and action flowing from that Silence in enlightened joy", prompting one of the people who used to daily kneel in front of her feet and merely gaze at her eyes, to write down the following words: "The silence she brought with her into the room was unlike any I had ever experienced – deeper, full of uncanny, wounding joy. In Meera's silence I returned to a deeper learning, the one I experienced in music when my whole being was addressed, the one I had known as a child, sitting reading by my mother as she slept, or playing canasta with her on the beach, watching the sea. Fear struck at me, and doubts, but always every evening Meera would remove them, simply by being herself, seated in her chair with such simple love. I had no idea who or what she was; I knew only that she was something I had never seen before, and that I was more at home with her than with anyone else"<sup>1309</sup>. Concordantly, "When love implants itself deep inside the heart, the body, deprived of strength, breaches. Though in a particular moment the heart, because of the impatience of the fervency it feels, almost empties itself of the passion, enabling the body to take control of its functions again. Then the lover starts to speak"<sup>1310</sup>. The Italian linguist and a narrator, Umberto Eco says in one of his novels, flying the reader by a reiteration of the idea that love and language do not go together and that a choice of one excludes the choice of another in the interior of our being and our interface with this infinite world. Knowing all of this, I am quite aware that no truly fascinating levels of compassionate acting that channels the divine energies stored in us outwardly and makes us resemble a shining star on the face of the earth could take place unless we are prepared to leave our attachment to language and millions of clichéd habits and gestures that it entails behind and enter the meditative silence through which the glow of the enlightening sense of oneness of it all

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<sup>1308</sup> See Marc J. Seifer's *The Life and Times of Nikola Tesla: Biography of a Genius*, Citadel Press, New York, NY (1998), pp. 246.

<sup>1309</sup> See Anthony Storr's *Feet of Clay: A Study of Gurus*, HarperCollins, London, UK (1996), pp. 229.

<sup>1310</sup> See Umberto Eco's *Baudolino*, Plato, Belgrade, Serbia (2000).

could be enlarged in its extent, all until it covers everything with its oceanic waves of empathy. I also know that no contact between two creatures could be as fulfilling as the one taking place in the silent starriness of their spirits. Eventually, therefore, as you could expect, the communication we had that night, in Beretta and beyond, ended up being unspeakably gorgeous. Even my Little Bear told me once how her silence is of an utmost importance to her as it stands like pillars that support the palaces of the cognitive panoramas from which she sees the world. We both agreed on this, which resulted in our easily spending hours in silence, while each one of us is being immersed in one's own inner world and yet feeling each other's beautiful presence. Even when we talk, our comments tend to be separated by long periods of silence, during which the messages exposed are free to slowly sink into the seas of our minds. One of the most carefully treasured aspects of the communication between the Little Bear and myself is consequently our silence, never feigned or oppressive, but at all times stimulating for the mind and conjunctive for the heart. For, silence is a great pointer; it may be a pointer to the infinite immenseness of the world, which we are insensitive and blind to for as long as we focus on subjects of our conversations and, quite often, filling every silent moment with an awkward search for words to say, when there is so much beauty everywhere around, if we could just look up, to the starry sky, and let the music of our heart point at the precious little insights that crave for our attention.

In this spirit, we could observe that nothing elevates the value of music like a sense of silent emptiness lying dormant somewhere in it, just as a supreme appreciation of starry silence is conditioned by the presence of a plethora of sounds all around us. This succinct observation leads us to conclude that diverting from a straight line that follows an unilateral stream of thought toward its diametrical opposite is what sustains the vividness and meaningfulness of this line, as in accordance with the dialectical character of the symbol of the Way and the blend of connectedness and distantness that it embodies. Namely, extension of any way in Nature implies an improved connectedness, though of ever more distant ends. Therefore, although I imagine the future on this planet pervaded with an unending amount of uplifting sounds and other awe-inspiring perceptual sources of information, I also see it as the age of adoration of silence, greater than ever before. Hence, while I see an enlightened creature walking on air through an urban sci-fi landscape drawn in my head, surrounded by a twitter of millions of exciting calls behind each corner of her experience, I also dream of an ever deeper meditative silence in which she would be immersed. This parallel stretching the arms of human spirit to ever deeper and more inspiring ways of expression and ever more wonderful meditative realms is in agreement with the basic tenet of the Way of Love. Namely, the greater the explosion of our spiritedness that sheds stardust of celestial beauty all over the face of the planet, the more silent the inner starry landscapes of our spirit must be too. After all, the partial elimination of noises that with their frenzied nature distract human minds, introduce seeds of nervousness therein and bring them to the edge of a state of mental muss, from rustling plastic bags to clacking shoes to jangling sounds of clashed objects to the rattling sounds of engines, will produce an age of sacred silence in which every music will reverberate strikingly and will coincide with the transformation of disordered white-noisy background to symmetry and order that every evolution from the thermodynamic perspective implies, while, of course, never forgetting that "in wildness is the preservation of the world"<sup>1311</sup>, as Henry David Thoreau noticed, and that a balance between Themisian forces that tend to bring everything to a state of perfect order and the Dionysian ones that tend to scatter this coherency into something more natural, entropic and lively has to be

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<sup>1311</sup> See Henry David Thoreau's *Walking*, retrieved from <http://thoreau.eserver.org/walking.html> (1862).

always sustained if we are to continue the story of evolution that will take humanity to emanations of ever more fantastic and divine beauties.

Although ours is a world in which creative acts are praised for their loudness and ability to momentarily awaken us from the daily numbness caused by the extinguished glows of Love and Wonder within our hearts and minds, the secret of how to fairly assess their true qualities lies in leaning our ears and other senses on the beauty of silence that they leave in their wake. Just like unhealthy food is very tempting to eat and may feel delicious while eaten, arousing our senses for a brief moment of time, but leaves us feeling heavy and tiresome some time after we are done with dining, the same is with the products of creative work that have an appealing luster on their surface, but whose core is delusory, empty and rotten. That the products of pop culture tend to be exactly such – glossy and alluring on the surface but with the core of aspirations from which they have arisen washed in greed, vanity and hypocrisy – can be seen by monitoring the effects of this aftertaste of theirs that they evoke in our minds. This sordid aftertaste could be sensed as we carefully observe how the sound waves of pop songs bounce back and forth between the walls of our head in the silence of our beings. Just as unhealthy food may exert an instantaneously pleasant effect on our taste buds, but then hurts our belly and draws hazy curtains on eyes of the heart with which we see the world, the majority of pop songs may sound uplifting while we listen to them, but if we let them reverberate across the starry space of our minds, we would realize that they do not wash our brains with love, secretly and inconspicuously as truly beautiful songs do, but induce debilitating glides and disharmonies all over it, sowing the seeds of the same sinful aspirations as those that stood at the core of their origins, without the listener's even noticing it. For, the world could be imagined as a boat floating on an endless sea of spirit, and whatever it is that we do or think, whatever the vibration we send from our being outwardly, mental, emotional or physical, it travels in all directions and penetrates everything on its way. As this hidden exchange of information takes place on an invisible and silent plane that holds the foundations of the visible world, most of the time it proceeds unnoticed and ignored.

Yet, pointing at the beauty of silence and wordlessness can be marked as a crown of musical and literate creativity, respectively. Who else might we invoke to exemplify this point but the Little Tramp, the illustrious performance artist whose ability to enlighten the audience came as the result of his being in favor of expressing himself with the wordless gesture, the pantomime, the ability of his which, not coincidentally at all, completely dissipated when the first words came out of his mouth in movies. By analogy, we could conclude that verbosity and beautiful being must be inversely proportional to each other in their magnitude, that our fall from grace as a child born to infinite pureness of the spirit begins when words begin to substitute the real acts, and that silence is the must-have key in our soul if we yearn to unbolt the door to living divinely, like an emanation of Apollo on Earth, through sublimity, sunlight, prophecy, poetry and healing via simplest of gazes and touches. The ending of M83's ethereal, though somewhat artistically infantile record about a youth that strives for the stars, Saturdays = Youth<sup>1312</sup>, quivers with one such beautifying silencing, inviting one to quietly look at the mesmerizing orbits of dreaminess gleaming from the eyes of the youth gazing at one from the record cover, as if being ready to grasp it all, to be bright, glamorous, honest, heroic, and stellar, all at the same time, to be a star that illuminates the face of the world with its light. For, as the Way of Love tells us, the beauty of the silence underlying and enwrapping our spirits defines the glow of their starriness, and *vice versa*: the braveness with which we will open up the channels to express ourselves freely and in accord with our ethical and aesthetical dreams clears up the inward path, towards

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<sup>1312</sup> Listen to M83's Midnight Souls Still Remain on Saturdays = Youth, Mute (2008).

attaining the inner peace and harmony within the silent and meditative sea of our soul. And so, whenever a star is about to step up on the stage and start to express oneself in inspiring ways, a star descends deep within, into the inner silence of itself at the same time. Silence and starriness thus hold their hands together and, as Lao-Tzu noticed, it is empty space that lies at the core of the usability of a spinning wheel (Tao-Te-Xing XI). Moreover, as insinuated by the story in which a sage heard a bunch of youths shouting at each other on the bank of the river Ganges, came next to them, told them a story about lovers who transition from soft voices to whispers to gazing silently at each other's eyes as their hearts come closer and closer together, in love and harmony, and concluded that the hearts of these youngsters must have stood very much apart from one another when they had to yell so uncontrollably so as to be heard<sup>1313</sup>, love and silence come as naturally together as brightness and sunshine do. Likewise, it is not delirious babel, but soothing silence that stands at the heart of the celestial glow of our spirits, of eternal youthfulness such as the one inscribed in the groves and the atmosphere of the sentimental and airy M83's record. It is as if the more powerful the spin of the chakras aligned along the vertical that connects the earthly terminal of a being with its heavenly counterpart - serving as a channel for the downward transmission of the celestial streams of the energy of Love and the upward conduction of the propulsive stellar power of Wonder, and thenceforth the embodiment of the magical movement whereby "the heaven shrouds, but the earth carries"<sup>1314</sup>, one of the grandest ideals of the ancient alchemists - the deeper the vortices of silent stillness in their center, resembling the eyes of a divine dancer, vivaciously sparkling with joy along their edges, while holding dark wells in the center that attract it all into their deep and dilated insides. For, just like intense inhalation naturally comes after deep exhalation, so is any harmonious extension in life entailed by the complementary cocooning of the system in question, and *vice versa*. Therefore, the louder the music we create, the more silent the silence that it holds in its heart must be.

Oftentimes I claim that nothing taught me how to act in life more than playing in a band, whose name was, accidentally or not, Silence by a Crescent Star. It was the beauty of silence that we wished to demonstrate through our music and hence this name. Whether I have in mind: (a) the grand focus and the prayerful feeling of empty-minded oneness that I would build and maintain inside my mind in order to pick the most enchanting notes at any given moment with immaculate precision, while Sri Chinmoy, deeply immersed in his own world while playing sitar, watched over me from a poster hanging on the wall of my red room; (b) the grace in filling other players' sounds with subtle starry twinkles of my solo guitar so as to make them even more beautiful and yet stay in the shadow of it all, somewhat like Edge of U2, one of my first immense musical inspirations, from the times when I was a 13-year old boy, did; (c) the art of listening with carefulness and trust and still expressing myself in a sane and true-to-myself fashion at the same time, which later guided me straight to the gate of the philosophy of the Way of Love, the skills I learned could be endlessly piled one on top of another. For example, the first glimpses of the art of the Way of Love came to me through realization that a true mastery of playing in a band, which is merely one of the millions of forms of communicating with others, can be reached only insofar as the balance between the empathy-bearing objective realism and meditative-sanity-arising subjective idealism, intrinsic to the co-creational thesis, is respected. In other words, I found out that the beats of the drum or the plucks of the guitar strings did not yield a starry sense of magic in the air if I let myself fly on the wings of the music that surrounded me

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<sup>1313</sup> See Shikhar Agarwal's What Makes People Shout When They Are Angry?, Quora, retrieved from <http://www.quora.com/What-makes-people-shout-when-they-are-angry> (2014).

<sup>1314</sup> See René Guénon's The Great Triad, Sfairros, Belgrade, Serbia (1946), pp. 25.

and completely lost myself in it. Whenever I did so, I would fall down the abysses of sheer objectivist stances, and the shine of my creativity would quickly fade away since there would be no glow from the inside to replenish the energy spent in the process of respectfully, but passively following others. On the other hand, if I were to immerse my consciousness into a wholly meditative state, while forgetting or neglecting to listen and enjoy the music that comes to my ears, the tones sent in the air would equally fail to reverberate in perfect harmony with their phonic surrounding. But what the Way of Love teaches us is the art of compassionately listening and meditatively expressing oneself at the same time, never losing connections with the world around us nor with the creative core of our spirit, but acting as a bridge between the two, finding a miraculous way to be humble but not submissive and self-respectful but not snobby, and thereby delivering the great treasures forged within the starry core of our being onto the daylight of the world.

As the Way of Love instructs us, listening to music or relishing any piece of art, including the products of divine creativeness that comprise every detail of our experiential realities, should proceed with our simultaneous (a) immersion into the world inside, while absorbing precious impressions and enriching our spirit thereby, and (b) trustful and empathic unison with the surrounding world, while probing it and discovering ever more fascinating details about its nature and forms. Should we completely withdraw ourselves into the inner world of our thoughts and emotions, we would become blind to the infinitely beautiful guiding lights that the pieces of art we have encountered give out. On the other hand, if we tend to be fully absorbed in the artistic pieces or any other worldly details we hold in our sight, but either the inner world of ours is all ruined, desolate and deserted or we simply neglect to put our observations in the context of our life, our ability to be astonished by wonderful insights found therein and become profoundly enriched thereby would become diminished. Hence, the most fulfilling encounters with artistic pieces or creatures and inanimate objects of the world follow the line of the Way of Love, of simultaneously dwelling inside and outside, of standing on the rays of our attention that are spread from the deepest core of our being to the divine foundations of the world and dancing on them like a dexterous tightrope walker. For, only by levitating in-between the two planes, one of which is dominated by the microcosmic relationships under the starry dome of our thoughts and on another one of which are drawn links and messages found in the given pieces or details, could we find full enjoyment in these artistic encounters between our being and the world. We should neither sink too deep and become overly plunged into our own inner landscapes of emotion and thought nor fly too high in our sympathy with the surrounding details while forgetting to sanely and meditatively feed our inner self with the insights found on the way if we are to remain to fly along the middle course and continue journeying on the way to become transformed into an enlightened, eternally joyful boy with stars twinkling in his eyes like champagne bubbles, whose each living moment resembles standing face-to-face with angelically beautiful mermaids and dolphins, while simultaneously withdrawn inside and evermore distant and untouchable on one side and lovingly intimate, warmhearted and direct on the other, enthraling the world with the magical Way of Love which his entire being breathlessly voyages on. The deeper he dives inside of the endless ocean of his heart and the more remote he thus become, the greater the pearls of impulses yielding magical and inspiring acts does he dig out to the surface of his being. On top of that, he knows that incessantly streaming to reach a sense of oneness with the details of reality, while withstanding the fall in their arms and loss of the touch with his spirit thereby, is the key that leads to the treasures hidden on the bottoms of the seas of the world. On the day on which I write these words, I swam above stingrays shimmering on the

seafloor of the Caribbean Sea, amidst colorful corals and silky sand, and became instantly reminded that approaching enchanting details of reality too close makes us become burned and deprived of the window through which their beauty could be glimpsed, as images of an Odysseus during his return to Ithaca, placing wax in his ears and ordering his fellow sailors to tie him to the mast of the boat so as not to approach the singing sirens too near and thus be turned into bones such as those surrounding this delightful island, as well as of flying Icarus who approached the Sun too closely and had the wax that tied wings to his arms melted, falling to the sea, swooshed through my head, as I leaped and glided through the warm coastal waters like a humanoid dolphin of a kind. Emerging to the surface and catching a breath, I glimpsed the Sun and a vision of the Earth dancing around it, neither approaching it too closely nor distancing too far away from it, for it is able to sustain life on it only by tracing one such middle way, which in the domain of the mental microcosm, of the profoundest conceivable communication between the human mind and Nature I have named the Way of Love, pleasantly ran through my head, enlightening my whole being for a second or two.

Not only should we approach the worldly details, including artistic pieces, with a mindset precisely set to the balance of the Way of Love, but the most captivating pieces of art, in turn, tend to reinforce the feedback between meditative introspectiveness and creative expressiveness that epitomizes this great balance that I have raised on the pedestal of human consciousness. This viewpoint is quite concordant with the mission that innumerable musicians who managed to forge strikingly relevant, moving and influential works have taken upon themselves throughout the history, producing pieces that were fostering a sense of communion in the early times dominated by regular enmities between human creatures and evoking emotions that reconnect us with the starry nature of our beings in the modern age pervaded by conformist losses of intimate touches with the creative cores of our inner selves in which the voices of divinity reside. And yet, the works of the greatest artists of the world have at all times inconspicuously tuned people's hearts to the frequency of the Way of Love, awakening immense empathy and opening channels for the outbursts of their shiny creative energy outwards, while at the same time integrating the essence of their beings and enrooting them in divine spiritedness by deepening their meditative focus and introspective insight. After all, the world in which the meditative contact with one's starry essence would be lost would lead to the extinguishment of a genuinely communal spirit, as all the expressions emanating from a sense of sincere sympathy would then slowly wither and disappear. Likewise, a hypothetic world in which no empathic threads were drawn by compassionate hearts would breed generations of minds unable to figure out the way to get in touch with the divine voices reverberating amidst the starry constellations of the soul instilled in all of us. For this reason, when it comes to creating touching and truly meaningful pieces of art, it matters not whether these works aim at deepening introspective insights and illuminating our heart and mind with an enlightening bliss or prompting one to pull off moves that will bless and beautify the surrounding world. Since these two eventually promote each other in the long run, whether we point at the beauties hidden in human hearts or those lying scattered in each and every piece of reality, the roads to advanced evolutionary horizons will be shed light upon.

Living, cognizing and experiencing any detail of the world should thus open both the way inside, towards encountering the essence of our spirit, and the way outwards, in the direction that leads to opening of the channels through which an ever greater shine of our spirit will be released to the world. While Garry Kasparov was still a disciple in the school of Mikhail Botvinnik, a former World Champion in chess, he was given a great advice by his teacher: "In order to

succeed, you need to cease being a slave of the variants and become their master instead”<sup>1315</sup>. By following this guiding principle, Garry learned how to obey the spirit that a chess variant instills in the game, but also sanely and controllably apply it while never losing sight of the aim set forth by his own visions and aspirations. In such a way, he managed to follow his own instinct and voice of the intellect inside and yet trust the drive instilled into the game by the variant he would pursue, becoming a true champion eventually. Likewise, when an old sage was seen walking towards a distant peak that seemed unreachable to him and was warned about that, he replied to the suspicious passerby, saying: “My heart is already there; that being so, the paths that lead thereto will open, all by themselves”. In other words, to be on the road and to have our sights resting on the aims *per se* is the key to creative acting. To be fully here, immersed in the surrounding world that spins around us like an enchanting carousel, and yet to be slightly withdrawn, meditative and distant is how a great personality, a blend of direct and sunshiny attentiveness and a dark side of the moon, is being built. Hence, as we listen to a musical piece, we should know that the secret to getting the most out of this experience lies neither in completely plunging into its sound and thereby forgetting to travel in line with the music of our own spirit nor in resistance to leap into waters of trustful and empathic unison with the sound while leaning firmly onto our own critical perspectives of a distant *Res Cogitans*. Instead, the key is in our supersonic streaming along the line of the Way of Love where we would obey both the objectivistic principle of being one and the same with whatever we encounter and curiously, with a whole lot of love and wonder, explore and the idealistic principle of being one with the divine constellations that illuminate our heart and mind and which lead us to unique stellar roads of the evolution of our spirit.

The same principle of balancing perfectly deep and distant withdrawnness and perfectly attentive closeness accounts for the creative aspect of artistic expression. Namely, while we ought to live with our works in the back of our mind, caressing them with each breath of ours and nourishing them as if they were children of our spirit of a kind, far more important than our very physical being, we should also resist to believe in their creation by faultlessly precise copying the blueprints of our artistic visions and dreams onto the substrate of reality. Rather, as the co-creational thesis itself indicates, we should be aware that ourselves and Nature are to be equally involved in this creative process. Our pieces of art will thus become infused with our own essence, although there will always be a room left for the inflow of surprising and spontaneous natural impulses which are beyond our control and are vital for the sake of giving our works a sense of timeless magic and charm. Such works, co-created in the realest sense of the word, will speak to their creator and guide him on his path, constantly surprising him with their being an infinite source of enriching impressions, as much as they would capture the essence of his being and communicate its signals to others, enabling the ennoblement of their spirits thereby too. Many artists have for these reasons shared a feeling that they have merely acted as open channels for some divine energy to pass through and inscribe itself on an earthly medium. Even the Christ had the same feeling when he looked upon his miraculous ability to heal the sick; “Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works’ sake” (John 14:10-11), thus he said once, clearly touching the co-creational coalescence of the artist and Nature in every creative act conceived and born in their togetherness. Needless to add, one such creative concretion takes place almost exclusively on the foundations of faith, of

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<sup>1315</sup> See Milan Đorđević’s *How the World Champions were Losing*, IP Princip, Belgrade, Serbia (2005), pp. 153.

genuine religious sense of an incessant communication between the depths of our soul and the voice of Nature that is present everywhere around us.

Indeed, to partially withdraw ourselves, accept that our works will never be perfect projections of our dreams and open the door for the inflow of the influence of another is what makes us walk towards the road to perfection in this life. For, whether we become inclined to solipsistic stances and demand that our works be immaculate replicas of our visions and dreams or to the side of objectivism wherefrom we would find ourselves inertly conforming to the norms and expectations of our environment, both of these extremes would predispose our works to give a lasting impression of solitary “dancing with the ghosts”<sup>1316</sup>. The only way to breathe timeless liveliness into our pieces of art, philosophical discourses and emotional expressions is to open space for another equal source of creative incentives to fall into our arms and engage in a creative dance with ourselves, the task which is intrinsic to the co-creational thesis and the Way of Love, the two cornerstones of the worldviews impressed on the pages of this book. To give you a banal example, if I was to have the structure of this paragraph as an edifice of thought built perfectly well, no new bricks of ideas, such as these very words, would be able to find stable place in it; forgotten and left aside, they would be preordained to crumble away with the passage of time. Therefore, thoughtfully engrained imperfections are essential for making our works truly perfect; for, only they do offer ways for the ceaseless evolution and renewal of our creations. The opposite extreme from this utterly perfect and thus inherently unapproachable state would be, of course, the one wherein imperfections multiplied without control and the bricks of ideas were too loosely connected to each other, endowing the whole edifice with a potential to cave in under slightest pressures. Just like opening our arms to the world, as imperfectly as it gets, and inviting another to join our solitary dance equals offering us and the world the chance to evolve, and just as the fate of a perfectly ordered system from the thermodynamic point of view, the one which does not hold even a wisp of entropy in it, would be slumping on the path of degradation, everywhere we look, the opportunities for progress open only where symmetry and chaos coalesce.

Hence, longing to reach perfection in the pieces of art we craft to such an extent that it becomes a hindrance to unbound inscriptions of our spirit in their forms presents a powerful obstacle on the path of enabling the creative shine that originates from the essence of our being to spill itself all over its surface. A short examination of the structure of artistic pieces that follows can demonstrate that such strivings are predestined for failure, all until we grasp perfection as a perfect imperfection of a kind. Namely, music that uplifts our spirit is, as we have shown earlier, a complex composite of emotions conveyed to the listener’s ears on the wings of the sound waves it creates. A hypothetically perfect song would thus be a concoction of innumerable facets of a full flight of spirit, which are often quite antithetical to each other, from sparkly joy to compassionate sadness to spinning of the windmills of heroic willpower to piercingly thunderous valiant strength to virginally sweet outflows of gentleness and grace and many others. Yet, placing one or a few of them in the forefront typically makes others fade in the background. For example, if Pet Sounds was made to send forth the waves of sharper, more

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<sup>1316</sup> As stated by an anonymous reviewer of Mark Wigley’s *The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida’s Haunt*, “Like all good conspiracy theories this is a self-fulfilling prophesy: someone will inevitably contradict you, thereby proving the conspiracy is operative by attempting to cover it up. If anything, this book proves that conspiracy theories do indeed work, but when Deconstruction dances, its partner will always be a ghost”; available at [http://www.amazon.com/Architecture-Deconstruction-Derridas-Haunt/dp/0262731142/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1305613778&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.com/Architecture-Deconstruction-Derridas-Haunt/dp/0262731142/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1305613778&sr=8-1) (1999).

direct and striking emotions in the air, perhaps by employing cymbals, the type of percussion standard in pop rock musical arrangements but not used once on the record, and by lightening the harmonic complexity in the low frequency range created by the overlaying of six or more bass instruments in some songs<sup>1317</sup>, it would have been done on the account of diminishing the dusty graininess of the sound and the sense of dreamy distantness that it carries. Its melodic waves washing over the coast of our mind at the very moment of listening might have thus become ever more salient, although its ability to act as a magical key that unlocks the secret cellars of our mind and lets childhood memories fly out before our softening eyes would have vanished. Or, if *Automatic for the People* by R.E.M. had its prophetically pounding directedness interspersed with grainy little sounds smeared all over its minimalist background, the powerfulness of its guiding voice would have been distracted and its enlightening rays of light dissipated all over these little speckles of duty sounds in the aural backdrops. The empty spaces that permeate the record's sound, through which the radiance of the voice is able to freely travel, straightforwardly dazzling the listener with its non-dissipated rays and washing her mind in pulsating waves of light, would thus be lost in our search to make its sound even more perfect by enriching it with complexities at the fine temporal scale. One could thus clearly imagine how something touching the clouds of utmost artistic sublimity in the realm of modern music could have been made even greater and yet, as we see, something precious would have been lost thereby. And all of this has pertained to an objective character of works of art only. From the other, subjective point of view, we could start off by noticing that all of us require different peaks from the full spectrum of emotions of a hypothetically perfect song to produce an enlightening feeling within our hearts and minds. Just like different plants deplete the soil underneath them from different nutrients, so does each one of us absorb unique harmonies of vibes from the nature of reality as the food for one's spirit. Moreover, owing to our biological nature which passes through different stadiums during our lifetimes, these ideal spectra are also subject to constant change in the course of our lives. Therefore, what may seem as a perfectly enlightening piece of art to a juvenile mind, with bouncy beats and euphoric rollercoaster rides, may not be sensed as equally perfect by an elderly spirit that tends to find perfect emotional solace in monumentally solemn, somber and slow artistic articulations. As we see, owing to both objective and subjective reasons, as ever before, no perfections could be expected to emanate from human artistic creativity in this life. And yet, just like the world that has reached a perfect state of order, with no entropy left in it, would immediately set itself on a downward path, letting its order crumble with each new moment, and just like the game of chess is played by professionals and amateurs alike with excitement because the solution to a perfect sequence of moves has not been found, so does every form of human creativity, artistic one included, flourish on the grounds of its inherent imperfections. "If he was something special, I wouldn't have this song"<sup>1318</sup>, sings Christina Perri in a pop tune comparable to a small diamond in the sea of dust of radio rubbish, summing up in simple words the essence of the message expounded herein: whereas any hypothetically perfect circumstances would bear uttermost adaptation and, thence, creative sterility, imperfections in life are those that we ought to be thankful to as the sources of our stellar creativeness and the ladders that enable our ascents to the stars.

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<sup>1317</sup> See Scott McCormick's *The Ingenious Musical Arrangements of Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys*, Disc Makers Blog (September 19, 2017), retrieved from <https://blog.discmakers.com/2017/09/ingenious-musical-arrangements-of-brian-wilson/>.

<sup>1318</sup> Listen to Christina Perri's *Bluebird on Lovestrong*, Atlantic (2011).

Summing up, this is why we can claim that all truly touching pieces of art and inspiring creative acts in general have to have some unfinished touches added to them, wherefrom humanely fragile reaching out to grasp their essence would be naturally encouraged. The famous sculptor, Auguste Rodin was notorious for his despising the outward appearance of the slick finish and made his busts look deliberately unfinished<sup>1319</sup>, one of which was *The Hand of God*, where the amorphous stone blends in with a hand holding lovers in embrace, barely allowing the features of the figures to be recognized, and did not bother much that critics who demanded that all things artistic be neat and polished commonly called him lazy, hasty and odd for the sake of sheer oddity. The American abstract painter, James Brooks was also aware of the deadening effect overworking a piece of art can have and advised placing a full stop on one's endeavors when "the work is still alive and moving"<sup>1320</sup>. As a matter of fact, probably the most famous painting ever made, da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, was "left unfinished" according to Giorgio Vasari, which is a sensible observation since we now know that da Vinci himself openly regretted for not finishing a single one of his works<sup>1321</sup>. Subsequently, 16<sup>th</sup> Century painters such as Tintoretto, who worked at an astonishing pace<sup>1322</sup> and whom Vasari discarded as a careless painter given that "his sketches are so crude that his pencil strokes show more force than judgement and seem to have been made by chance"<sup>1323</sup>, as he wrote, but also late Titian and El Greco built fame around their avoiding the smooth finish and deliberately making paintings look incomplete, which was, at the time, their way of protesting against the growing trend among the commoners to tie the artistic quality solely with the degree of technical excellence. A few hundred years later, Claude Monet reechoed this opinion by saying that "anyone who claims he's finished a painting is terribly arrogant"<sup>1324</sup> and his close friend, Auguste Renoir brought this principle to life when he, fed up with the faddish bandwagon of Impressionism, painted over the gown of the lady in the forefront of the painting he had painted in an impressionistic style and in light colors five years ago, in 1880, *The Umbrellas*, in dark hues and with straightly drawn and delineable lines, those first and foremost heresies in the increasingly tightening and exclusionary impressionistic circles. Regardless of Renoir's tendency to shun novelties once they turn into clichés, the degree of abandon continued to be finite in his later works, just as it was finite in the work of practically every painter from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century who emerged from the premises of realism. Even painters who refused to alter their paintings after they were being first painted, such as the early Renaissance painter, Fra Angelico, did so not because they perceived their art as perfect, but because they believed that the imperfections embedded in it were divine in their originating from the holy inspiration of the moment. In contrast, it is worth remembering that what killed the academic art of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, despite its solemn syncretic goals and elaborate forethought, was its striving for perfection, as through the insistence on the production of canvases that looked slick, idealized and totally devoid of texture, as if they were never touched by the human hand. Although realists who deliberately roughened the textures of their paintings to make them look unfinished were the first to rebel against the concept of the planned picture and other falsities of the perfectionism of the academic painting style, the true revolution

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<sup>1319</sup> See E. H. Gombrich's *The Story of Art*, Fifteenth Edition, Phaidon Press, London, UK (1989), pp. 528.

<sup>1320</sup> See William C. Seitz's *Abstract Expressionist Painting in America*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA (1983), pp. 64.

<sup>1321</sup> See Henry Thomas' and Dana Lee Thomas' *Living Biographies of Great Painters*, Garden City, New York, NY (1940), pp. 49.

<sup>1322</sup> See Michel Nuridsany's *100 Masterpieces of Painting*, Flammarion, Paris (2006).

<sup>1323</sup> See E. H. Gombrich's *The Story of Art*, Fifteenth Edition, Phaidon Press, London, UK (1989), pp. 371.

<sup>1324</sup> Watch the documentary series *The Impressionists* with Tim Marlow, Episode 2: Monet, MagellanTV (1999).

was brought about by the impressionists, who made imperfections the source of an unprecedented visual dynamics, which made their canvases literally quiver with color and emotion. This entombment of the academic art in the visual domain would bear resemblance to the burial of academic poetry by the early modernists of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, including Ezra Pound, an academic expellee whose poetry owed its power to “the eschewal of academic jargon” and “self-confidence and broad scholarship, paradoxically, to the absence of self-honed knowledge”<sup>1325</sup>, making the subsequent becoming of his parataxic, authentically anti-academic work a central subject of academic studies of his period, to say the least, ironic. All this is to say that since no work of art can ever attain the vistas of pure perfection, patches of imperfection ought to be allowed to freely coexist with their more perfect analogues in our works, lest they lose their resonance. And this is not even to mention that imperfections, like the entropic freeness of movement in the physical reality that our spirits inhabit, are the keys to bringing life to anything they constitute, be it products of art or of biological evolution. My books, for these very reasons, try to heartily live up to this ideal of finely balanced perfections and imperfections. After all, as could be inferred from the blind spot effect and the premises of the Way of Love, moving away from the lines we ought to follow in life every now and then is the only way to ensure our successful journeying along them. To embrace imperfections each time it seems to us that we have found ourselves in the reign of blissful perfection for too much time is the way to sustain this bliss of divine joy in our minds. Hence, “If man were happy, the less he were diverted the happier he would be, like the saints and God. Yes: but is a man not happy who can find delight in diversion”<sup>1326</sup>, Blaise Pascal mused in his *Pensées*, while his late contemporary, English satirist, John Gay, created a line saying “follow Love and it will flee, flee Love and it will follow thee”. Speaking of this partial retreat into nothingness, by which cracks of imperfections are left in our works, wherefrom the rays of sheer divinity will be able to penetrate into the world, I am reminded of yet another one of the invaluable, silence-celebrating experiences I equipped myself with while playing in a band. It was the ability of my bandmates and myself to communicate perfectly well through music alone. Moreover, this communication without a single word spoken was so fulfilling that we frequently wondered aloud about the point of ever again communicating in language. After all, words and literature have always seemed to me like a tiny, miniscule subset in the humongous set of music of Nature, which encompasses it all, from the vibrating atoms and molecules to the hums of the seashells and the splashes of the ocean waves to the Earth spinning on its axis and revolving around the Sun to the supersonically streaming meteors, galaxies and stars. And I have known that the time will come when I will leave the sweet little music that the earthlings have played behind and immerse my head into cosmic silence of the great One, intercepted only by the sound of twinkling stars and the Earth humming as it orbits around the Sun.

No wonder then that one may over and over again look at the title of a record by a Swedish pop star, Oh You’re So Silent Jens<sup>1327</sup>, and laugh, getting reminiscent of how being quiet and dreamy is the key to hearing the celestial music stream through our spheres of consciousness and attaining the peaks of artistic productiveness, whereas being a loudmouth would leave us on the surface of things, unable to plunge deep into the unfathomable oceans of the human heart and mind wherefrom sprouts of the essence of creativity raise their jovial heads

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<sup>1325</sup> See Peter Ackroyd’s *Ezra Pound and His World*, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York, NY (1980), pp. 25 - 26.

<sup>1326</sup> See Blaise Pascal’s *Pensée No. 132, Series VIII. Diversion*, Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK (1669).

<sup>1327</sup> Listen to Jens Lekman’s *Oh You’re So Silent Jens*, Service (2005).

like sunflowers on a lazy summer afternoon. If there is one secret that quiet, yet spellbinding rhetoricians have known, in contrast to their haranguing tub-thumper counterparts, it is that just like increasing supply drops the value of goods in the economic realm, so does silence increase the value of words and provides a natural semantic embellishment to our speeches. In fact, only mediocre rhetoricians, preachers and any creatures out there, on the stage of life, in the moments of expressing the essences of their beings and trying to deliver expressions that uplift the human spirits and enlighten their worldviews, have to rely on loudness and temporary leaping onto vistas higher than those occupied by the audience to show themselves in an enchanting light. Truly fascinating performers are able to deliver their pearly points via quietude, while standing mingled with the listeners and shedding subtle twinkles of starry silence onto them, like a flying fairy of a kind does with her magic wand, which makes me recall how not only the music I had composed was meant to be listened quietly, as if being played in the starry distance, but the music of the future might be listened in quiet ways rather than in mind-blowing loudness. For, many are benefits of listening to music that is played quietly, in the distance. Ever since the dawn of the human race, people have sharpened their auditory skills by discerning the distant sounds of peacocks, starlings and other singing birds and animals. As I studied during starry nights with the sound of robins and orioles heard in the distance, on the kitchen table in our family house in Belgrade, my parents were sleeping behind the wall and I had to play music so quietly that it was almost inaudible, making sure that it does not wake them up, sharpening my aural skills thereby and bringing to mind the answer al-Bistami gave when he was asked about the source of his wisdom: “Having gone to bed, my Mother would politely tell me to leave the door open, if I can. I’d spend the entire night standing by the door to make sure it stayed open. All the wisdom, everything I ever learned entered through that door”<sup>1328</sup>. For, by listening to music quietly, played almost on the edge of a total starry silence, while standing on the foundations of sensible care and alertness, is how I crafted my musical skills. Hence, I claim that our minds sharpen their exploratory skills while focusing on subtle notes and sounds of quietly played music or any other perceptions, whereas letting oneself be washed by the waves of loud sounds coming from massive speakers tends to place a straw hat over our sensory seeking the sunny secrets of the universe and put our adventurous spirit to sleep by the sea of infinitely abundant treasures of the world. In that sense, listening to music played quietly teaches one the art of searching rather than finding, and the same could be said for any performances and expressions that we deliver to the world. Only insofar as they retain the balance between meditative withdrawnness and focus on the starry silence within on one side and sunshiny openness and expressive directedness on another can they live in accordance with the Way of Love and thus be truly inspiring for the world. Being too extrovert, open and direct by yelling around our messages and trying badly and ungracefully to inculcate our points into other people’s heads is divergent from the Way of Love as much as being overly silent, pensive and distant, while neglecting to nourish the drive to release the shine of spiritual treasures that we conceal inside for the sake of beautification and healing of the world, is. It may be for this reason that Rainer Maria Rilke claimed that “a perfect life equals a perfect death”, as if trying to tell us that a truly enchanting deliverer of impulses that instill new life in the surrounding creatures will never be the one who merely tries to shine, while never being able to descend into the starry wells of silence within one’s being and partly withdraw oneself from the face of the world, turning a hemisphere of one’s being into a dark side of the Moon, while the other hemisphere is empathically and expressively shining outwardly, like the Sun. To blend the Sun of loving

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<sup>1328</sup> See Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch's *Anthology of Sufi Texts*, Naprijed, Zagreb, Croatia (1978).

directedness and openness with the stars of silent solitariness, to mix life and death in our eyes, minds, hearts, words and moves in the world is to be a true and inexhaustible source of creativity and inspiration for it. In such a way we become a creative force that “shines, but does not dazzle” (Tao-Te-Xing LVIII), which was celebrated by Lao-Tzu and which produces expressional bursts that neither do merely show oneself off while failing to make others independently glimpse the shiny roads forward nor timidly mumble things, quietly and inaudibly, while standing alone in the corners of the stage, failing to collect enough empathic desire to shine forth and bless others therewith. We then manage to blend the starry silence and dreamy withdrawnness with the sunny explosions of warmhearted expressiveness in all creative impulses of ours, for the planet and life thriving on it to enjoy.

In praise of this silence within, the rhymes of two songs from New Order’s May of 1983 record are let fly through the air: “A thought that never changes remains a stupid lie. It’s never been quite the same. No hearing or breathing. No movement, no colors. Just silence... From my head to my toes, from the words in the book, I see a vision that would bring me luck. From my head to my toes to my teeth, through my nose, you get these words wrong, you get these words wrong. Every time you get these words wrong I just smile”<sup>1329</sup>. These words are to remind us that whatever we say in language becomes helplessly reconstructed and reassembled by the person standing on the other side of the communication channel into which we purge our expressions. This hypothetic person whom we talk to, in fact, always forms novel and unpredictable meanings in her head, which are often not anticipatable at all and sometimes even thoroughly opposite from the messages we intended to originally convey<sup>1330</sup>. Hence the words spoken to one’s own image in the mirror by Alan Sillitoe’s Arthur Seaton, beaten up and humiliated by the world but determined to regain the glory, later reiterated in the title of the Arctic Monkey’s debut record: “Whatever people say I am, I am not”<sup>1331</sup>. In fact, it often seems to me that speaking is reminiscent of transporting jigsaw puzzles that are inevitably going to break apart in the air through which our words fly, even when they are being carried on the white doves of purest and holiest of intentions. Later they will become restructured and rebuilt, but, even so, only if there is enough good will to invest some intellectual effort on the side of the person who receives the message. For, the more complex the message we try to convey, the more effort is needed from the other side to assemble its scrambled pieces into a semantic structure, the meaning of which, remember, will never be identical to the one that was being sent out, but can only be, in the best possible scenario, compatible with it. In addition to this, the quoted verses also remind us that truthfulness and beautifulness of things we do or say both depend on contexts that enwrap them and thus need to incessantly change as the passage of time brings about an unending flow of new contexts. Yet, this is not something we should be depressed about, but something which would make our spirit smile, in sheer starry silence of our being,

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<sup>1329</sup> Listen to New Order’s *Your Silent Face and Leave Me Alone on Power, Corruption & Lies*, Factory, UK (1983).

<sup>1330</sup> And not only words, but acts too are always interpreted based the interpreter’s intentions and assumptions. For example, think of someone who tends to be surrounded in life by only intellectually powerful creatures or only intellectually weak and submissive ones. Namely, in both cases, one can interpret that as a sign of the person’s insecurity if one sees the person’s avoiding the challenge of improving knowledge and awareness of those who truly need it in the former case or the person’s desire to always be right and be seen as intellectually supreme in the latter case. But, likewise, one can interpret the person as brave and phenomenal if one assumes that he is not afraid to confront opinions with the supreme intellectuals in the former case or that he is ready to invest efforts in educating those who are truly in need of education.

<sup>1331</sup> See Alan Sillitoe’s *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, W. H. Allen, London, UK (1958).

from our head to our toes, because it is the incessant cycle of misunderstandings and advancing our communications to improve our understanding, producing new, more complex and sensible misunderstandings on the way, that drives us and the world to evolve towards physically and spiritually ever more fascinating states. It is perfect imperfections that open glistening horizons and lead towards the evolution of the world.

It is worth always keeping in mind that an easy acceptance of the revelations of our own ignorance in discussions is what sets grounds for endlessly productive and selfless dialectical confrontations that lead to wonderful new syntheses of knowledge. Without it, that is, by being stiffly afraid to be proven wrong, we would always look for hypocritical and insincere confirmations of our ideas and approaches even though this may be catastrophic at times, especially when we stream towards abysses of thinking or being and neglect the need to be open for advices and signs that Nature sends to us so as to redirect us from the wrong path. Occasionally, when they come to perfectly match the missing pieces in the jigsaw puzzles of our worldviews, these advices will draw an immediate aha response from us, though most of the time they will be shrouded by a veil of mystery, the thickness of which is, as a rule, directly proportional to the greatness of their guidance. Like periostin, the protein known to increase the healthy spreading of the cells of the periosteum by promoting their detachment from the substrates<sup>1332</sup>, the process that, if left unchecked, can cause cell shriveling and death<sup>1333</sup>, so are some of the most precious signs in the dialectical plot of life, in which surprises are the norm, counterintuitive, seemingly rerouting us into completely opposite directions from those which we have intended to take, be it shadowy abysses instead of sublime skies or snowy mountain peaks instead of the warm seaside. In the long run, however, they do us a favor and, analogizing after the case of this peculiar molecule, impel us to spread our spirits more than ever and embrace the earth ever more extensively, all until we become likened unto stars who, alive, do cartwheels all of the time, unstopably, out of the divinest of joys. Hence the often celebrated, Socratic exclamation by the shrewdest of scholars, “I don’t know”, glistening like heaps of gold and holding the key to the ceaseless evolution of our knowledge, representing humble ignorance as the deepest drive for our curiosity and the secret ingredient needed for the arrival of our minds at the doorstep of the most enchanting discoveries in the realm of science. Grounds for puzzlement and perplexity are, therefore, exclusively those wherefrom rockets of great and @evolutionary insights and ideas could be launched. To smile and rejoice in face of ambiguities rather than to eliminate them by reductions to singular and perfectly predictable semiotic channels is thus clearly the way to go in our quest for epistemic sacredness.

Even paintings share the same ambiguous nature as linguistic constructs. Right at the moment of waking up from a spring afternoon nap, as I rapidly passed through that magical zone where unboundedly imaginative dreaminess and sane reflective reasoning hold their hands together, the zone wherein glimpsing an enlightening vision or an idea over and over again reminds me of how “creativity is a dream with the leash”, as Jorge Luis Borges held, I saw a painting composed of a girl sending whispers into a boy’s ear, which was so big that it occupied most of the canvas. In addition, the story that the girl whispered into the boy’s ear seemed to have been painted on this canvas where the abstract and the real, as in so-called real life, mingled into an inextricably coherent whole. The details of this dream whispered in a dream could be

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<sup>1332</sup> Thomas Diekwisch’s Materials Design for Periodontal Tissue Regeneration, Presented at the 16<sup>th</sup> YUCOMAT Conference of the Materials Research Society - Serbia, Herceg-Novi, Montenegro (September 5, 2014).

<sup>1333</sup> The survival of all cells in the human body except blood cells is, namely, conditioned by their adherence onto a surface.

glimpsed in the background of the canvas where the immediate surroundings of the couple turned into distant spaces and universes. Thus, behind a stone fence, one could see an entire city shrunken into this miniature space, with all of its passageways, other people's life stories, parks, flowers, even the ocean coast and night stars sweetly shimmering in the back. But then, one person observing the painting may interpret the girl's story as boring and uninteresting since it is the boy's imagination that travels through distant streets of the city and the entire universe while he uninterestingly pretends to listen to her story. Another person looking at this painting may, however, realize the intricateness of the girl's story, which widens the scope of the boy's imagination all until he sees the entire world in her whispers, practically suggesting that the entire world could be found in a grain of sand, that is, in any story that we hand over avidly to the world, which the painting, itself, with its multilayered meanings and metaphors may have hinted at in the first place, thus making a structural masterpiece out of itself. Still on the other side we have the merits of music, a form of an absolute art; although it does not either produce identical impressions in all listeners whose hearts it penetrates, it does get closer to the ideal of an absolute.

It was in the astral days of my youth that I discovered that playing music loudly and letting it fill every corner of my mind, leaving no room for pieces of silence and sane reflection in it, is no good. Only later did I come across the following words penned by a Soviet physicist: "Intense, careful listening in silence increases aural acuity; then man receives sounds at the level of the hum of his own inner ear"<sup>1334</sup>. And so, my favorite pastime would be to play Pet Sounds in a darkened room on my cassette player so quietly that the sounds would hardly audibly reach my ears, urging me to strain myself to hear all the details, thus sharpening my sensory attention and yet leaving enough room for silence and desolate introspection to fill the space of my mind and engage in a lively dance with the enchanting music. I would feel in those magical instances as a dolphin that slumbers with one half of its mind and is awake with another. Perfect compassion with the music would thus take over one, listening part of my mind, whereas the other, meditative part would be free to spin the dreams and visions that relate to my existence and place in the world. One part would sanely be here, resting within the lotus of my own heart and mind, whereby the other part would be sent out to trustfully absorb every little wave of music and empathically hold hands with its creators. After all, the dreams sent forth to us by songs and other pieces of art that the world abounds with reverberate within the rooms of our spirit most intensively when they encounter the wonderful life that we live, which means that dreams spun by one pole of our mind and incentives to live them sparkling all over the other half is the way to go. Living only in dreams and songs, while never pining hard to embody them and bring them to the surface of our being, would soon deprive us of the ability to fully enjoy them and be deeply touched by their graceful messages. Likewise, life without dreaming and drawing enchanting visions on the bright and blissful canvas of our mind would soon transform itself into a tiring, mind-numbing and meaningless commotion of living creatures and things.

Such is, of course, the case with our meeting each piece of art and each creature of this world, as the co-creational thesis whispers to us. Should we plunge into impressions of the outer world just as Pinocchio does, forgetting to follow the celestial path of one's own heart set forth by the Father, we would end up blindly following a road to nowhere. And if a voice from the back of our mind appears to repeat Carlos Castaneda's Don Juan's words that timelessly echo through the chambers of our psyche, "All paths lead nowhere, so choose a path with heart"<sup>1335</sup>,

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<sup>1334</sup> See Vsevolod Isidorovich Arabadzhi's *The Sound in Nature*, Beopolis, Belgrade, Serbia (1997).

<sup>1335</sup> See Tom Killion's and Gary Snyder's *Tamalpais Walking*, Heyday Books, Berkeley, CA (2009), pp. 47.

we could be sure that, in that case, this road of excessive empathy stands for one such heartless road in the long run, as gradually, step by step, it would drain away our inner sources of creative impulses and impressions and leave us biddably bouncing from one firm wall of a strong personality in our surrounding to another, without ever hatching the divine egg of our own cosmically unique self. The same outcome that is intrinsic emptiness describable by deserts of depression settled within our mental and physical being would result from our negligence to step forth and empathically and spontaneously unite with the worldviews of others, preferring to stay confined within the limits of our own desolate self instead. These two extremes, one that typifies conformist followers and the other one that typifies lunatic solipsists, present deviations from the Way of Love, the walkers on which always seeks the balance between listening to one's own heart, being one with oneself on one side and empathically following the voice of Nature ringing everywhere around us and being one with everyone else on another.

Listening too much music played from the outside with patience and the desire to capture its messages and meanings, without ever plunging in silence and the inner music of our own being, thus typically results in an overall perplexity and inability to fully enjoy the music listened to and find these precious meanings in it. Just as fasting in the Christian tradition and meditation in the Oriental ones serve the purpose of facing us with cognitive nothingness and baselines of our sensitivity to perceive meaning and beauty, spending time in silence and oneness with the music of our own heart are vital for sustaining our ability to empathically encounter and efficiently absorb impressions of the outer world. On the other hand, of course, solely meditating and closing the door to our intimate openness and compassionate interactivity, which have the purpose of blessing and beautifying the world around us, leads to similar impoverishment of our spirit and a crippled ability of ours to travel in peace and harmony through the landscapes of our soul. As pointed out earlier, to be able to attain ultimate happiness in our meditative inwardness and introspection, in our dwelling inside of our mind and heart, we need to live every moment of our lives with the aim to beautify and bless the surrounding world, whereas to succeed in the latter we need to equally retain the attitude of inwardness and self-withdrawnness, all of which would make us “shine, but not dazzle”, as given to us as a precious Lao-Tzu's guideline (Tao-Te-Xing LVIII).

Now, no matter how miniscule and unimportant or offensive and repulsive the sources of information we face may seem, we should be sure that they always carry a plethora of wonderful insights and shed starry signs of immense importance before our feet to guide us on our paths. As Goethe's Mephistopheles lamented, “I am part of the power which forever wills evil and forever works good”<sup>1336</sup>. For, this world has been designed to continuously evolve into ever greater and more blissful states by the undying dialectical confrontations between qualities of life and their opposites. However, as I recently watched a cheesy commercial TV show with the speaker referring to the following words, “Get rid of life you had planned and embrace life that is waiting for you”, I bluntly discarded their blissful meaning, neglected to descend deep enough into their semantic well and wrongly interpreted them as something suggesting how we should not follow our inner bliss, but should instead place ourselves into the hands of Nature and let her fully guide our thoughts and actions in this world. Little could I know that this was Joseph Campbell's thought and that it was deeper than I had initially thought; yet, I kept on rearranging the message that lit up the shadowy corridors of my mind to a Middle Way concept, as if eternally guided by the Chuang-Tzu's message: “Most people follow this or that way solely; how many of us are ready to follow them all, to pursue a Middle Way?” Thus, I attributed the following meaning to

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<sup>1336</sup> See the epigraph to Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, Ardis Publishers, Dana Point, CA (1940).

this thought: “We should open our senses to the silent music that is the voice of divine Nature that pervades it all and forget the paths that we have prepared ourselves to travel on based on our own aspirations and desires”. Yet, should we descend deeper, we may realize that the secret of the Way of Love lies entirely in the balance between letting Nature speak to us and outline our missionary fate on one side and opening our heart so as to creatively marvel the world with the beauty of dreams and visions we have crafted inside. For, the most productive dialogues are those where both sides are open to both absorbing new meanings and avidly scattering the seeds of their spirits throughout the world with passion and enchanting expressiveness. And if Nature becomes seen as present in the heart of each one of her creatures, we may realize that it is all intertwined after all, and that following the path of bringing happiness and satisfaction into other people’s lives equals opening the door to our own living in accordance with the missionary fate meant for us and with our deepest aspirations, which, sooner or later, we will realize are one and the same. Thence, it may dawn on us that the key to it all is simpler than it may seem. To follow one’s heart which is the heart of divine Nature, which beats in all the creatures of the world and all of the corners of the world, it is. Or, as proclaimed by Joseph Campbell, “Follow your bliss”, and trust all things that Nature bestows us with and sends as moonlit glistening droplets of rain to the eyes of our heart. For, once we dive deep into the blissful sense of oneness with it all within the greatest depths of our mind and heart and reach the landscapes of perfect freedom wherefrom wonderful, purely enchanting moves and the music of words are naturally pulled to the surface of our being, each surrounding creature is being miraculously incited to sip the same nectar of an utmost spiritual liberty from the core of its soul; or, as the Christ would have put it, “Because I live, ye shall live also” (John 14:19). Being immersed in our eternally youthful and optimistic soul colored with starry constellations that twinkle with the music divine, and delivering spurs for our words and acts in this world from there on is therefore the key to all, as simple as it can get.

Yet, to be simple and deep at the same time is a challenge like no other. Speaking of minimalistic simplicity, I have always marveled upon the fact that richness and vibrant complexity of sound could be almost immediately recognized in a musical piece and ascribed to its artistic character. The same, however, cannot be said for immaculately simple expressions. They may require enormous amounts of time and dedicated listening thereof before the seeds of brilliance begin to sprout in touch with our fertilizing mind and before they reveal all the beauties dormant in them in full splendor. For this reason, exactly those pieces of art I endow with the attribute of the greatest: pieces of art that aspire to attain the ideal of marvelous simplicity, not oversimplifying and debilitating, but revealing it all and capturing the essence of the Universe underneath its umbrella. To write in complicated, sophisticated and well-crafted sentences is easy, I have always claimed, but to speak in a simple and unpretentious manner and still not to insult the reader upon offering these pearls of clear-cut simplicity is the highest art attainable. Down-to-earth approachability that reveals an impression of enchanting intimacy and directedness, as if the underlying message of our expression has been directed to one and one only, is thus placed right next to graceful radiance with remote mysteriousness, a sense of distant dwelling in a starry sky of one’s own untouchable inner world, and is what comes out of these powerfully moving words that live quite in accord with the concept of the Way of Love. This is why at this place in the discourse I will place the three stars and say no more words. Still, there will be hope that I may have said it all. For, as Ferdinand Kürnberger’s motto placed at the very

entrance to Ludwig Wittgenstein's landmark tractate says, "Whatever a man knows, whatever is not mere rumbling and roaring that he has heard, can be said in three words"<sup>1337</sup>.



Sometimes I feel as if the magic of triangle, of trio in anything in Nature and complexity it induces, from which endless possibilities that typify life emerge, as epitomized in Lao-Tzu's saying, "From one comes two, from two comes three, from three arise all things" (Tao-Te-Xing XLII), is hidden in this celebration of mysterious three words. Sometimes I also feel as if the Holy Trinity – the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost – a form of which is also intrinsic to the triad of the Way of Love - mind, Nature and the Way, the mysterious thread that links the former two, along which the energy that we may call Spirit, shhh, flies - is hidden there too. "In the spirit of three stars, the alien thing that took its form"<sup>1338</sup>, the words of Sufjan Stevens' song describing the touchdown of an ET beauty onto the glistening podium of our heart are now left to reverberate in my head peacefully, just as they did as I stood on Ljubljana streets, relentlessly resting my glorious gazes on Triglav, or the Three-Headed, if I were to translate its local name to English, an Alpine peak, the tallest one in Yugoslavia. Then, "*Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres, quarum unam incolunt Belgae, aliam Aquitani, tertiam qui ipsorum lingua Celtae, nostra Galli appellantur. Hi omnes lingua, institutis, legibus inter se different*", is the beginning of Gaius Julius Caesar's account of the Gallic wars, known under the name *Commentariorum de bello gallico*, which, half a century after elaborating it as a part of her final high school exam, my Mom still knows how to recite by heart, reminding me of how the metaphor of the magic of threes, which has undoubtedly marked my Mom's maternal life, could be found striking us from the most ordinary signs in the world around us. These thoughts reverberate quite in accord with the verses of Christopher Hervey, "The whole world round is not enough to fill the heart's three corners, but it craveth still; only the Trinity that made it can suffice the vast triangle heart of Man"<sup>1339</sup>, secretly reminding us that by reaching out to foundations of the pyramid of our knowledge and being is how we arrive at its peak where all three sides become one and the same. For, beautifully moving backwards has been every now and then proven as the most constructive way to step forward; or, as Lao-Tzu would have pointed out, "Who returns was sent by Tao" (Tao-Te-Xing XL). In the context of the triangulation of the human spirit in its being stretched along a horizontal plane that connects the poles of godly Nature and the human soul while forming triangular amplitudes in its dancing between the two, and of meditatively moving ever deeper inwardly as the way to supersonically stream forward in stellar expressions of our spirit, and *vice versa*, as in accordance with the Way of Love, Evelyn Underhill might have further noticed the following: "Mystical writers constantly remind us that life as perceived by the human minds shows an inveterate tendency to arrange itself in triads: that if they proclaim the number

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<sup>1337</sup> See Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Routledge, London, UK (1918), pp. 1.

<sup>1338</sup> Listen to Sufjan Stevens' Concerning the UFO Sighting Near Highland, Illinois on Illinois, Asthmatic Kitty (2005).

<sup>1339</sup> See Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism*, Methuen & Co., Ltd., London, UK (1911), pp. 113.

Three in the heaven, they can also point to it as dominating everywhere upon the earth”<sup>1340</sup>. If Aristotle’s spirit was with us now, it might have hopped right in, adding a thought or two from his cosmological ruminations: “The world and all that is in it is determined by the number three, since beginning and middle and end give the number of an ‘all’, and the number they give is the triad. And so, having taken these three from nature as laws of it, we make further use of the number three in the worship of the Gods”<sup>1341</sup>. Is this why, I have always wondered, the third man who spend the night with Laura Palmer on the night she was killed hid the clue as to who murdered her<sup>1342</sup>? Is it because all the mysticism of life, along with its myriads of mysteries that vivify the human soul, revolve around the number three? Is this why special agent Cooper got three enigmatic lines whispered to his delirious ears by the giant who emerged from his lucid dreams, as he lay wounded on the floor, having just concluded that “nothing is so bad as long as you can keep the fear from your mind”<sup>1343</sup>? Storywriters who believe in the so-called rule of three, the epitome of the Latin saying “*omne trium perfectum*” according to which characters (e.g., “three blind mice”), attributes (e.g., Julius Caesar’s “*veni, vidi, vici*”) and structural elements (e.g., leisured opening, buildup of tension, and illuminative resolution) that come in threes are markedly more captivating to the readers than those that come in any other number, would readily agree with this viewpoint. So would the classical landscape painters too, who have held that dividing the canvas to the foreground, the middle ground and the background brings about the perspective most pleasing to the senses. Soccer strategists knowing that positioning the central midfielders in the shape of a triangle, albeit constantly shifting in space, maximizes the number of possible combinations with the ball would second it too. And so would cognitive therapists who reaffirm in their teachings James Michener’s rule that “character consists of what you do on the third try”<sup>1344</sup>. When it comes to music, we could always recollect the Romanticists’ method of defying their predecessors’, Classicists’ habit of dividing compositions to three parts, starting with a theme, then raising the tension and finally resolving it, oftentimes by restoring the consonant beginnings or occasionally, as exemplified by the major-minor-major structure of La Marseillaise, ending on an even higher emotional note compared to the uplifting opening theme. What Romanticists wished to do was to deaden the energy and the drive of what comes after the opening rather than to expand on its elatedness, as their antecedents did - hence, the Beethovenian and later Brahmsian slow and ominous second movement or the Shakespearean painstakingly long second act, e.g. – but they still could not escape from the tension-producing nature of the antitheses posed as contrasts to major themes and had to eventually work their way around their resolutions as they approached the ends of the essentially dialectically evolving compositions, lest their aesthetics be diminished. By creating tension even where they wished to produce a sense of relaxation, they appeared not to have been able to escape from the curse, *i.e.*, blessing of the number three, the one to which innumerable theologians, mystics and philosophers divided purposeful stories of human lives. Life scientists might then pay our attention to the fact that tricellular boundaries or any other meeting points of three biological entities often possess special properties absent from ordinary, biphasic

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<sup>1340</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 110.

<sup>1341</sup> See Aristotle’s On the Heavens, Book I, Part 1, Translated by J. L. Stocks (4<sup>th</sup> Century BC), retrieved from <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/heavens.html>.

<sup>1342</sup> Watch the TV series Twin Peaks directed by David Lynch (1990/91).

<sup>1343</sup> Watch the first episode of Season 2 of the TV series Twin Peaks directed by David Lynch (1991).

<sup>1344</sup> This quote occupies the central spot in Fernando del Rosario’s artwork called Character, which was on display at an exhibition at the Newport Beach Public Library on June 24, 2023.

boundaries<sup>1345</sup>; biochemists may add that trimer motifs are more of a rule than an exception in protein assemblies, as seen, for example, in bacteriophage T4 fibritin, the prokaryotic lectin and HIV inhibitor actinohivin or  $\beta$ -hairpin oligomers forming amyloid fibrils implicated in a number of neurodegenerative diseases<sup>1346</sup>; solid state scientists may mention triple junctions as points of contact of three grains whose motionlessness is critical in ensuring extraordinary densification of materials during sintering<sup>1347</sup>, whose motions often comprise the quintessential recovery mechanism preceding primary recrystallization during annealing<sup>1348</sup>, and whose termination of grain boundary segments in polycrystalline samples has an immense effect on their response to various physical stimuli<sup>1349</sup>; experts in catalysis would extend this insight by pointing out that the rate of catalytic transformation of gaseous reactants initiated at the triple junction between the gold nanoparticle, the metal oxide support and the gas phase usually greatly surpasses the one occurring at the plain gold/gas interface<sup>1350</sup>; statisticians would tell us that a shift from two to three experimental replicates marks the transition from a little reliable, preliminary set of results to the one reportable with confidence; physicists, in turn, would remind us of how all hell breaks loose in their computational models when the third body is introduced to a system composed of two bodies alone; chaos theoreticians, complexity scientists and experts in nonlinear chemistry would tell us that, on a more positive note, oscillatory reactions, the primitive prototypes of self-organization phenomena, thanks to which inanimate matter spontaneously transformed to living matter before the evolution even began, are possible only insofar as there are no less than three intermediates in a networked, feedback-looped pathway of chemical reactions; physical chemists may tell us that the molecule of water, which is far more abundant in our bodies than any other molecule, is a physicochemical celebration of the number three, suggesting that we are mostly made up of the little molecular pyramids that H<sub>2</sub>O molecules are; historians often state that history proceeds in triads and triple jumps, in concert with the French proverb *jamais deux sans trois*, i.e., “never twice without a third”, meaning that events that have occurred twice are likely to happen for the third time; psychologists often, in the steps of the philosophy proposed by the French neuroscientist, Henri Laborit and turned into a cinematic metaphor by Alain Resnais in *Mon oncle d'Amérique*, claim that the human psyche is threefold, consisting of (a) reptilian, animalistic brain, focused on survival only, (b) mammalian brain, endowed with the ability to reflect on past experiences and marked by the notion of “memory”, and (c) divine brain, gifted with the glass-bead-game-like art of connecting pieces of memory with rigorously logical and imaginatively analogical links, the three circles of consciousness that only in cross-inspirational

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<sup>1345</sup> For example, the paper by Susanne M. Krug *et al.* of Freie Universität and Humboldt-Universität in Berlin that I reviewed in 2012 for Biomaterials journal, entitled Sodium Caprate as an Enhancer of Macromolecule Permeation across Tricellular Tight Junctions of Intestinal Cells, shows how the tight junction at the contact between three cells could be the predominant pathway for the paracellular transport of drugs across the epithelium.

<sup>1346</sup> See A. G. Kreuzer, I. L. Hamza, R. K. Spencer, J. S. Nowick – “X-Ray crystallographic structures of a trimer, dodecamer, and annular pore formed by an A $\beta$ 17-36  $\beta$ -hairpin”, *Journal of the American Chemical Society* 138, 4634 – 42 (2016).

<sup>1347</sup> See, for example, the paper by M. J. Lukić, Z. Stojanović, S. D. Škapin, M. Maček-Kržmanc, M. Mitrić, S. Marković and D. Uskoković – “Dense fine-grained biphasic calcium phosphate (BCP) bioceramics designed by two-step sintering”, *Journal of the European Ceramic Society* Vol. 31, pp. 19 –27 (2011).

<sup>1348</sup> See T. Yu, N. Hansen, X. Huang – “Recovery by triple junction motion in aluminium deformed to ultrahigh strains”, *Proceedings of the Royal Society A* 467 (2135) 3039 – 3065 (2011).

<sup>1349</sup> See Louise Priester’s *Grain Boundaries: From Theory to Engineering*, Springer Series in Materials Science 172, Springer, Dordrecht (2013), pp. 300 - 303.

<sup>1350</sup> See Mingshu Chen’s and D. Wayne Goodman’s *Catalytically Active Gold: From Nanoparticles to Ultrathin Films*, *Accounts of Chemical Research* 39, 739 – 746 (2006).

juxtaposition with each other can give birth to a harmonious human being<sup>1351</sup>; politicians might tell us that just as intrinsic indeterminacies arise out of the switch from two to three interacting objects in physical models, so did the US Constitution split the government powers into three branches, not two, including the legislative, the executive and the judicial<sup>1352</sup>, all in order to maintain its balance and prevent its disproportionate rising over the people's interests, and so forth. Then, as I have repeatedly told my students, three in percentages is a magic number too, given that 3 % of the gross domestic product is allocated by the developed countries of the world to scientific research, that profitable returns for a state's economy are made if 3 % of funds dedicated to basic science lead to the development of technological products, and that inspiring 3 % of students to walk home elated, having opened the gate for the inflow of inspirational thought inside of them, and perhaps eventually choose science as their profession, or whatever else the teacher teaches on, fulfills the teacher's role. Relatedly and nowhere less importantly, although my fellow *Otpor* comrades might disagree<sup>1353</sup>, revolutionaries have often spoken of the 3 % of population as needed to get out on the street and start protesting before the regime can be changed<sup>1354</sup>. Although my students have found it concerning that my lectures were meant to enlighten such a small proportion of the class, this, in a way, has been like the effect the Velvet Underground had on the music world: as the legend has it, not many people were impressed by their inventive sound, but all of those who were went on to start a band on their own. Finally, if you fast-forward any given child's development in the first year of his life, you will notice that manipulation with single objects quickly cedes place to attempts to initiate an interaction between two objects by combining anything with anything, be it books with hammers, chalices with bouncy balls or rattles with balloons. By doing so, the child insinuates the innate inclination of ours to not only set ourselves in relationship with all things around us, but, even more sublime, to serve as a Golden Gate Bridge that connects two of something into a state of sacred unity and act as such in the spirit of the mysterious Ghost of the Holy Trinity, present and absent from the scene at the same time, like the image of the Way itself, simultaneously connecting and separating those who stand at its ends, preparing himself for the role of the peak of the pyramid of being that he will ideally take on later in life. For, if one is symbolic of the absolute unity of things and of meditative solitariness, while two alludes to the shredding of this singularity to pieces in order to connect oneself with another, then three must stand for the act of building a bridge, stepping aside with a perfect connection in sight and quietly, with a smile underneath one's breath, like God himself, a catcher in the rye or a ranger riding off into the sunset on his

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<sup>1351</sup> Watch *My American Uncle* directed by Alain Resnais (1980).

<sup>1352</sup> The Congress, divided itself to the Senate and the House of Representatives, the President and the Supreme Court in other words, respectively.

<sup>1353</sup> If I, myself, learned one thing after a decade of social protests against the government of Slobodan Milošević, from March 9, 1991 to October 5, 2000, after I developed chronic frostbites on my fingers and toes due to facing police cordons day and night in the winter 1996/97 and escaping arrests, tortures and bullets by sheer luck, it is that social change against corrupt regimes cannot be brought up by simply walking down the streets and blowing into whistles, banging onto pans, chanting and carrying slogans. This particular regime was brought down by the revolutionaries' infiltrating the clandestine criminal channels that lay underneath it and that supported it secretly. It was a powerful lesson, thanks to which I do not get to see many members of my generation out on the street protesting anymore against the government corruption, in spite of their being equally horrified by it as in the olden days.

<sup>1354</sup> See *Nenasilne demonstracije i pravilo od 3,5 odsto: Kako mala manjina na protestima može da promeni svet*, *B92 BBC News* (July 10, 2020), retrieved from [https://www.b92.net/bbc/index.php?yyyy=2020&mm=07&dd=10&nav\\_id=1705534](https://www.b92.net/bbc/index.php?yyyy=2020&mm=07&dd=10&nav_id=1705534).

horse after bringing peace and harmony to a lonely town that lay on his path, elevating oneself up, towards the apex of the celestial sphere, like Polaris, the end of the long thread of the kite that the constellation of Little Bear is and the only one that children flying it hold in their hands, and immersing oneself into darkness in which, at the end of the day, all stars must reside.

Number three is also naturally evocative of crossroads; for, at the intersections, where two meet, does the third magically emerge into life. The entire concept of the Middle Way, alongside its peacemaking connotations, is thus suddenly being born as an emanation of the sacredness of number three. Through three one becomes One, the mystical numerologist in us may thus thunderously proclaim, while the orthodox theologian might concordantly observe that the Holy Ghost presents the central thread of the Holy Trinity that connects the Father and the Son and enables the ascension of the latter towards the former and merging of the two, yielding an enlightening bliss as the result of this primordial Hegelian synthesis. Knowing that crossroads represent the most favorable standpoints for boosting our creative powers may impel us to conclude that “three’s my lucky number and fortune comes in threes”<sup>1355</sup>, as sung by Nicolette Suwoton in one out of a myriad of magical mystic songs plucked like celestial teardrops off the grooves of Massive Attack’s prophetic record *Protection*. On countless such crossroads my Belgrade buddies and I had stood confoundedly, with the sound of *Protection* ringing in our ears and providing an angelic guidance to our wistful spirits, before we concluded one day that Andy Warhol was right when he said that “two’s a company and three’s a party”, meaning that inexhaustible sources of ideas and incentives arise when a triangle with three souls in place of its vertices is created and let roll down the street and into the night. With the eye of my mind still resting on the peaks of pyramids in life, as in those days on which I glided jovially down the mystical alleyways of my birthplace, I also recall how the famous innovator in the acting area, Eugenio Barba, born on warm and sunlit Southern shores, but later becoming an expatriate in a cold, cold Anglo-Saxon world, such as myself, considered positioning oneself at a crossroad as a vital precondition for exhibitions of the most phenomenal eruptions of creativity conceivable, as exemplified by his noting how “‘cultural roots’ were synonymous with confinement, with a restricted horizon. I wanted to break the ties which limited my mental freedom and to approach the unvoiced dark ‘otherness’ in myself and around me which a specific culture hindered me from doing”<sup>1356</sup>, and so he found Belgrade, my hometown and the capital of the nonaligned movement that stood between the streams of East and West for a long time, as a logical choice to host the first conference of individual group theatres, and that exactly in the year I was born, 1976, at which he proposed the founding of the Third Theatre as something new and different from both the First Theatre, commercial, conventional and embedded in traditional cultural values, reinforcing the classical aesthetical heritage of humanity, and the mainstream avant-garde and experimentalism of the Second Theatre, conceiving it as the one that “lives on the fringe... created by people who have seldom undergone a traditional theatrical education”<sup>1357</sup>, but who still devote their lives to learning how to shed moves that sparkle with sheer starriness all around them through erasing the boundaries that limit the expansion of the shine of their spirits and crushing the authorities that require dues that take toll on the authenticity of their creative expressions to be paid, staying all alone and yet one with it all on the dancing podium of the

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<sup>1355</sup> Listen to Massive Attack’s *Three on Protection*, Circa, UK (1994).

<sup>1356</sup> See Eugenio Barba’s and Ian Watson’s *The Conquest of Difference: An Electronic Dialogue*, In: *Negotiating Cultures: Eugenio Barba and the Intercultural Debate*, edited by Ian Watson and colleagues, Manchester University Press, Manchester, UK (2002), pp. 236.

<sup>1357</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 198.

Universe. To dance together with stars that twinkle all around one, endlessly, like the words that comprise the previous sentence or this one, is thus to move in accord with threes, that is, neither to conform to expectations of others and be fully one with them at all times, thus losing the sane touch with the deepest constellations of one's own spirit, nor to try hard to be wholly different from others and run away from the inevitable merging of the hearts, thus becoming deprived of the drives to empathize which are a prerequisite for endowing ourselves with a genuinely starry nature, but to be both one and two, that is, three.

Sometimes I also feel as if the whole world gravitates towards three-word expressions in the course of its being alternately subjected to a centrifugal pull in the direction of circumlocutory, multiword schemes of thought and a centripetal drag into silent, wholly wordless centerpieces of our meditative selves. In view of this, three as the number of words in an expression of a single thought might be hypothesized to be its optimal verbal and phonetic size in this age of hypermodern and ultrafast communication, as in accordance with the aforesaid opening thought from Wittgenstein's Tractatus. By producing a mild sense of mysteriousness that opens a glowing space of wonder in front of the interpreter, while still revealingly offering precious communication signs and messages, so sized expressions could live up to the ideal of perfectly balanced clarity and perplexity, which all truly captivating expressions of thought and emotion engrain. Finally, sometimes I feel as if a simple, yet infinitely profound I ♥ You, that very same phrase Natacha von Braun discovers on its way from Alphaville to the Outlands, is confined in these three words as well, being a mantra which, when deeply installed within the roots of an enlightened mind and heart, may launch us to the sky filled with soulful stars where we could dwell in meditative peace and darkness and deliver through it an utterly inspiring shine that uplifts and rejuvenates the world, as the Way of Love itself has prophesied. Hence, the answer is simple: erase it all from the skies of our minds and let only pure Love shine from their cores. It is this love that will, irrespective of anything else, of any situation that we find ourselves in or any actions or words that we choose to express ourselves with, manage to enlighten ourselves and the world alike.

As I say this, an angel in me leaps with joy, his eyes glistening, scintillating with sheer starriness, declaring that there is nothing like living with eyes wide open and letting the waves of cosmic joy be channeled through the body and the mind across which his wings are spread, which then become the head and the heart of an antenna transmitting godly messages to the enlightening world that spins around us like a celestial carousel of Wonder and Love. And in its center, as well as in the center of our pirouetting spirit in those moments, spinning in circles around and in the middle of circles bearing more circles, each one of which conceals a universe as a whole in it, silence intercepted but by a twinkle of one star only has stood solemnly.



**Stars keep on falling** like sparkly dust on the palms of my hands, twinkling with the subtle melancholy and unbound cosmic joy that the messenger doves of the Way of Love dissipate from their angelical wings. If I could shed this stardust all over your eyes, signifying the eternal wonder that gazing at the starry sky awakens in us, and yet draw the sunshine of empathy that melts human hearts with its attentive rays in the midst of it, I would come up with a neat landscape of the celestial philosophy of being disguised hereby under the magic veil of the

Way of Love. To one holding it close to one's heart and anchoring its ships of attention that flow on the sea of loving emotions onto it, this principal doctrine of creative being brings forth innumerable insightful treasures on every corner of life. By living through it, one naturally becomes an enchanting superstar, sending invisible rays of divinity everywhere one goes. In the eyes of the world one then appears partly like a desolate escapist renouncing the prosaic everyday matters and clichéd communications of the modern day to dwell inside of a realm of fantasy, and partly like an explosion of spiritedness and the joy of being, "no man, but a dynamite"<sup>1358</sup>, as Friedrich Nietzsche outlined the traits of a superman, the one who nourishes the sun of love inside of one's heart from which the rays of ecstatic expressiveness radiate in all directions, selflessly burning one's essence and scattering its light and ashes freely into the winds of the world with endlessly compassionate creativity. Like a real star on the night sky, balancing (a) the inward pull of gravity that tends to collapse it into singularity, that is, fully withdraw it into an inexpressive cocoon of its inner world where the meditative touch with the divine can be unremittingly preserved, and (b) the explosive push of an outwardly directed force, that is, the expressive drive that tends to expand and dissipate the essence of the star into cosmic spaces and give away every single piece of it for the sake of saving the world, so do stars on Earth need to conform to the same balancing principle in order to build and sustain the shine of their spirits. This balance is, of course, such that it seems paradoxical and unreachable at first, and yet it is exactly one such nature of this balance that predisposes it to be grounds for an endless evolution of the spirit of knowledge of those who walk on it during their lifetimes, who ride on its monocycle through the fanciful fields of life, never ceasing to blend joy and sadness in the pot of their spirits as all angels do, thus giving rise to real rainbows in their vibrant eyes and hearts. For, as we have known, these multicolored adornments of the heavenly dome arise only where the rains of melancholy and the sunshine of joy meet each other. Lying ingrained in the heart of the Philosophy of the Way, which rotates around the symbol of simultaneous separateness and connectedness that each way in Nature could be seen as, this mixing of the unmixable conceals the key to giving rise to acts that will charm millions of souls by the merits of their otherworldly grace.

As we hold the palms of our hands open for the stardust of the Way of Love to fall from some heavenly heights onto them, a little glowing speckle lands straight on our line of fate to tell us that running forth with the flags of freedom and the ideal of euphoric expressiveness in our hearts, but without any dose of graceful closeness and solitary secretiveness blooming in us, would eventually lead to our tumbling down the cliffs of beautiful being in the world. One such fall from grace would result in our finding ourselves at the bottom of dry and rocky canyons, frivolously and air-headedly preaching freedoms, offering empty packages for the thirsty passersby in caravans, whose cups only Love, missing from our bestowals, can gratifyingly fill. Every expressive attack that enlightens the world can be thus said to be based on an impeccably structured defense, a strategy that all skillful chess players, army commanders and sports coaches, can confirm to be the winning one. For example, if there is a single fundamental idea with which soccer as a sport was born, very English in its essence, as historians of this game may notice, it was that the more time the ball spends in the vicinity of the opponent's goal, the greater the chance of scoring. Yet, after it resulted in too many fruitless sending of long balls forward and unstructured, crowded runs toward it, time has proven it wrong and the most modern soccer strategists of the day quite often give away the ball possession, attracting the opponent to their

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<sup>1358</sup> See Friedrich Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One is*, Translated by R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin, New York, NY (1888).

own side of the pitch so as to open space for rapid and devastating counterattacks, providing a living proof that defensive fortification is the first and the foremost aspect of immaculate offensiveness and that, as the concept of the Way of Love proposes, meditative withdrawnness lies at the heart of every form of truly fertile explosive expressiveness. Correspondingly, when Stan Sakai, a Californian comic book writer, depicted his ideal of a definitive warrior as a rabbit, an epitome of a timid and coy animal, or when Po Lo, a Taoist equerry, picked a grey and hunched mule as the future best horse in the kingdom<sup>1359</sup>, or when Lao-Tzu mentioned that “one who would like to become strong should first learn how to be weak” (Tao-Te-Xing XXXVI), they all hit the center of the target of the balance of the Way of Love.

With the very mention of the legendary rabbit samurai, Usagi Yojimbo in the context of the Way of Love, a scene from one of his adventures flashes in front of my mind. It depicts a tea ceremony whereon Usagi, an epitome of a *ronin*, that is, a masterless samurai who had found the wisdom of life with “no guru, no method, no teacher”, as Van Morrison would have cried into our ears<sup>1360</sup>, complying with the principle of “using no way as a way” popularized by the martial arts pop star, Bruce Lee, was about to depart for good from his fellow female warrior, Tomoe<sup>1361</sup>. In the middle of it, following periods of silence and awkwardly offered comments on ordinary things, Tomoe turns around and says, “Even between good friends, there are things that are hidden”<sup>1362</sup>. Someone has said that real friends do not doubt, but hope, and such partial withdrawnness of one’s spaceship of the stellar thought inside of the orbits within the sphere of one’s consciousness need not interfere with this benevolent glow of hope that radiates from one’s heart whenever a silhouette of the spirit of a friend begins to slowly emerge in the space of one’s mind. Devotion to a friend was placed as the final stop on the journey across the American land by Jack Kerouac<sup>1363</sup>, and altogether with the poet’s wistful gazing at the stars above and contemplating over whether God could be a Pooh bear, it was a sign that our ascents to the stellar realms of being and enlightenment of our inner self are proportional to the extent of unconditional and nonjudgmental love that we nourish for the fellow beings. In other words, the only way to draw an iron thread that will connect us with the blissful Divine that dwells deep within our soul is to give our heart out for the sake of empowering others with the holy spirit and prompting them to draw inside of them these magic strings along which the music of the heavens will begin to reverberate across every aspect of their physical beings. Enlightenment of oneself is thus inevitably conditioned by the extent of one’s yearning to enlighten others; or, as Paul Tillich noted, the only true self-affirmation is rooted in “the paradox of participation in something which transcends the self”<sup>1364</sup>. Hence, in this universe where being lost and being found are so inextricably entwined, supporting each other on another’s back, the more one ventures out into the unknown, far beyond the safe harbors of one’s actual self, the more one will be at home of his heart, so to speak; hence, the omnipresent relevance of the metaphor of the Way that colors each autumn leaf of this fancy scrapbook that you happen to be holding in your hands.

We are thus repeatedly reminded of the following by the Way of Love, the concept applicable not only to relationships between two human creatures, but also to those between any two living systems, be they parents and children, two soccer teams or chess armies confronting

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<sup>1359</sup> See Lieh-Tzu’s Taoist Teachings, retrieved from <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/7341> (5<sup>th</sup> Century BCE).

<sup>1360</sup> Listen to Van Morrison’s In the Garden on No Guru, No Method, No Teacher, Mercury (1986).

<sup>1361</sup> See Stan Sakai’s Usagi Yojimbo (Book 22): Tomoe’s Story, Chapter VI: Chanoyu, Dark Horse Books, Milwaukie, OR (2008), pp. 147 - 170.

<sup>1362</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 157.

<sup>1363</sup> See Jack Kerouac’s On the Road, Penguin, New York, NY (1955).

<sup>1364</sup> See Paul Tillich’s The Courage to Be, Yale University Press, New Haven, MA (1952), pp. 165.

one another, or two cells, societies or ecosystems interacting with each other. Namely, exploding in empathic expressiveness is a necessary precondition for illuminating our insides with the torch of wisdom and the rays of utmost happiness, whereas cultivation of the silence within, the ocean of which we plunge into like a jovial dolphin, stands for the only grounds from which we are able to deliver the enlightening actions to the world. The search for these middle grounds has been going on for millennia and Emma Goldman recognized it in the following passage, as she ingenuously wondered whether pure anarchism, the philosophy that she cordially advocated, and the corresponding eradication of any sense of authority arising from the surrounding souls would, in fact, prove to be destructive for our spiritual wellbeing: “The problem that confronts us today, and which the nearest future is to solve, is how to be one’s self and yet in oneness with others, to feel deeply with all human beings and still retain one’s own characteristic qualities”<sup>1365</sup>. The solution to this problem, as we see, lies on the middle ground territory claimed by the worldview that is hereby named the Way of Love. Tomoe’s insightful comment has thus rung in accord with the inescapable nature of a truly fulfilling relationship between two creatures, as defined by this concept and also emanating from the visions of Jan Struther’s Mrs. Miniver: “She saw every relationship as a pair of intersecting circles. It would seem at first glance that the more they overlapped the better the relationship; but this is not so. Beyond a certain point the law of diminishing returns sets in, and there are not enough private resources left on either side to enrich the life that is shared. Probably perfection is reached when the area of the two outer crescents, added together, is exactly equal to that of the leaf-shaped piece in the middle”<sup>1366</sup>. A similar chord is stricken by Lucy in Leo McCarey’s 1937 movie *Make Way for Tomorrow*, when she recites the verse she exclaimed to her husband when he asked her if she was afraid during their wedding ceremony fifty years earlier, obliging both to remain with hearts as bound in compassion as alone, with the cosmos as a whole resplendently reflected in them: “The vows have been spoken. The rice has been thrown. Into the future we’ll travel alone. With you, said the maid, I’m not afraid”. Alternately approaching and distancing is thus what typifies every relationship that rests on the pillars of inexhaustible love and creativity. Revealing all that one has would not only eclipse the shine of another, but will also lead one to lose the touch with the core of one’s being. Hence, one has to remain meditatively sane and plunged deep into oneself and yet empathically united with the views of another in order to adopt the Middle Way which epitomizes every balanced relationship in Nature. By standing right in the middle, on the thread that connects the heart of one and the heart of another, one resembles an acrobat who vigilantly sends the treasures of one’s spirit outwards, to endow others therewith, and also passes on the wonderful impressions of the outside world straight to the wishing well of one’s heart. This is probably what Diotima of Mantinea, the seer who, according to Plato’s *Symposium*, had taught Socrates the philosophy of love had in mind when she hinted on the ideal of *metaxy*, of standing in-between things in life so as to maximize the creativity of our interaction with them. This ideal was subsequently elaborated in the explications of theodicy of Simone Weil whereby she concluded that divine creation was complete only when the Creator withdrew itself from its creation, that absence is an indication of the presence and *vice versa* and that every separation is a link and the other way around. Needless to add, the given ideal is concordant with the simultaneous separateness and connectedness epitomized by the symbolism of the Way from

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<sup>1365</sup> See Emma Goldman’s *Anarchism and Other Essays* (with a new introduction by Richard Drinnon), Dover, New York, NY (1969), pp. xiv.

<sup>1366</sup> See Douglas Hofstadter’s *Le Ton beau de Marot: In Praise of the Music of Language*, Bantam Books, New York, NY (1997).

which the entire Philosophy of the Way filling up the pages of this book like autumn leaves falling onto pastoral hills and meadows sprung to life.

The rabbit samurai, however, responds by saying, “That is the nature of friendship, but more is revealed over time”<sup>1367</sup>, as if breaking the balance and explicating his ignorance. Yet, as a sage, he had surely known that stepping out of balance every once in a while and pointing at one’s weaknesses is what marks true steps forward. For, “to be like a bamboo shoot that sways with the wind” is the guideline that another samurai sage gave to his adherents to direct them to the realms of supreme strength in life, certainly living up to the advice given out once by St. Paul the Apostle: “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty” (Corinthians I 1:27). Biological systems that survive harsh conditions because of their pliability, epitomizing “flexible tongues that live, while stiff teeth fall off”, as Chuang-Tzu put it millennia ago; modern buildings that integrate structural segments meant to break down under tremor and thus achieve the ideals of earthquake-resistance; materials undergoing repeated cycles of quenching and creep so as to be made mechanically superior; and a congenial petite creature who stood on the blades of grass and held the following words clumsily written on a crumbly cardboard, “People cry, not because they are weak, but because they’ve been strong for too long”, evoking dreams of embodying softness that channels the waves of emotions on which our bodies can dancingly surf and other impulses that lead to enlightening action, are only some of the pervasive examples of the state of affairs whereby “strength is made perfect in weakness” (Corinthians II 12:9). Also, what the rabbit samurai may have intended to say while leaning his gentle heart onto the principle that prompts us to be like a full Moon, with its light side shining in empathy and responsiveness to others and yet with the dark side remaining deeply immersed in the depths of our own being, was that all our endeavors would turn out to be unfruitful should we find ourselves consciously resisting to bestow more and more of the precious insights that are being born within our meditative heart onto others. For, the extent of the shine of divine spirit within us is proportional to the glow of empathy sent forth towards the rest of the world. This implies that traveling in one direction, e.g., towards illumination of the self, is possible only insofar as we travel in the complementary direction as well, i.e., towards sanctification of another, and *vice versa*. Henceforth, we should live fully for others, limitlessly giving all that we have thereto, knowing that we are like an ocean that the more it gives, the more it has to give. “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45), as stands written in the Bible. Hence, as a relationship evolves, the shiny intersection of circles that stands for things given and exchanged grows, but so does the dark, meditative ones that represent the inner and concealed treasures of the earthlings’ spirits. In that sense, as an ideal relationship develops over time, more things become revealed and yet more feelings grow inside so that they could be shared, bringing mutual satisfaction.

Spiral is the shape of both our galaxy and the molecule of DNA, two forms that define the outlines of reality at macrocosmic and microcosmic scales, respectively; as such, there is no doubt that spiral patterns depict every line of progress in this world. A spiral can also be broken down to two distinct geometric forms juxtaposed to each other. Its circular element stands for an incessant tendency to link the beginnings with ends and balance the opposites, whereby the linearly streaming aspect thereof shows us that only when we step out of the balance symbolized by a perfect circularity, yet stick to the latter, could we stream forward. In other words, “all

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<sup>1367</sup> See Stan Sakai’s Usagi Yojimbo (Book 22): Tomoe’s Story, Chapter VI: Chanoyu, Dark Horse Books, Milwaukie, OR (2008), pp. 157.

things from eternity are of like forms and come round in a circle”, as Marcus Aurelius noted down in his *Meditations*<sup>1368</sup>, while “life enters through one door and exits through another”, as a drunkard said to a filmmaker who told it to my Mom, alluding to the metaphor of life as a road, a journey toward the horizons of an unforeseen and unpredictable novelty, whereby we ought to embrace the process of change, adventurously and courageously, with all our heart. Yet, walking straight ahead is possible only insofar as we couple the circular movement of our feet to the linear propulsion of our trunk. Or, if we are a seafarer at heart, like myself, we could think of a message in a bottle or any other object floating on the water; as it drifts on a swell from the open sea to a coast and to an endearing heart waiting to open it, it follows a spiral trajectory when viewed from a direction perpendicular to its line of movement, meaning that the instances of approaching the coast and distancing from it alternate as the object proceeds toward its destination. This is to say that without making the ends ceaselessly revert to the beginnings and without bonding the head with the tail of the serpent that symbolizes life and our being in some alchemistic models, no conditions for truly progressive forward streams could be created. Similarly, whenever we find ourselves on a solely linear trail, deprived of anything that takes us back in one way or the other, we should revisit our path, for in the end we might conclude that it does not lead us to prosperous destinations. The same can be, of course, said for solely circular movements that merely spin us in circles, as degenerated and futile as the flight of a bird that flaps only one of its wings or a canoe paddler that uses the oar only on one side of the boat to propel it forward. When in the opening slide of the scientific presentation I gave at a congress in Strasbourg I wrote T. S. Eliot’s timeless verse “The end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started” in a circle, symbolizing the touch between the ends and the beginnings celebrated by all the masterful storytellers, before I did a cartwheel in the air so as to show how best to read this circular writing on the wall wherein some of the letters stood inverted and spilled myself on the floor, insinuating how shocking surprises and the habit of crashing habits are vital for the success of our scientific endeavors as much as sloppiness and freedom to bang our head into the wall time and time again are, I placed a star of the same color as that of a cell nucleus displayed on the preceding slide in the center of the circle and then the remaining part of the verse, “And know the place for the first time” straight into its heart. Thus I kept on weaving my story on the explicit level, while on the implicit one I subtly indicated that the workings of the cell, as well as of any harmonious living entity, are based on a balance between moving things in circle, repeating it all along an endless loop, reverting to itself so as to preserve integrity and fortress oneself, in essence, and always letting impulses that lead to innovative action spring forth from the core of our being and shine outwardly, against the habit, the routine and a myriad of clichés amidst our spirits swim across the sea of reality. For, verily, wherever we direct the sunrays of our glistening glances, we could discern something spiral in the sense of engraining the given synchrony between periodicity and novelty, the balance wherein the one between self-protective enfoldment and expressive outbursts of creativity, embraced by the concept of the Way of Love, lies dormant too.

When we find galaxies in the most miniscule details in life, we could know that we are streaming well along the line of systemic knowledge which takes us by the hand to see “a world in a grain of sand”<sup>1369</sup> and become one who brings the starry Universe, the greatest conceivable, and miniscule grains of sand, its atoms and molecules, that is, the tiniest things imaginable,

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<sup>1368</sup> See Marcus Aurelius Antonius’ *Meditations*, Penguin, London, UK (167 BC).

<sup>1369</sup> See William Blake’s *Auguries of Innocence*, In: *The Pickering Manuscript*, Kessinger Publishing, Whitefish, MT (1803).

together. The evangelical metaphor of the Christ's dividing five loafs and two fish among thousands of gatherers and managing to feed them all (Mark 6:35-44) has in my head always been a celestial reminder of the fact that even when we find ourselves in the most impoverished conditions, physically or intellectually, the door to glimpsing the shine of the beauty divine will always be present in the little details of the world, waiting to be opened if we only knew how to knock on them with a whole lot of love and fancy. Each detail of the world of our experience is the product of the dialogue between the essence of our being and the concealed essence of the grand Co-Creator, between the deepest questions that we hold within the cognitive foundations of ours and the subtle guiding voice of Nature, and its careful and dedicated inspection will always open the way to startlingly fulfilling insights. Scientific, aesthetic or philosophical examination of the tiniest and the most neglected seashore pebble opens the door to a universe of miraculously rich messages for the thriving of our beings in numerous other aspects of our existence. Hence, to keep the Universe as a whole in our heads, to awaken the grand sense of oneness with all that there is, and yet to lean our hearts close to the little creatures and objects of the world, is the way to bring the love and beauty divine down to earth for the happiness of living things that surround us as well as to make celestial angels from the heavenly planes smile like crescent moons as they take pleasure in the eruptions of beauty from our being for the benefit of all and everyone.

Once we descend low, becoming like an ocean that lets all the rivers flow into it, once we become so, so close to the little earthly details that we may encounter their essence and recognize their immense beauty, opening doors to many spiritual insights, we also climb up, up, up in our spirit, reaching stellar worldviews of a kind. It is thus that we become the evangelical source of the salt of the earth, shedding stardust of grace and beauty from these heavenly heights onto little details of the world, which once slipped off the railway of human thoughts as uninteresting and meaningless, but are thence returned in full strength to the eyes of humanity, with miraculously restored savor and appeal. Seeds from which the sprouts of divine awareness arise, transforming dull and disinterested looks into starry eyes holding sparkles of wonder and sunrays of love deep in their wells, are thus poured forth all over the face of the planet from these sublime cognitive vistas that we inhabit, washing it with angelic tears, the magical concoction of an unbound cosmic joy and an infinitely compassionate sadness. When we begin to see the world from one such sublime perceptual panorama from which we are aware that little details around us are like those "stones in which little suns that will illuminate us slumber", as in a Branko Miljković's song, our eyes and other senses become like suns, sending rays of attention from one detail of the world to another, never letting our consciousness fall to sleep and drag our spirit into slumbering and phlegmatic states. The latter sadly typify the dwellers of this planet so much that Béla Hamvas once suggested that the level up to which we are truly awakened and attentive can be used as an indicator of one's progress on the scale of spirituality. Our mind in one such perfectly attentive state, wherein one walks through the fields of the world like a secret agent, focusing on tiny details, knowing that each one of them may yield immense insights on the spy-like mission upon which we have embarked ourselves, may also be said to resemble a starry sky, where one after another twinkly star is lit as our wondrous curiosity swiftly shifts the rays of our attention across the entire celestial sphere in the center of which we levitate. Yet, a state of wide-awake and responsive dreaminess, which may be depicted as the sunset of the human mind whereby both the sun and the stars illuminate its skies, hides the secret of enlightening creativeness. Therefore, something that pulls us inward and makes us mildly absentminded, distant and dreamy is required to complete our mindset for the sake of crafting it to its perfection. And as the

Way of Love has suggested, an inward pull of attention that focuses its rays onto the center of the pot of our impressions, in which they are melted and forged into precious treasures of spirit, has to be in balance with the outward pull, which derives from the desire to shed the light of our spirit onto others and enlighten them thereby. In other words, if we are merely engaged in these shifts of attention without being able to look at the world like the horse keeper Po Lo does, recognizing what is to become a superb horse in an ordinary mule by meditatively seeing through with the superman-like rays of attention and intuitively correlating each insight with the spiritual glow inside our mind and heart, we would be only seeing trees after trees without ever grasping the forest as a whole. Hence, as a counterbalance to the force of Wonder, which sends our rays of attention in all directions at once, making our eyes resemble a sparkly sunlit surface of the sea on a sunny day, is posed the power of Love, which works to integrate the cognitive rays of our mind into a single core and instill a deep and soft, sun-like glow into our eyes. Together, they transform our mind into a beautiful sunset at the ocean shore, with both the sun of Love and the stars of Wonder illuminating it and the world alike.



If you ever see me tagging the city or school walls or ragingly breaking things apart while whistling “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen” (Revelation 18:2) or reconnoitering the semantic landscape around Sanai’s ancient verse, “Treasure abounds in ruins”<sup>1370</sup>, and dancing my heart out in rhythm with Voltaire’s dictum, “To build is beautiful, but to destroy is sublime”<sup>1371</sup>, wishing to whirl myself into an epitome of that Nietzschean chaos from which stars are born and yet ask me why I act so, I, a consecrated rebel in my heart of hearts, may swiftly turn around and ask *you* in turn if you have ever heard of the **theory of Ruin Value**. Ever since the image of the state of the world, in all its falseness and exile from godliness, albeit pervaded with heavenly beauties all throughout it, began to crystallize inside my head, I have been aware of the necessity to ruin the walls erected by the society in order to restore the godly order I have dreamt of. My most popular essay written as a high school kid, a kid that was because of living in a war-torn country more of a grownup than most grownups elsewhere in the world, was an emotional argument in favor of the necessity to ruin the actual order, in sweat and tears, before something holy and consecrated can be brought to life in its place. As of that day, the punk in me, be it in the world of science or daily communications, has strived to leave the impression akin to that jotted down by a fan over the performance of Patti Smith in London’s Roundhouse in 1976, the year I was born: “Listening to her was like watching palaces fall and old documents burn, cities collapsing in great clouds of rubble, and an entire way of life being put to the sword. But it was not murder, it was a mercy killing, and, once the dust had settled, they would be rebuilt and replaced, by something new, something better, by something that *we* created, the youth of the day, the kids on the street, the brats who didn’t want to clamber aboard Mick Farren’s vision of

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<sup>1370</sup> The verse is from Sanai’s *Hadiqat*, p. 347, line 3 and is quoted in *Signs of the Unseen: the Discourses of Jalaluddin Rumi*, Introduction and Translation by W. M. Thackston, Jr., Shambhala, Boston, MA (1994), pp. 129.

<sup>1371</sup> See Nina L. Dubin’s *Futures & Ruins: Eighteenth-Century Paris and the Art of Hubert Robert*, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA (2010), pp. 69.

the imminent musical apocalypse”<sup>1372</sup>. Besides, in order to allow the physical systems to evolve, order and chaos in them must be precisely balanced, which brings to mind that the secret behind the moving character of Van Gogh’s sunflowers has lain in the Dutch artist’s turning the floral arrangements into floral disarrangements to some extent and showing the flowers in a borderline state between living and dying, just the way still life, to live up to its etymological nature, ought to be, echoing in the distance Arthur Rimbaud’s prime principle of poetry, which is “to reach the unknown by the derangement of all the senses”<sup>1373</sup>, and transmitting the subliminal message that no greatness could be attained without the artist’s deranging oneself in the course of composing a piece of art as well as that allowing oneself to be deranged in contact with a piece of art is a prerequisite for becoming enriched by it down to the darkest depths of one’s soul. “When you spend months on a tempera, you’ve got to watch out the mind doesn’t take over the emotion. I do wild things – if somebody saw me, they’d think I was nuts, ruining it. Then I haul it back in, bring the forms and bones into reality and shapes – refine it. If it’s all just a placid development, to hell with that. You’ll get a normal, regular painting”<sup>1374</sup>, the realist painter and the accentuator of an authentic American loneliness, Andrew Wyeth pointed out, inviting artists from all walks of life to engage in similar alternations between composition and decomposition as routes to the divinest products of creative work. One of them was the German painter Wolf Vostell, as when he developed the techniques such as Blur or *Décollage*, the latter of which was based on tearing and rupturing a prefabbed paste-up, as if to say that only through such act of composed destruction can the essence lying underneath the multilayered surface of reality get exposed and freed with all its sacramental energies into the world. In an old Zen story, therefore, when an Emperor showed to the sage how his garden looks impeccably tidy and ordered, the sage took a can full of leaves and tossed them all over the ground, proclaiming: “Now it looks perfect”. In the same spirit, the Christ called for wheat and tares to grow together, side by side, until the harvest (Matthew 13:24-30), something which postmodern gardeners who know the extent to which weed balances the mineral content of the soil would readily agree with, distantly echoing the divine words uttered by Dhul-Qarnain right after the wall between two mountain-cliffs was built to separate the good and fertile land from that of Gog and Magog, pervaded with wickedness and seeds of malignancy: “This is a mercy from my Lord, but when the promise of my Lord comes, He shall level it down to the ground. And the promise of my Lord is ever true” (Al-Kahf 98)<sup>1375</sup>. Evoking a similar sentiment, the Christ uttered once in front of his followers that he “shall destroy (this) house, and no one will be able to rebuild it” (Thomas 71), building in them the image of walls that separate us from one another, crumbling down with a horrific roar so as to open space for an unblocked shine of our spirits that will be free then to connect with every soul in their proximity and shed their lifesaving lights on them. To pose earthshakingly perilous crepuscules side by side with the day-breaking shininess of the divine spirit in us has, in fact, been a standard recipe applied by artists, including Nature herself, in attempts to highlight the latter and raise its value to enormous heights, something that expressions of it and it only would never be able to result in. Therefore, no city has touched my heart as deeply as Calcutta, for nowhere did I come across a combination of the fecundity of life and its decay at display

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<sup>1372</sup> See Dave Thompson’s *London’s Burning: True Adventures on the Front Lines of Punk, 1976 – 1977*, Chicago Review Press, Chicago, IL (2009), pp. 13.

<sup>1373</sup> See Arthur Rimbaud’s letter to Georges Izambard (May 13, 1871), retrieved from

<https://www.dispatchespoetrywars.com/documents/arthur-rimbaud-to-georges-izambard-13-may-1871/>.

<sup>1374</sup> See Wanda M. Corn’s *The Art of Andrew Wyeth*, New York Graphic Society, Greenwich, CN (1973), pp. 56.

<sup>1375</sup> The story along with interpretations could be found in Ibn Katheer’s *Stories of the Quran*, Translated by Ali As-Sayed Al-Halawani, available at [www.islambasics.com/index.php?act=download&BID=80](http://www.islambasics.com/index.php?act=download&BID=80) (8<sup>th</sup> Century AD).

amongst architecturally marvelous neocolonial ruins in such magnificent proportions as in it, serving as the ultimate epitome of Ivo Andrić's view of the Orient as "a wonderful miracle and the greatest horror, a place where the boundary between life and death is not clearly defined, but rather curls and quivers"<sup>1376</sup>, and being, I believe, the aesthetic reason why Mother Teresa chose it as the site for her missionary work. Also, nowhere did drawing houses with crayons on asphalt appear more touching and beautiful than on the famous Fischer footage<sup>1377</sup> of a boy sitting on the streets of Cologne, right next to the city rubble and peacefully painting the ground, somewhat similar to the popular image of Archimedes drawing his circles in front of vicious Roman legionaries who were there on a mission to wipe them all. "Albeit ruined, it is beautiful"<sup>1378</sup>, the words of an inhabitant of Vukovar, the city that suffered immensely during the recent civil war in Yugoslavia, pronounced in the midst of its fall, then echo in my head, plucking tears from the flowery walls of my soul as they bounce off them. They also revive my memory of how in Wajdi Mouawad's *Scorched*, the only people who remember the miseries of war and pave the road to celestial goodness by staying away from the vicious circle of causing distress to oneself and another and true to the guiding star that insists on never using hatred as a guide are always portrayed in oneness with the ruins of the war, leaning their backs on them, as if conjoining in compassion with every atom of their bodies, distantly evoking the shadows left permanently imprinted on disintegrating Hiroshima stonewalls by silhouettes of spirit resting against them in the moment of explosion of the A-bomb. Thus I bring to mind the splendor of Albert Speer's theory of Ruin Value, according to which buildings, or quite possibly all other pieces of human creativity, should be made to degrade into aesthetically pleasing ruins, the concept which he applied in the architectural planning for the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, having held Parthenon and other ancient ruinous monuments as the ideal to be reached. Another native Berliner and Speer's contemporary who weaved his philosophical views around the image of the ruins was Walter Benjamin. Unlike Speer, however, he did not exactly see ruins as an aesthetic modality, but rather as an archetypal metaphor of the human thought and of humanity itself, as perpetuated by his famous vision of the angel of history, later evoked in Wim Wenders' *Der Himmel über Berlin*, a celestial being who, thanks to its enormous empathy, always looks back with the wish to restore what has been ruined, but whose wings get caught in the storm from Paradise called "progress", which blows him forward, "into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward"<sup>1379</sup>. Albeit marginalized in the wake after World War II because of Speer's political affiliations, his theory continued to thrive in the hearts of Berlin punks who began to live in the 1970s up to the ideal of *Einstürzende Neubauten*<sup>1380</sup>, the movement preoccupied with introducing flowery fragileness into postwar buildings endowed with a sense of sterile plasticity and perfection. Today it thrives in my heart, which you would always find squatted, squeaking with happiness not in a plastic, snooty, glossy, cookie cutter part of town wherein every brick lies at the right place and all is about one row of "Gucci, Gucci, Louis, Louis, Fendi, Fendi, Prada"<sup>1381</sup> after another, but on streets such as those bordering Hualing Park in the Jiantan neighborhood of Taipei, whereon crumbly, must-laden,

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<sup>1376</sup> See Ivo Andrić's *Signs by the Roadside*, Prosveta, Belgrade, Serbia (1976).

<sup>1377</sup> See the History Channel's documentary *The Third Reich: Rise and Fall* (2010).

<sup>1378</sup> See the B92 documentary entitled *The Last Cut: Vukovar*; available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUPu4LhPI6I&feature=related> (2007).

<sup>1379</sup> See Walter Benjamin's *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (1940), In: *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt, Translated by Leon Wieseltier, Schocken Books, New York, NY (2007).

<sup>1380</sup> "Collapsing New Buildings" would be the literal translation of this German phrase.

<sup>1381</sup> Listen to Kreyshawn's *Gucci Gucci on Somethin' 'Bout Krey*, Columbia (2011).

blackened-by-smog facades sheltering worn-out rustics in houses hugged by the goddesses of ruins meet sanguine orchids, succulent mullein rosettes and the lush of life at its best. My heart does not leap in ecstasy in sterilely planned American urban places wherein everything is geometrically uniform, places which are as monotonous as Californian sandy beaches, but in those wherein one could find the contrast between decay and the indestructible force of life rising from it and overcoming it, those wherein wheat and tar grow side by side, those wherein death and life are entwined so tightly that any animosities between the two have ceased to exist. Rather, visual details such as those decorating almost every little street in the jaw-dropping northern and central parts of Calcutta, including the one where the impeccably polished and glossy Methodist episcopal church on Lenin Sarani borders a beautiful neocolonial ruin on its left, are those that touch my heart deeply and animate my spirit down to its deepest core, making my jaw drop and dizzying my mind all the while, as if it has become immersed in a sea of stars or reached the highest scale of Stendhal's syndrome. As I stand by these utterly dialectical sceneries, it is as if the barrage of contrasts emerging from them plainly cuts this poor heart of mine in two and allows the mysterious lights populating its insides to rise to the surface and bring unutterable bliss to their deeply humbled bearer. For, without ruins, really, nothing, really nothing can have a radiance that enchants the soul with the beauty divine in the universe of my perceptions and understanding of the world. Therefore, "I bring ghetto to the gold coast" is what Bob Marley said when he was asked why he lived on 56 Hope Road, only two blocks away from the Jamaican prime minister<sup>1382</sup>, and that is exactly what I would tell you too if you were ever to see me in my dark, chaos-casting mood in a sterile, posh, shipshape, sardined scene where conservatism and conventionality are worshipped like some devilish demigods, firmly believing that to ruin is to create when things have become orderly to the point of tiptop sterility. Although some may notice that construction and growth of anything in life is lengthy and painstakingly detailed, while the destruction and the decline usually occur suddenly and rapidly, without much focus and planning beforehand, this need not be so, in support of which I might evoke in the ragged lounges of my memory the brickwall of a three-story house on the corner of Adelaide and Duncan in downtown Toronto. This wall, the only part of a house that once stood there that remained erect, I watched mesmerized for an hour or two in summer sunshine and rain as it got slowly razed by the bulldozers, excavators, hydraulic shears and wrecking balls, realizing for the first time that destruction can be as meticulous and intricate as the creation, especially when it is an integral part of the latter process. Accordingly, sometimes I wonder if the grandiose creativity of Antonio Gaudi, who found the utmost splendor in organic asymmetry, anarchic geometric forms and, quite often, dingy raggedness, which he eventually fell victim to when he was mistaken for a beggar after being tragically hit by a tram on Barcelona's Gran Via, the longest street in Spain, would have been sparked had he not been born in a ruinous house with a tilted roof. And just like the cities would begin to breathe once again with the energy *feng shui* masters have mysteriously sensed to flow through harmoniously designed houses, domes, halls and whole cityscapes if their overly symmetrical and ordered, orthogonal and grid-like structures and superstructures were to be transformed into something more orderly disordered and tidily disheveled, like the expressionist scenography of the Cabinet of Dr. Caligari where oblique is the rule and straight the exception, resembling forms that comprise natural landscapes, from trees to clouds to shimmery sea surfaces to drifty sand dunes to human faces when tears of devotion run down their tenderly trembling cheeks, so would the inspirational potential of our beings benefit

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<sup>1382</sup> Watch Marley, a documentary film directed by Kevin Macdonald (2015). "I am bringing the ghetto uptown" is another version of Marley's saying per Who Shot the Sheriff? Documentary directed by Kief Davidson (2018).

from crushing our habits to pieces, habits that confine our endless potentials to amaze with innovative moves, moves that are capable of engraining mountains of emotiveness in them, to cold and all-but-inspiring, zombie-like behavioral narrowness. The renowned acting instructor, Eugenio Barba has thus considered the mental and physical state of Disorder wherein all the habits and behavioral clichés stand erased as the one that enables the actor to become “a bridge between the two extremes: the incursion into the machine of the body and an opening for the irruption of an energy that shatters the limits of the body”<sup>1383</sup>. This approach to mastering the art of acting Barba crafted while working as Jerzy Grotowski’s first apprentice in Opole, at the Institute for Research into Acting where Jerzy had built a system of teaching that revolved around the cosmic concept of *via negativa* defined as “not a collection of skills but an eradication of blocks”, the goal of which was the awakening of “the requisite state of mind... in which one does not ‘want to do that’ but rather ‘resigns from not doing it’”, to which end “the education of an actor... is not a matter of teaching him something; we attempt to eliminate his organism’s resistance to this psychic process”<sup>1384</sup>. Thus, according to Andre Gregory, an ace in the art of acting aimed at self-sacrificially annulling itself for the sake of incarnating the art of being, free from any goals and pretenses, a road into the Sun whose every brick is made of here and now, the Scottish mathematician and occultist, Robert Ogilvie Crombie, a.k.a. ROC, advised his left-handed adherents to strictly write with the right hand and *vice versa*<sup>1385</sup>, wishing to make it a habit for them to act so as to break all the habits and eventually emerge from the Maya world of fantasy into the blissful reality of being. Hence, when Hajime, one of the protagonists of Hou Hsiao-Hsien’s movie *Café Lumière*, the quiet, Ozuesque homage to the aesthetics of natural landscape and situations untouched by the hand of human pretense or theatrical prejudices<sup>1386</sup>, drew a celestial creature conceived in the midst of an imaginary womb created by ramshackle railway tracks, somewhere deep within the thick and multilayered semantic skin of his message he wished to encourage us to make sure that in our head exists the room for disordered jiggling and jaggling of the contents of our mental sphere, of our visions, memories and steamy veils of emotions; for, not where things smoothly glide along predetermined tracks of thought, but out there, where order and chaos are equally represented are the greatest things in this life being born, from stars to stellar worldviews to magnificent pieces of human creativity. Thereupon, the most captivating nativity scene I have ever come across could easily be the one decorating the church of Our Lady of the Mount and St. Gent, lying on the highest vista of Lisbon, a.k.a. Miradouro de Senhora do Monte, in the heart of its Graça district, and being dominated by dark tinges and portentous shades in spite of depicting the most joyful of all historical events, the birth

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<sup>1383</sup> See Anthony Frost’s and Ralph Yarrow’s *Improvisation in Drama*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY (2007), pp. 220 - 221.

<sup>1384</sup> See Jerzy Grotowski’s *Towards a Poor Theater*, edited by Eugenio Barba, Routledge, New York, NY (1968), pp. 16 - 17.

<sup>1385</sup> *Watch My Dinner with Andre* directed by Louis Malle (1981).

<sup>1386</sup> Hsiao-Hsien’s movies exemplify the fundamental difference in the aesthetics of the traditional and modern European and Asian approach to artistic expression. Namely, whereas packing the watcher with emotions and the induction of an emotional turmoil inside of its soul is most often seen as the fulfillment of the purpose of an artistic expression in Europe, liberation from emotion and the induction of a peace and pureness of the mind, before which no worries would exist anymore, is most often seen as the goal of an artistic expression in Oriental arts. To set the consumer of the piece of art on fire, make his insides explode with the firework of emotions and inspire him for a similarly exuberant action vs. to subtract emotionality and then carefully uproot any leftover emotions inside one and turn one’s state of mind into a finely leveled, meditatively placid sea sensitive to the slightest movement, such as the symbolic click of a cap separated from its pen in *Taipei Story*, is the difference in the intended outcome between European and Asian arts, respectively.

of the Christ, suggesting that from the coalescence of the colossal wish to bear new life and its inevitable decay into ashes and grime do the most stellar seeds of this life come to being. Therefore, to shatter things apart when we feel that they have become overly structured and organized as well as to bring order to them when they have begun to dissipate in chaos and disharmony, all so as to keep them fluctuating around the ultimate systemic balance between balance and imbalance, is the mission that all the blissful creatures of this universe have been on.



From left to right, top to bottom: Giotto's figure of the Almighty from the Scenes from the life of Christ and the Virgin in the Arena Chapel in Padua (1302 – 1305); Giotto's Miracle of the Crucifix from the Upper Church of Assisi (1291 – 1294); a detail from the Ovetari Chapel in the Church of the Hermits in Padua (1448 – 1457); Frederic Edwin Church's Ruins at Baalbek (1868), and the personally photographed two details from the nativity

scene in the Church of Our Lady of the Mount and St. Gent in Lisbon, showing the newborn Christ lying in a straw crib in-between a pair or ruined pillars.

From the stillness of the architecture and the tranquility of gardening to the rapturous vivacity of dancing and back to the still order of crystallographic symmetries I go to show you how the balance of the two is what matters most in life. For, things ought to be constantly modulated with their opposites in order to maintain freshness and prevent our awareness from drifting off into blind spots of perception, the process that naturally occurs anytime we end up gazing for too long at single, unchanging details of reality. Hence, back I go musing over the glorious marble statues and crumbly pale facades, sun-bronzed Greek goddesses and rusty fences that decorate the cityscapes in which the azure, stardust-shedding silhouette of my spirit dwells. So, Château de Montépilloy, a glorious ruin on the edge of a forest just north of Paris<sup>1387</sup>, standing tall and piercing the clouds with one wall only and barely a piece of a dome, letting the void speak for infinity and for the rise to heavenly orders, I usually declare the most beautiful tower as well as a castle I have ever seen, while in attempt to announce the most beautiful church I have ever entered, my lips once pronounced the name of the Church of the Hermits in Padua, my most beloved Italian city and the site of one of my classic pilgrimages<sup>1388</sup>. Wondering why I made this choice afterwards, I came to conclusion that such a lasting impression on me must have been made by the oldness and dustiness of its ruined walls, pale frescoes with missing pieces and hardly recognizable features, bare shadows of Mantegna's wall paintings illustrating the life of St. James that once counted "among the greatest works of art of all time"<sup>1389</sup>, all hanging on crumbly walls, cracked, shattered and dangling upon slightest touch, demolished at the hour of bombing by the allies in World War II. Like the sculpture of the Virgin Mary in the Breezy Point neighborhood of the New York borough of Queens, right after the hurricane nicknamed Sandy swished by her, leaving her miraculously intact amidst a sea of shattered and blazed debris, or that of the ephemeral Blue Fairy, lying at the bottom of the artistic vision of the future of this metropolis, flooded by the rising sea levels, but standing still like the Christ of the Abyss on the Mediterranean seafloor off the coast of San Fruttuoso, into which David, the robot from the movie A.I., the modern version of the timeless tale about a boy named Pinocchio, with a Wonder Wheel fallen onto his vehicle, tirelessly gazes for two thousand years, so have the bluish wall paintings depicting the Holy Mother rarely ever appeared as touching as in this church, when contrasted with the demolished surrounding in which they are found. While we are still in the city of Padua, the one wherein Giotto's artistry reached its apex in the early 14<sup>th</sup> Century, we should recollect the famed Arena Chapel, with the most fascinating face frescoed on its wall being the chiaroscuro-shaded figure of the Almighty, occupying a central place in the chapel, in the midst of the lunette in the triumphal arch, and owing its impressiveness exactly to the grazed surface where his hair would have lain. Similarly, if we were teleported in the blink of an eye to the Upper Church in the city of Assisi where Giotto's earlier artistic period came to fruition, we might realize that the most fascinating detail from the life of St. Francis painted on its walls is that of Miracle of the Crucifix, showing the haloed saint kneeling before the crucified Christ in the church of San Damiano, whose parts of the roof and a whole front wall were demolished and misted by the passage of time. In one of his annual essays on art, *Salon de 1767*,

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<sup>1387</sup> Watch *Sans Soleil*, a French documentary film directed by Chris Marker (1983).

<sup>1388</sup> 'twas a pilgrimage to hear Pilgrimage by R.E.M. on Stadio Euganeo in Padua, the voyage of which took me floatingly, on a heat wave, over many days and nights, left and right across the northern Italian landscapes, from as urbane as Milano, Bologna, Verona and Venice to as rural as Arquà Petrarca.

<sup>1389</sup> See E. H. Gombrich's *The Story of Art*, Fifteenth Edition, Phaidon Press, London, UK (1989), pp. 259.

Denis Diderot mused on the beauty of Hubert Robert's paintings wherein ruins always occupied a central place and went on to elaborate a "poetics of ruins"<sup>1390</sup> by noticing that, in the spirit of the artist sitting calmly between colonnades in one of Robert's landmark works and painting the statue of the Pythian Apollo that stood still and intact under the caved roof of the Grand Gallery of the Louvre in Ruins, "ruins set one dreaming", of the past and of the future alike, while "epitomizing the death of continuity"<sup>1391</sup> and, as such, serving to rouse us from the tedious rhythm of habitual existence by denoting an undying dynamics and change, such as that present on the atomic scale, in every seemingly still and static object, thus contrasting the stupefyingly monotonous standard architectural worldviews<sup>1392</sup>, as well as playing a dissenting role by signifying something profoundly wrong in the makeup of the materialistic machinery of the mankind when all it ends up as is "ravages and rubble"<sup>1393</sup>, making us logically wonder all along if no art could be complete without embedding an element of ruins within its expressions. It may be that exactly these Diderot's musings echoed in the mind of René Louis de Girardin when he approached the construction of the Temple of the Philosophy in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's park in the first French landscape garden at Ermenonville in the early 1770s and intentionally made it look like a ruin, with a missing portion of the circular roof and signs of wear impressed on every side of it, as if it got struck by fire, a torrent and an earthquake all at once, on top of which he ordered a broken Tuscan pillar to be left at the temple's base with an inscription on it, *Quis hoc perficiet*<sup>1394</sup>. Then, the Portuguese masons did a service to the gods of aesthetics when they opted not to fully renovate the Church of Santo Domingo in Lisbon, the city of gorgeous architecture but excessive façade facelifts<sup>1395</sup>, following its substantial damage in two earthquakes and a fire in the last 500 years, leaving it in a partially ruined state instead, with fading colors and stone columns separating the frescoes visibly hollowed, crumbling under the pressure of time, and, as such, allowing it to convey the idea that spirit is greater and more fundamental than matter and that the shine of godliness can be released from our hearts even when the features of the physical world are being crushed to pieces with immaculate effectiveness. Conversely, I have maintained that nothing can ruin an edifice as a shortsighted renovation that endows it with a fresh, unicolored facade, brand new metallic handrails, plasticized eaves and polished stairs and elevators, the reason for which some European capitals have, in my opinion, transformed their amazing architectural heritage and an artistically appealing visage into something quite sterile and unpleasing for the eye. "To the building materials used today, despite their most scrupulous selection and fashionable fetishization, there adheres a peculiar sterility, such that the buildings

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<sup>1390</sup> See Denis Diderot's Salon of 1767, In: Diderot on Art, edited and translated by John Goodman, Yale University press, New Haven, CN (1767).

<sup>1391</sup> See Nina L. Dubin's Futures & Ruins: Eighteenth-Century Paris and the Art of Hubert Robert, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA (2010), pp. 44.

<sup>1392</sup> "Let us imagine the impossible: let us imagine the world – sickened though it is by everything that does not change from day to day – were gracefully to acknowledge your monotony; what would architecture then become", wondered Giovanni Battista Piranesi in one of his tractates. The quote was found in Nina L. Dubin's Futures & Ruins: Eighteenth-Century Paris and the Art of Hubert Robert, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA (2010), pp. 109.

<sup>1393</sup> See Denis Diderot's Salon of 1767, In: Diderot on Art, edited and translated by John Goodman, Yale University press, New Haven, CN (1767).

<sup>1394</sup> This can be translated as a question "Who will complete this" or "Who can perfect this".

<sup>1395</sup> 'Tis the city of the world's most miniature balconies and perpetually closed windows too, as I often christen Lisbon, subtly alluding to the mentality of its inhabitants and Portuguese people in general, typified by an uptightly sealed surface below which the characteristic Iberian passions boil and crave to escape

appear like so many rouged corpses, mummies cosmetically tarted up”<sup>1396</sup>, mused Durs Grünbein, evoking the same sentiment of disappointment in artificial edifices deprived of the spirit of naturally ruinous and radiantly dissipating. It is for this reason that the punk *bona fide* in me claims that art is preserved not by renovating the old, ruinous monuments of the past, but by demolishing the sterilely clean and polished products of modernity. Quite concordantly, at the entrance to the SF Exploratorium, one of the seats of the muses of scientific wonder in this city, founded by Frank Oppenheimer, the wizard and a visionary to whom knowing how to break the rules was the starting point of creativity, inside of a rotating column, behind a magnifying glass, the words excerpted from a 1977 San Francisco Chronicle article by Herb Caen, the man who coined the term “beatnik”, cut from a yellowish and dusty newspaper, inviting us to realize that things could be indeed restored by ruining them, stand written: “As for the esthetic aspects of this berling controversy, I think the Rock should be allowed to go to rack and ruin. Every city should have a ruin”<sup>1397</sup>. Museums, after all, one could argue, ought to lie in ruins themselves considering the ruined items from times long gone exhibited in them, lest they be worthy of an accusation for architectural hypocrisy. The French painter, Jean-Baptiste-Pierre le Brun thus conceived of the Louvre at around the time of its opening in 1793 as a monument that could be made complete only “by an image of a ruin”<sup>1398</sup>, arguing that “the dust of Athens is still sought after by savants and artists for the beautiful debris of its mutilated monuments”<sup>1399</sup> and the world’s largest museum, in his opinion, should have been created as a ruin in the first place rather than waiting to be made beautiful only after its ruination by the passage of time and the wheels of human history. Moreover, along the line of another formulator of “the romantic theory of the ruin as a moment of sublime equilibrium between man’s heavenward stretch and nature’s downward pull”<sup>1400</sup>, Georg Simmel’s thought that “ruins mark the restoration of unity between nature and spirit”<sup>1401</sup>, pervasion of the aesthetics of ruination all through the web of artistic creations of the humankind may be the starting point of liberating fine arts from their confinement to cold museum atria and lofty galleries of “an inaccessible, prejudiced ivory tower”<sup>1402</sup> and releasing them out into the world, where they have belonged in the first place, the mission on which countless conceptual artists and art critics have been, from John Dewey, who asserted that “the contents of galleries and museums... weakened or destroyed the connection between works of art and the genius loci of which they were once the natural expression”<sup>1403</sup>, to Marcel Duchamp and Andy Warhol, whose urinal and Campbell soups, respectively, were to demonstrate the everyday nature of the most fabulous pieces of art, the enjoyment of which need not be entailed by the organized visitations of art repositories, and then all the way to Banksy, whose art is all about freeing itself from the economic ties of greed and the egotistic ties of glory and bringing it back to the natural contexts from which it was once dissociated by those who

<sup>1396</sup> See Durs Grünbein’s *The Bars of Atlantis*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, NY (2010), pp. 198.

<sup>1397</sup> The quote is from Herb Caen’s article *Patter of a Tiny Mind*, San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle/Sunday Punch (January 9, 1977).

<sup>1398</sup> See Nina L. Dubin’s *Futures & Ruins: Eighteenth-Century Paris and the Art of Hubert Robert*, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA (2010), pp. 156.

<sup>1399</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1400</sup> See Douglas Murphy’s *Ruins: Beautiful Decay*, Architects Journal (November 17, 2011), available at <http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/culture/ruins-beautiful-decay/8622647.article>.

<sup>1401</sup> See Georg Simmel’s *The Ruin* (1911), In: *Essays on Sociology, Philosophy, and Aesthetics*, edited by Kurt H. Wolff, Harper & Row, New York, NY (1965), pp. 260 – 263.

<sup>1402</sup> See Alexxa Gotthardt’s *Jean-Michel Basquiat on How to Be an Artist*, Artsy (June 6, 2019), retrieved from <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-artist-jean-michel-basquiat>.

<sup>1403</sup> See John Dewey’s *Art as Experience*, Berkley Publishing Group, New York, NY (1934), pp. 9.

wished to protect it by depriving it of the flights across the unbound worldly skies and slamming it instead inside of birdcages of a kind, the cages whose prison bars and portcullises, as we know now, are to be hardheartedly crushed. With these thoughts swirling in our minds, the co-creationists as we are may begin to engage in creative acts whereupon ruination will be coupled to edification and whereupon emptiness, left so as to be filled by the other side in communication, will stand paired with exuberant fullness, all until one is made to flow from the heart of another, as depicted in the celebrated Tai-Chi-Tu emblem.

And so, in the spirit of the marvelous theory of Ruin Value, following the steps of genuine Berlin punks with paint cans and brushes, guerrilla gardeners with spades and watering cans, dumpster divers who have known that piles of trash, things neglected and tossed aside by the mainstreams of humanity are where greatest treasures are to be found, and our witty Zen master waiting watchfully with a can full of leaves, standing next to the shadow of Shunryu Suzuki, the seeker of wisdom in the commonplace things that happened to be tossed aside by the blind followers of the path of global carelessness, who maintained that “for Zen students, a weed, which for most people is worthless, is a treasure”<sup>1404</sup>, whenever I find myself in an overly sterilely organized environment, my immediate urge is to restore the balance and aesthetic harmony by channeling chaotic impulses through it and dispersing stardust of dizzying disorderliness all across the fields of its impeccable, sunshiny tidiness. For, I have known that tares and wheat ought to be grown side by side, lest the wheat withers, as well as that “all action of man is a mixture of creation and destruction”<sup>1405</sup>, as Martin Buber claimed, and that, therefore, raising is to be accompanied by razing at all times, lest our creative energies disappear down the drain. I have also kept the firm memory of Robert Schumann’s composing his most revolutionary musical piece, the first movement of Fantasia in C, Op. 17, in which he pushed tonality to new levels by avoiding the tonic for the first 297 bars of the 308-bar-long piece<sup>1406</sup>, under the name Ruins, so as to insinuate that his goal was to destroy in it the many concepts embraced dogmatically by the composers of his day. Eventually, after Ruins symbolically came Triumphal Arch and Starry Crown as titles for the following two movements of the Fantasia, which, as a whole, Schumann would name ★ ★ ★, a unconventional act that was to earn him a big fat decline by the publisher and even prompt his wife and public relations manager, Clara to remove the piece from the concert repertoire altogether because of the negative response by the listeners<sup>1407</sup>. The effect Schumann caused by this subtle etymological trick, however, ended up being much more valuable than the petty events surrounding the social reaction to it, instructing all those who have a keen sense on how to read between the lines that the old and the stale in any human discipline must be ruined with as much poetic sensibility as Schumann wove into his Fantasia before the new style and fresher order of things could be installed in their place. When it comes to my Quixotic engagements in the scientific domain, I have been certain that a grandiose act of ruination is needed before today’s science, sick to the core, can be revitalized and turned into something beautiful once again, the reason for which I have made it a rule to at least once in each scientific paper or philosophical essay of mine lose my mind for an instant, say goodbye to

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<sup>1404</sup> See Gillian Whiteley’s *Junk: Art and the Politics of Trash*, I. B. Tauris, London, UK (2011), pp. 27.

<sup>1405</sup> Read Martin Buber’s *On Polarity: Dialogue After the Theater*, In: *Martin Buber and the Theater*, edited and translated by Maurice Friedman, Funk & Wagnalls, New York, NY (1969), pp. 72.

<sup>1406</sup> See Jeffrey C. Smith’s *Analysis of Bartók String Quartet #5*, retrieved from the repository of the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics at Stanford University:  
<https://ccrma.stanford.edu/~jchrsmt/Papers/bartokno5v6.pdf>.

<sup>1407</sup> *Ibid.*

logic and sanity and flop into the waters of incoherency where all machines cease to work and begin to rust and where we come to remember that we are humans, an insight wherefrom the dozy creative forces in us may begin to awake. And if Kool Herc succeeded in giving birth to a whole new musical genre that branched out into some of the most powerful streams of popular music, a.k.a. hip-hop, by making music strictly out of the breakdown moments of disco and funk tunes, at the sound of which most other DJs in those days switched to another record on the turntable<sup>1408</sup>, I strongly believe that these breakdown moments in my academic writings and other trains of thoughts, be it verbalized or abstracted, could become the sources of new styles and momenta in science, the dawn of brighter days in it, as it were, if they only became amplified and perceived as guiding lights that would help us emerge back on the Kerouac's road toward freedom rather than plain rubbish. This is to say that just like subtraction, elimination and differentiation are coupled to addition, accumulation and integration in every complex real-life operation, in every construction, "some destructions are necessary"<sup>1409</sup>, as Arthur Rimbaud cried out loudly, with clinched fists, when he saw two fallen lime trees in his beloved garden in the park called *Le Bois d'Amour*. Or, as Slavoj Žižek noticed while analyzing the ideological corollary of the romanticized version of the story of the Titanic<sup>1410</sup>, the way it was presented in James Cameron's movie, sometimes a destruction of a state is necessary to preserve its most sublime undercurrents, those which have instilled true life to it. Without this destruction, the given state would have evolved into something stale and insipid, whereas the sublime values on which it rested would have become deemed as passé and drowned into oblivion; hence, the idea of eternal love, which would have faded away, like most teenage crushes, had the Titanic not crashed and had Rose truly "gotten off" in New York City with Jack, remained to live in the hearts of the millions, inspiring at the same Rose for "a life of freedom and adventure"<sup>1411</sup>, exactly because the ship they were on split into two and sunk to the bottom of the ocean on a cold April night. Therefore, sometimes obliterating the surface, in the spirit of Christ's overturning tables at the entrance to a Jerusalem temple (John 2:15), is the way to preserve the divinity of the foundations and sometimes overturning the foundations of the systems that we stand on, resembling the role of Shiva who alternately creates and destroys the worldly edifices so as to sustain their uninterrupted evolution, is the way to bring blossom and prosperity to it. As is usually the case in this quirky world of ours wherein tumbling down topsy-turvily is the way to enter real wonderlands in our explorations of cosmic pastures<sup>1412</sup> and wherein all prosperous things turn themselves upside down every now and then, suggesting that only through making constant summersaults and cartwheels could we evolve forward, in search of gods, the greatest personas we could imagine out there, covering the entire skies and whole universes with their infinite being, the best we could do is to behold children, the littlest human spirits we could sympathize with. For, having no sense of attachment to achievements of their ego, to children this balance between constructing and deconstructing comes as natural as sunshine, which I can attest to by spending hours enticed by the lighthearted easiness and grace with which sixteen-month old Theo would knock down blocks he had stacked into a towering structure just seconds

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<sup>1408</sup> Watch Hip-Hop Evolution documentary, Episode #1: The Foundation, directed by Darby Wheeler, HBO Canada (2016).

<sup>1409</sup> See Enid Starkie's Arthur Rimbaud, New Directions, New York, NY (1961), pp. 72.

<sup>1410</sup> Watch The Pervert's Guide to Ideology directed by Sophie Fiennes (2012).

<sup>1411</sup> See the Wikipedia article on the 1997 film Titanic, retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titanic\\_%281997\\_film%29](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titanic_%281997_film%29) (2015).

<sup>1412</sup> See Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865), retrieved from <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/carroll/lewis/alice/index.html>.

ago in spite of the unutterably elating and radiant sense of accomplishment that the successful act of building a complex object arose in him. Like Picasso painting a deconstructed violin<sup>1413</sup> to make the point that every violin in our eyes is a subjective construction, calling for this process to be as beautiful as it can be, so has the ultimate semantic aim of every destructive act in the hands of Theo and other children been to point at the beauty of creation. Or, as Theo, now nearly a seven-year old boy, said when asked why he still resorted to the habit of crushing the intricate structures seconds after he assembled them in his playroom, only to rebuild them and break them yet again, “Because breakers and makers”, surreptitiously giving the grisly grownups the clue that meaningful destruction is an integral aspect of every sublime creation. Now, transfer what you see in children onto any other existential or epistemic domain and you will undoubtedly be rewarded with a true guiding star to help you navigate your way through them. Thus, for example, we should be sure that erasing impressions from the whiteboard of our memory is as vital as engraving them on it, while no music of life could have arisen had it not been for the alternate absorptions and releases of stress and other forms of energy by its bearers. Then, what the vital role that philosophy plays in sustaining scientific endeavors on sound and stable bases teaches us is that incessant deconstruction in terms of tireless digging through the metaphysical and axiomatic foundations of systems in question is required for their solidity and strength to be preserved at all times. Therefore, all harmoniously built edifices in the sphere of our knowledge can be said to resemble the already mentioned, Derridean “structures erected by their very ruins, held up by what never stops eating away at its foundation”<sup>1414</sup>. As a matter of fact, the style of thinking that is only about construction, without ever sacrificially subjecting its structures to degradation, cannot be praised for its creativeness since it tends to be typified by fixed preconceptions and insights that are stiff, predictable and not modifiable at all. In contrast, brilliant thought is inescapably tied to the process of revisionary ruination of its very self; or, as Edmond Jabès pointed out, in the spirit of not a brainwashed atheist, as it may seem, but an authentic seeker of godly truths inscribed in the world, “The meaning of a word is perhaps only its openness to meaning. The word God has no meaning. Not several either. It is meaning: the adventure and ruin of meaning”<sup>1415</sup>. And indeed, if we wish to create expressions that stun the world and simultaneously surprise us, their very bearers, with the infinity of guiding stars that they strew straight into our face, we must resist delivering them from the solid foundations of dogma and bring them forth from constantly crushed and demolished bases of being and thought instead, as in accordance with the precept inscribed on a piece of pinkish paper by the protagonist of the world’s most renowned deconstructive filmmaker’s, Jean Luc-Godard’s<sup>1416</sup> *Pierrot le Fou*: “Language of poetry rises from the ruins”. Richard Wanger did not stray far from this ideal when he wrote in a letter to the German musician, Theodor Uhlig that “works of art...

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<sup>1413</sup> See Pablo Picasso’s oil painting *Violin and Grapes* (1912), Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY.

<sup>1414</sup> See Mark Wigley’s *The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida’s Haunt*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA (1995), pp. 45.

<sup>1415</sup> See Talia Pecker Berio’s *Mahler’s Jewish Parable*, In: *Mahler and His World*, edited by Karen Painter, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (2002), pp. 87.

<sup>1416</sup> Cinematic anarchist as he is, his style of creative construction has been inescapably related to dismantling and deconstruction of the reigning standards of cinematic expression. Thereupon, he has always represented first and foremost an immaculate film critic and only then a filmmaker. And just as he justly deserves the epithet of the filmmakers’ filmmaker and a comic book artist such as Gébé deserves that of the cartoonist’s cartoonist (See Edward Gauvin’s *Introduction to Gébé’s Letter to Survivors*, New York Review Comics, New York, NY (1981), pp. xii), I have strived to earn that of the scientist’s scientist thanks to my goal of simultaneously providing original scientific contributions and challenging the staleness and rottenness in which the scientific community of the day finds itself.

can only be prepared for by means of revolutionary activity, by destroying and crushing everything that is worth destroying and crushing”<sup>1417</sup>, and confided to Franz Liszt about his “enormous desire to commit acts of artistic terrorism”<sup>1418</sup>. Concordantly, Jean Genet talked flowerily about “the act of building his life minute by minute, witnessing its construction, which is also progressive deconstruction”<sup>1419</sup>, building in us a sense of monumental structural stability, the maintenance of which asks for things to be sacrificed and subject to careful annihilation at all times. For, “you have to make a sacrifice to make sure the house becomes solid”, as the champion Rocco teaches his brother Vincenzo in Luchino Visconti’s neorealist classic, *Rocco and His Brothers*, having told him how the best cornerstone for a house is the one mason throws onto the shadow of the first passerby, evoking the tales of maidens that were being built alive into the walls of medieval cities to protect them from harm and making certain that we always look after the fact that creation without destruction, renewal without dying and evolution without erasure are all but possible in this world of ours. Sure enough, the style in which a full stop is placed on our creations, be they musical pieces, books, acts in the world or entire lifetimes, has a critical effect on the overall impression they will have on the pearly eyes of this world. And sometimes placing a full stop before everything in a piece of art was clarified and every empty pixel of it was filled with color will make sure that the piece shines forth with much richer meanings than if it were to be chewed and adorned for months or eons more, thus bringing it closer and closer to the state of perfection. Igor Stravinsky’s art was praised for its “intentional primitivism”<sup>1420</sup>, where “the apparent poverty and deficiency is the result of creative will and artistic consciousness”<sup>1421</sup>, and the same skill of leaving a piece of art with unfinished touches and stains of imperfection at the right time and place underlies every impeccably executed artistic work. “It’s really not done yet”<sup>1422</sup>, Prince is noted to have said in the backstage of the First Avenue nightclub in Minneapolis, right after he played *Purple Rain* for the first time, in a 13-minute performance that, unknowingly to him at the time, would become “one of popular music’s greatest landmarks”<sup>1423</sup>. Had he continued to refine the song, it is likely that lots of its moving power would have been lost, impelling us to think now of countless works of art whose fate was exactly such: to crush and crumble under the weight of an overly filigreed structure, when leaving them half-finished was the key to achieve timelessness. Reducing, ending and eliminating thus quite often equal weaving inventive threads into the embroidery that results from our creative being in this world. For example, to enable the lighting up of 200,000 light bulbs in the blink of an eye at the World’s Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893, the moment of magic like the world had never seen, Nikola Tesla tore up his royalty contract with George Westinghouse Electric Company, which obliged the latter to pay him millions of dollars for his inventions<sup>1424</sup>, to save it from bankruptcy, electrifying the spine of many self-centered

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<sup>1417</sup> See Alex Ross’ *Wagnerism: Art and Politics in the Shadow of Music*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, NY (2020), pp. 23.

<sup>1418</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1419</sup> See Mark Wigley’s *The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida’s Haunt*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA (1995), pp. 45.

<sup>1420</sup> See Arthur-Vincent Lourié’s *Vyorsti* (Paris), 1928, Mavra, In: *In: Stravinsky and His World*, edited by Tamara Levitz, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (2013).

<sup>1421</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1422</sup> See Alan Light’s *Let’s Go Crazy: Prince and the Making of Purple Rain*, Atria Books, New York, NY (2014), pp. 3.

<sup>1423</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1424</sup> See John Jacob O’Neill’s *Prodigal Genius: The Life of Nikola Tesla*, Angriff Press, Hollywood, CA (1944), pp. 79. Excerpts from this book are also available at <http://www.reformation.org/nikola-tesla.html>.

dwellers of the modern world with this selfless and altruistic act and showing us how many are forward streaming steps in this life that we could make only by burning bridges behind us. Certainly, by cutting the cords of political cunningness enwrapped like boa constrictors around our love for fundamental science and philosophy and following the line of selfless benevolence on the account of the one of selfish slyness, as Tesla did and I, myself, have courageously tried to imitate, we have a chance to arrive at destinations that lie farther than any man has ever been in our explorations of life. *En passant*, browsing through the diary notes I wrote as a 12-year old boy, I stumbled upon scribbles that expressed my impressiveness with this act of his, adding how “today I firmly decided to be a great physicist when I grow up. The idol for that will be Nikola Tesla... He spent his whole life in poverty. He lived like a hermit and had but a single friend: a little bird”<sup>1425</sup>. Like Laurence Sterne’s, his ideal, I felt, was “not to be fed, but famous”<sup>1426</sup>, and like this mocker of the English literary conventions of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and the destroyer of the many rigid forms and stale clichés that thrived in it at the time, so have I entered the science arena with the same ideal in mind, trying my best to topple everything dry, corporate, purely technical and devoid of the romantic spirit in it. Along the way, I have wished not to appeal to the current generation and seek praise from it; rather, I have secretly hoped that my work will be recognized as worthy by the future generations, just as it was the case with Sterne’s, who was mostly ignored in his own time, but is now widely recognized as a predecessor of postmodernism<sup>1427</sup>, a trend in literature that would be born 200 years after his death. In a way, this approach that I have chosen has meant that the most valuable gift I could bestow upon humanity would be creatable only if I distanced myself sufficiently from it. The Way of Love equally suggests that walking away from those that are dearest to us sometimes enables our love for them to shine forth freely and light up the stage of the entire world thereby. Sailing away and disappearing in the distance is a necessary step in the process of discovering new lands, and withdrawing in darkness, in desolation rows of our consciousness, is vital for emerging outside with brilliant treasures in our hands, which we will then freely share with others. For, in the spirit of the Way of Love, there is no perfect shine of our spirits without our devoted immersion in our inner world, and *vice versa*: there could be no thriving meditative journey towards meeting the essence of our soul without incessantly striving to give the same essence to the world, to place it as a sacrificial gift of ours below its feet. Likewise, in the spirit of Tesla’s touching deed, it may often be that by tearing up contracts and links in life and throwing them in the waste baskets, by madly breaking the strings of our instruments, that we write new chapters in the history of humanity. After all, as the Sun sets on one side of the Earth, it rises on the other, as fresh new things and beings feed on the remains of the ones that passed away. Hence, it is by debasing and destroying that we sometimes reveal wonderful new features of the world, as if brushing the sand that has covered the long forgotten foundations of wonderful deeds of humanity and letting the daylight gleefully wash over them.

Years ago, when I heard Pixies for the first time playing Santo, Cactus, Debaser, Gouge Away and other gems of a genuine grunge music, my world turned upside down. The first song to open the gate in my mind for an inflow of the beauty of all things offbeat, oblique and

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<sup>1425</sup> Translated from my childhood diary (May 2-3, 1989).

<sup>1426</sup> See Christopher Fanning’s Sterne and Print Culture, In: The Cambridge Companion to Laurence Sterne. Cited in the Wikipedia article on Laurence Sterne, retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laurence\\_Sterne#cite\\_note-8](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laurence_Sterne#cite_note-8) (2019).

<sup>1427</sup> *Ibid.*

upturned was the Pixies' cover of Neil Young's *Winterlong*<sup>1428</sup>. In it the band took a tune whose harmonies were conventionally pleasing to the ear and arranged them into an eruptive ode to noise by making millions of sounds, from Black Francis' prickly rhythm guitar strokes to Lee Ranaldo's insane vibratos to Kim Deal's backing vocal slides in major thirds, blend in and out of one and letting the melody sail saliently on them, as freakishly and wackily as it seems. It took many years before I realized that my impression with the song was because, unlike in the case of its original version, where the shy lead guitar, soft percussions and smooth voice of the Canadian tenor merely added up to the mellowness of the melody, and unlike in the case of songs by, say, MC5 or the Stooges, where roughness is squeezed between its likes of rudeness and rawness, here the band complemented the maudlin *melos* of the song with the use of striking aural abrasiveness. In doing so, they magnified the song's intrinsic beauty beyond proportion, turning thereby a bottle of blues into a basin able to hold and lull a whole ocean in its cradle. All around me in those teenage days was music that either strived for mellowness and smoothness or expressed sheer fury and frustration, but then all of a sudden in the sound of the Pixies these two sentiments, as seemingly incompatible as fire and frost, stood blended into a single, inseparable unity. From that moment onward, music became a magical medium wherein things that seemed impossible to combine could coexist and where boundaries separating things could be erased with tiny bits of imagination and with tempests of passion. In this medium, as if in a sea of a kind, I jumped without hesitation, giving it all that I can and soaking up all that it had to offer with an open heart. Simultaneously, an awareness that one could live one's life, all over, from head to toe, in an upside down manner, with head plunged into foundations of it all, incessantly questioning their stability and validity, and with feet joyfully leaping off the clouds in the sky, dawned on me in those days. I unbuttoned my scout shirt and streamed with the wind on my bare chests across the city streets, carried on the waves of some mysterious energy. "Who has not passed through the punk phase won't ever become a just man", were the words ringing in my head back then, prompting me to become one such rebel against all the monsters of this world that revealed to me their Janus-faced and bigoted nature. I gradually became aware that disappointment with the state of the world supplied me with vital impulses for creative action in it. So long as we are unequivocally exalted by our perceptions, without finding any signs of obsolescence in them, we would never transform our spirit into an escapee that plunges deep into its blue seas to dive for pearly expressions concealed therein and eventually produces emanations of more divine forms of being than the world has ever seen. Thus I began to feel as if perfect contentment would equal resignation and immoral ignorance of illnesses and troubles that have stricken humanity, while at the same time never ceasing to believe in the merits of universal goodness, holding that one such repugnance over everything that is vulgar and unjust not balanced with the power of cosmic compassion radiating from our mind would make us become a gritty and thorny punk able to do nothing but pierce people's hearts with flashes of anger and spikes of dissatisfaction, with thoughts and looks that "dare, not glow"<sup>1429</sup>, as Lord Byron would have put it. On the other hand, I felt as if mere devotion to another uncoupled with a dose of resentment infused in my attitude would predispose me to be a pathetic and passionless "tool" in the eyes of the world. To challenge everything and yet to love everything; to be an enemy and a friend at the same time – that was a punkish revelation of a kind that deeply touched my whole being. For the first time, the overly orderly mindset of mine reverberated with the aesthetics of

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<sup>1428</sup> Listen to Pixies' *Winterlong* on Dig for Fire, 4AD (1990).

<sup>1429</sup> See Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Canto 3 LXXV, available at <http://www.turksheadreview.com/library/texts/byron-childeharold.html> (1812).

chaotic and rebellious. My honest adoration of beauties of the world thus began to walk hand-in-hand with despising all that is hypocritical, lukewarm and self-centered in it, resulting in a strange blend of loving and despicable to be embodied in my words and acts. In such a way, I embodied a mental mix of the seemingly unmixable and produced a captivating concoction of feelings in myself, quite similar to the dialectical pastiche of opposites that I earlier described as inherent to artistic expressions that mysteriously throw the observers into an enlightening state of paradox. Bordering a pure aerial artiness, the almost militantly aesthetic I, bowing in front of everything in life that glowed with the beauty divine and looking down on all that seemed crude and unbeautiful, was motivated by the very thought of being a sacred rebel of love, a warrior of light on the mission to bring celestial beauty to every corner of the world; on the other hand, however, I secretly feared growing into a bitter equivalent of Gustav Mahler from the *Death in Venice* directed by Luchino Visconti, filled with an undying regret for never becoming the Beatrice-like muse of his dreams, a solemn boy dancing around the seashore flagpoles, while overlooking the ocean of eternal life. Still, I was aware that in order to bring to life one such infinitely beautiful muse in one's gestures and acts, one essentially needs to be a renegade in terms of ceaselessly shattering obstacles posed by other people's lame expectations and stale desires. As one weaves a silky ladder to the stars and begins to climb on it, quite in Beatrice's spirit, free from the bondages of social norms and expectations, one could spin the following words of Coventry Patmore in one's head: "If we may credit certain hints contained in the lives of the saints, love raises the spirit above the sphere of reverence and worship into one of laughter and dalliance: a sphere in which the soul says – 'Shall I, a gnat which dances in Thy rays, *Dare* to be reverent?'"<sup>1430</sup> Thus I thought that acting in harmony with one's nature was the only way to live up to the divine mission inscribed in our hearts, fearing not the disrespect of our superiors that this attitude would entail, but knowing that submissive compliance with trends and ideals of our environment would inevitably distract us from following the path of our heart, the sacred mission that takes us to the very stars. Hence, in parallel with my aesthetic inclinations, my mind became overfilled with the thirst to rebelliously debase the disciplined scholarly approaches of the world which I inhabited. Even today, the two main tasks that my missionary heart beats to accomplish is to stand against the sterile and prosaic scientific creation and show to the world the intellectual merits of poetic flights of fancy, of altruistic passions and of instilling cosmic love in the center of the sun of our consciousness from which the sunrays of intellect will be enlighteningly emitted in all directions, as much as to stand against innumerable injustices and exhibitions of greed and carelessness that could be found everywhere in the world around us. To comply with this mission, sometimes we have no other choice in front of us but to burn the bridges behind us and thus light the way for humanity to follow, to relentlessly cut the branches on which we have been temporarily nested, living in the spirit of authentic nomads who have identified still homes and threads of comfort that pulled them in with spiritual graves and devilish hands of a kind. For, "it is not so much the old that dies as the new that kills"<sup>1431</sup>, as the Greek mythologist, Jane Harrison mentioned once, pointing our attention to the necessity of acting in the spirit of St. George, the slayer of the dragon, whenever the heavens call for our stepping up and acting so. The aesthetics of destruction thus appears in full light in front of our views, although we could be sure that it glows beautifully only so long as it hides an enlightening eagerness to erect something ever more delightful on the evanescent ruins it produces. As a

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<sup>1430</sup> See Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism*, Methuen & Co., Ltd., London, UK (1911), pp. 438.

<sup>1431</sup> See Jane Harrison's *From Ritual to Art* (1913). In: *What is Dance?* Edited by Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen, Oxford University Press, New York, NY (1983), pp. 506.

matter of fact, to arrive at illuminative metaphysical insights, the lucid philosopher has to topple down the visible ideas and premises of the inspected towers of knowledge and touch their foundations with the rays of his intellect as much as the clairvoyant mystic is obliged to dissolve the perceptual order in the sunshine of love radiating from his heart and the sea of tears flowing like pearly droplets from its compassionate mind, glittering under the moonlight of a sense of wonder, in order to arrive face-to-face with the divine spirit from which all things emerge. Or, as Evelyn Underhill mentioned in her classic treatise on mysticism sharply a century ago, “We must pull down our card houses – descend, as the mystics say, ‘into our nothingness’ - and examine for ourselves the foundations of all possible human experience”<sup>1432</sup>. “To kick it” is therefore still how I describe the reasons for my passionate engagement in various creative tasks that sprout everywhere around me, with my soul singing, “I’m the academy of public enemy”<sup>1433</sup>, knowing deep in myself that an honest opposition to mainstream, routine and habitual traits of the world helps it find a way forward along the tracks of its never-ending dialectal evolution. Or, as my upstate New York friend, Kevin Kriescher put it in an effort to emphasize the need to incessantly watch for habitual patterns in our thinking and acting and break them for the sake of progressively stomping forward in our spiritual streaming towards stars, “Unlearning is learning!”<sup>1434</sup> Such was truly my attitude during the so-called Skool Daze: unstoppably challenging authorities and reigning paradigms, like a steaming train; refusing to be an obedient sheep and knuckle under to petty the powers; wholly living up to the epithet of Lord of Misrule, ascribed to dancing dervishes as whimsical heralds of wisdom<sup>1435</sup>; cultivating a cosmopolitan spirit, which, I knew, was inherently tied to an openness towards fundamental criticism of the establishment and all that is; and, finally, with a heart of a social runaway and outlaw calling for revolution and debasement of clichés and norms around us, which, I claimed, fostered an expansion of armies of hangers-on and mediocrities rather than development of exceptionally creative personalities. I felt as if the world is such that it fits what Julia Higgins said upon her contemplation on “those who run the world” - “we can prevent the development of a genius, but we cannot create and develop a genius”<sup>1436</sup> - for a whole lot of fosterage of freedom to act

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<sup>1432</sup> See Evelyn Underhill’s *Mysticism*, Methuen & Co., Ltd., London, UK (1911), pp. 4.

<sup>1433</sup> Listen to Public Enemy’s *Don’t Believe the Hype* on *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*, Def Jam (1988). According to the official lyrics, though, it seems that Chuck D sang, “I’m the epitome of public enemy”. Still, the reconstruction of the lyrics into something more meaningful is a privilege of the nonnative listener that no one can take away from him/her.

<sup>1434</sup> See Kevin Kriescher’s *Geometric Guitar*, Xlibris, La Vergne, TN (2010), pp. 70.

<sup>1435</sup> See Peter Avery’s *Introduction to The Ruba’iyat of Omar Khayyam*, Penguin, New York, NY (12<sup>th</sup> Century AD), pp. 18.

<sup>1436</sup> The quote was found in an online presentation of the Serbian scientist, Jovan Đurić, who claims to have been “the first and only tenured member of the faculty of any U.S. university to lose the tenured professorship”, which had roots in his opposition to the Vietnam war and “the life-long pattern of maladaptivness”, as cited by the University of New Mexico authorities that dismissed him from his academic post. A strong proponent of the publication model whereby “the publication of a paper in a journal is not at all the recognition of that paper as true and correct, but it does mean that the referees could not find any error in that paper and that its content is interesting for further discussion by the entire scientific community in search of truth; the rejection of a paper only on some dogmatic grounds without finding any error in the rejected paper is the attempt for the censorship which is the gravest enemy of truth”, he claimed that “the publication of bold new ideas in order to facilitate their dissemination and their discussion is the only true justification of the existence of any scientific journal. By insisting only on the accepted theories and by preventing the publication of new, bold and controversial theories, the scientific journals and their editors hinder the progress of science and assist the proponents of the ‘accepted theories’ to uncritically obtain enormous funds for their research projects, from which they, the proponents of the ‘accepted theories’, lavishly fatten their paychecks from almost always public money paid by taxpayers”. More details on his lifelong

differently and prove to be better than the teachers, themselves, is required on the part of teachers that truly run this world for better, though which are not too many around us, as they are heavily outnumbered by those who demand unquestioning respect, obedience and cloned thinking. Yet, I felt as if fostering freedoms to be different is what the key to unlocking the infinitely deep starry potentials within each one of us is, which, after all, tends to be beneficial for the evolution of our societies as wholes. Looking back now, I realize that even my religiousness sprouted spontaneously, exactly because there was no one to forcefully drag me to the church, make me sit on a pew and follow the priests' chanting or any other rituals. Instead, I was free to roam in my thoughts, to dream and wonder about the essence of religiousness and the divine powers that underlie each piece of existence, opening the sacred writings to glimpse them every once in a while, only when the right times would come and only when I was moved by questions burning deep inside of me. Thus I was free to disagree with the vengeful image of the Old Testament God who punishes the trespassers in the Garden of Eden, but was still glad to think of how he never prohibited them from tasting the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge in the first place<sup>1437</sup>, hence favoring freedoms and autonomies over restrictions and enforced rules. Likewise, having not been forced or conditioned to become an admirer of religion, I became a passionate one at the end of the day, and the same road of freedom that made me arrive at these blissful insights on my quests for knowledge I nowadays demand from all other teachers and authorities, including myself, to set their disciples and followers on. It was never insisted in my family circles that I ought to be a religious follower of any kind, which is why I find myself nowadays exceptionally and intensely religious, and that not on shaky and crumbly foundations as happens with all the blind and unquestioning followers of any teachings in life, but on strong bases of scientific reasoning and individual inquiry. For, the more of the needs to obey are imposed on us, the less questioning we would exhibit and less treasures in our intellectual quests we would be able to find thereby. Had I been forced to be religious, it is quite possible that today I would have shared the anti-religious stance of many of my western atheist friends, just as being forced to obey the school authorities, although always treating them in my head as mere obstacles that need to be overcome on my way to freedom, resulted in my passionate fights to "deschool" society. Switching from the role of a pupil to the one of a teacher and learning that lecturing freshmen still produces electricity in the air and sparkle in their eyes whereas lecturing seniors usually only sends their dull, lackluster vibe back to the lecturer only reinforced my seeing schools and universities more as prisons for the human spirit than gateways to its freedom, screamingly craving revitalization via encouragement of anarchistic rebellion on every level of theirs. Of course, although State, Church and School, all three of which are homologous in many respects<sup>1438</sup>, have been widely recognized as the three social pyramids, akin to the three main Pyramids of Giza, from whose tops the major authoritative powers are exerted on us, we should bear in mind that innumerable little decisions that take the toll on our freedom and beauty of expressions are brought on a daily basis under the pressure of an authority found in ordinary people's opinions and norms that have over time shaped beliefs and cravings now dormant way below illuminable layers of our psyche. To stand against these petty but enormously influential authorities that roam around our head like ghosts is of even greater importance than struggling to

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attempts to publish his ideas on uniting gravitation and magnetic forces could be found on <http://jovandjuric.tripod.com/> (2011).

<sup>1437</sup> See Willard Gaylin's *Adam and Eve and Pinocchio*, Viking Penguin, New York, NY (1990), pp. 151.

<sup>1438</sup> See Harry Redner's *The Ends of Science: An Essay in Scientific Authority*. Chapter IV: Knowledge and Authority, Westview Press, Boulder, CO (1987), pp. 95.

bring down the obvious authorities in our world, be they of political, sectarian or academic nature. This insight brings us over to realization that loud anarchists who hunger after ruining the corrupted ideologies of the world are thus, as a rule, slaves of similarly imperfect doctrines and could be named all but genuine anarchists. For, once we truly liberate our mind from all the bonds with authoritative powers, we would emerge on the other side of the ocean of human mind, where the philosophy of Lao-Tzu thrives and where an enlightening realization that all beliefs and doctrines could be freely embraced with our heart and mind awaits us. After all, only insofar as we love and respect the flags of ideas against which we stand could we hope for their harmless replacement with more progressive ones. Concordantly, Michael Polanyi noticed how “the professional standards of science must impose a framework of discipline and at the same time encourage rebellion against it”<sup>1439</sup>. This is how we find ourselves in the midst of a circle that resembles a snake biting its own tail, always correctively turning into itself and thus preserving the spin of the wheel of evolution whereby revolutionary visionaries and submissive respecters clash with each other and in their dialectical encounters produce glistening paths forward for all humanity. Yet, since obedient sheep and paradigm-builders are many, whereas the nonconformist ones who creatively break the streams of standard and routine behavior and thus deliver innovative ideas and ways of being to the world are too little, I have consciously decided that the latter side would be the one that I would be gladly standing on, all in order to bring the balance back to this social swing, on which the harmonious evolution of humankind pivotally depends. To ruin the old values that pervaded the culture of followers has thence always been equally important in my head as raising the value of the Christ-like rebels against the everlasting tendency of human creatures to sink into inert muddles of consciousness, unquestioningly and deviously following streams of thinking and behaving set forth by others.

In fact, once we look closer at the widely accepted dialectical nature of the evolution of the world, we would realize that going against the stream and opposing rather than accepting and going with the flow is what is deeply ingrained in it. Namely, as dialectical confrontations are based on constant clashes of the opposites that yield new synthetic insights and directions of progress, only when we break the norms of accepted, standardized and habitual ways of reasoning and acting do we get a chance to lead the world to the new lands of knowledge and being. In such a way, the message offered by E. M. Forster, which I saw blinking on an SF billboard one Saturday night as we drove by it, “We like the like and love the unlike”, may be said to stand forth as a great ideal for the modern generation to attain. Not only to tolerate but to love what is different and goes against our values and ideals in life is what will bring humanity closer to a true cosmopolitan society. After all, we can all agree on the fact that the more primitive, nationalistically, single-ethnically or superstitiously religiously colored society is, the less of the tolerance for what is different from the way in which their members think, behave or see the world is present therein. In contrast, true cosmopolitanism wherein earthlings bring the entire starry cosmos, like giant, glossy and bubbly fortune telling balls, to their hearts, accepting the entire universe as their home, is inevitably marked by their astonishment with things and beings original, unique and different from anything else. Instead of tyrannically oppressing others with aims to mold them into templates set by our own visions and behavioral norms, trying to make everyone be just as we are, such enlightened creatures are aware of the fact that the evolution of the world crucially depends on our ability to selflessly elevate those who will be different, more visionary and more beautifully mindful than us and spur their flights into the free skies of the world. It has already been mentioned in this work that with teachers accepting the

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<sup>1439</sup> See Michael Polanyi’s *Knowing and Being*, Routledge, London, UK (1969), pp. 54.

fact that the true success of their teaching endeavors lies not in crafting their disciples to become just like them, but in urging them to become different, independent and, eventually, far better and more profound than their teachers have ever been, we enter the enlightening road that takes us to the neon-like and beautiful, starry and calm, supersonically quiet, true cosmopolitan society of the future.

Although it is an unavoidable fate of all the exceptional, luminous personalities to be spontaneously imitated by their surrounding, from their manners to their methods, the first sight of our disciples beginning to adopt our traits and copy our approaches, gleefully welcomed by the egotistic and narrow-minded educators, is thus nothing but a sign of straightforward defeat in the eyes of the enlightened teachers of the world. Therefore, under the florid banner saying Death to Fascism, Freedom to the People, the Serbian insurgents' World War II cry, as powerful as that of *Viva la France*, I have made it a prime aim in my teaching endeavors to recognize the first instance of being angered by a student's attempt to insolently ravage my worldviews and immediately transform it into a joyful opportunity for the epistemic evolution of both myself and the harsh offender, finding the fosterage of creative differing in the classroom far more fulfilling than the fabrication of a deadening sameness. In that sense, the following words of Erwin Chargaff reverberate with striking relevancy in the context of the need to educate the little ones so as to be different and stream beyond the roads to research that their teachers have pursued rather than to act as unimaginative conformists and merely follow the commands and norms given thereto, without ever bravely breaking them, thus failing to open the novel paths of progress in the domains of human thinking and being: "It is a fortunate fact that amateurs often are better in advancing science than are the professionals. Nothing more deadening than being a specialist, an expert. You lecture before a perpetually somnolent audience - the people change, but they are equally bored or obtuse - or, if you are lucky, you teach in a workshop on a beautiful island, and you teach them to become as you are; whereas what a scientist ought to do is to teach others to become as different from himself as possible. *Vive la difference!* should be the battle cry. Instead, it is 'like begets alike', until at the end dismal sociobiology takes over to tell us that you must be programmed in your genes to attend Asilomar. Scientific life nowadays would be funny if it were not sad"<sup>1440</sup>. From the words of this molecular biologist we could jump straight to the fact that cancerous cell lines replicate as perfect copies, clones of each other and are easy to maintain, whereas primary or fetal, finite cell lines unpredictably proliferate and imperfectly replicate, which invites one to naturally induce that the humane evolution of the world consists in multiplying unique perspectives of the world, forging a diamond of human knowledge that carries a starry glister derived from innumerable little facets on its surface rather than using educational means to enforce a continuous procession of perfect followers and thus endangering the creative performance of the scientific enterprise in the long run. Thus, wise teachers try their best not to contribute to the development of one such breed of unimaginative followers of commands and behavioral norms laid down by trendsetting authorities, the epitomes of "a wicked and adulterous generation (that) seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it" (Matthew 16:4), standing lamely and frozenly in social circles, ignorant of the inexplicably exorbitant, exhilarating and sunward-launching beauty that each and every earthling is, submissive to each other's submissiveness and thus drowning in ever deeper chasms of awkward and uncreative behavior with each tick of the communicational clock. Rather, the mission that all the sacred teachers have been devoted to is the one of giving their hearts and

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<sup>1440</sup> See Erwin Chargaff's How Genetics Got a Chemical Education, *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 325, 345 – 360 (1979).

souls to raise a generation of benevolent rebels against it all, creatures that break the streams of normality and expectedness with every single act, word and thought of theirs, delivering them on the waves of impulses that originate from the depths of their souls and not from the desire to obey an authority of one kind or another, making them stellar and magically inspiring thereby. Hence, anytime we recognize the desire to become just like someone else sprouting in the sphere of our consciousness, anytime we sense our streaming down the road of becoming a literal clone of values, behavioral traits and manners of a being that we have been allured to copy due to our insecurities and fears emerging under the imminence of social censure, we should ruthlessly uproot it from the soil of our mind. And when all these drives to become a conformist clone are systematically eliminated from our mental sphere, all that remains is acting in harmony with the voice divine that reverberates throughout the rooms of our spirit, spontaneously and naturally. The insecure voices from our social milieu, of course, would continuously urge us to give up on the unique behavior arising from one such divine guidance of our being, for it would surely appear frighteningly strange, outlandish and lunatic to them. They would advise us to restore our predictable and imitational self in their eyes and in the eyes of the world, but we should shun this advice of the masses as inherently ill-disposed. A healthy inclination to empathically imitate the surrounding creatures is innate to our beings and without it we would indeed become an unsympathetic and autistic individual. However, when this proneness to empathy crosses the boundaries of the balance of the Way of Love and transforms into the mental disease of conformism that tends to bring everything down to a state of infinitely monotonous and infertile uniformity rather than to diversify the tree of reality into ever more intricate branches and offshoots, as weird and wonderful as each one of them seems at first, it is no longer sustainable and should be treated with none other but the radical therapy of the Way of Love. This danger of imitation, alongside the submissive conformism that acts as its source, I get reminded whenever I reread Guillaume Apollinaire's poems and treatises that christen the surrealist mind as the most creative of them all atop the observation that man did not invent the wheel by mimicking the movement of the human legs<sup>1441</sup>. Rather, he ventured beyond the realm of sheer mimicry, which is here to remind us that a similar blend of empathy that calls for repeating what others have said or done and the thirst for originality that calls for differing oneself from anything anyone prior to us has said or done must be awakened in the heart of a holy seeker *en route* to the most sublime creative peaks imaginable.

When a 30-foot tall cypress tree was hit by a lightning during a summer storm at the seaside when I was a teenager, and fell straight onto the cardboard cabin in which I was sleeping at the time, miraculously leaving this miniature chalet intact and myself, sleeping on the top bunk, centimeters away from the point of impact, alive, I learned to see this event as a gigantic sign of the need to selflessly foster diversity and difference rather than insist on each and every one's following of our own single stream of thought. For, both the house and myself in it would have been undoubtedly smashed had the tree been branchless and not covered with thousands of twigs and pinecones that softened the force of its fall. Whenever I think of this cypress tree that sacrificed itself to hand a sign to a pearly pair of eyes that sympathetically roamed through the enchanting forest of the wonders of the world, a sign that was to be multiplied into a myriad of signs scattered like stardust of divine grace all over the pages of this book, the notes of the music I played and dancing moves I drop as I glide through space on the waves of Tao, one day supposedly inspiring and inciting many other eyes sparkling with wonder and love to enlightening action that aims at saving the Universe, I am prompted to keep its meaningful gift

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<sup>1441</sup> See Guillaume Apollinaire's *Oeuvres Poétiques*, Gallimard, Paris, France (1956).

closely anchored to my heart: it has been with me to remind me of the life-threatening dangers of basing our education of students, adherents and companions on impelling them to follow the paradigmatic trails of thinking and simply strengthen the central stem of the human tree of knowledge, as well as of the lifesaving trait of educational paths that prompt the followers to be different from us, branch out and become independent sources of new fruits on the tree of knowledge, the trait that has undeniably typified the greatest teachers that humanity has ever known and sages that influenced the planet with their teachings more than any institutions founded on dogmas and demands of discipline and obedience rather than of inherently rebellious differences and diversifications.

Understanding the merits of diversity that is deeply engrained in the fabric of our civilization as well as of differences in worldviews and ways of being of creatures of the world presents a first step in our becoming a teacher with heart and mind as broad as an endless ocean, able not only to tolerate styles of thinking and behavior that differ from ours, but to selflessly inspire them in their growth towards ever greater and sometimes even diametrically opposite dissimilarity. Letting our words and acts naturally emanate from one such selfless happiness in view of other people's branching out from our very teaching doctrines in innumerable directions, like rays radiated from the Sun, the utmost teaching supremacy of our method could be claimed. Otherwise, should we ignorantly stick to beliefs that we surely know what is best for others and try to shape everyone according to the templates of our own self, we would resemble one who reproaches the linden tree for not being an oak, as Bertolt Brecht would have put it; the diversity of the world would thus suffer and its sustainability and propensity to evolve would consequently be endangered too. For, not only would it be boring and suffocating our sources of creativity if everyone were the same, but this monotony in worldviews and modes of being would literally be deadly as life engraining it would quickly bring itself to the edge of extinction. This perspective brings us over to the teaching method of Robert Irwin, which yielded a number of stellar artistic careers, described by the visual artist himself: "I would think that the most immoral thing one can do is have ambitions for someone else's mind... Since my relationship to students had shifted from that of a leader to co-participant, my personal likes, dislikes, and biases were no longer critical to their development except as just one more issue up for discussion... All the time my ideal of teaching has been to argue with people on behalf of the idea that they are responsible for their own activities, that they are really, in a sense, the question, that ultimately they *are* what it is they have to contribute... Once you've learned how to make your own assignments instead of relying on someone else, then you have learned the only thing you really need to get out of school, that is, you've learned how to learn. You've become your own teacher"<sup>1442</sup>. "If I have any disciples, and you can say this of every one of them, they think for themselves"<sup>1443</sup>, Warren McCulloch concordantly mentioned in one of his lessons, outlining the rebelliously selfless nature of the most masterful teaching approach that we could envisage. For, whereas it is the tendency of mediocre teachers to support and stand for only those whose outlooks, methods and motives resemble those of the very teachers, an essential trait of the wisest teachers in this world is to recognize and appreciate endlessly versatile ways by which one could reach peaks of human knowledge and enrich humanity thereby. In Sarah Kay's

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<sup>1442</sup> See Lawrence Weschler's *Seeing Is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees: Expanded Edition, Over Thirty Years of Conversations with Robert Irwin*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA (2009), pp. 124 - 125.

<sup>1443</sup> See Stafford Beer's *On the Nature of Models: Let Us Now Praise Famous Men and Women, Too* (from Warren McCulloch to Candace Pert), *Informing Science* 2 (3) 69 – 83 (1999).

universe<sup>1444</sup>, the third and the final grand step in our advancing towards the creative peaks of our being is made when we break away from the links of obligatory similitude that tie us to our mentors and peers and begin our own, unique descent onto our personal planet of stellar being, unlike any other in any solar system of the endless cosmos through which we float. Hence, when I witness authorities directing the ideological streams that underlie a conversation to their own millwheels, as the Serbian saying goes, I merely draw an elephant in the air surrounding us and only occasionally loudly summon up a story wherein many people tapped it in the dark, arriving at wholly different conclusions as to what it was; only after combining their insights would they figure out the identity of the object hidden in the darkness. Similarly, our progress on the scientific and any other professional stage crucially depends on our willingness to complement each other's perspectives on knowledge and life rather than to clash with them because of our tyrannical tendencies to disvalue diversity and enforce autocratic monotony. Some of us are intrinsically moved by poetry and passion; others are driven by the desire to attain fame and recognition; the third ones may find crystal clear logic and intellect as the utmost creative tool and streams of satisfaction for the abstract sceneries of the mind. A great teacher will not be the one who discards and gives up on those whose traits differ from those that endow the teacher's own character or try to mold them in accordance to the template of his own personality. For, he knows very well that, as Friedrich Nietzsche put it, "the surest way to corrupt a youth is to instruct him to hold in higher esteem those who think alike than those who think differently"<sup>1445</sup>. Instead, he may find ones sublime and elevating, others funny and infantile, and the third ones brilliant but incomplete, and yet he will be aware that as diversity is the key to preservation and evolution of the world and our beings, spurring the progress of each one of them along unique directions rather than dissolving them all in a boring uniformity of indistinguishable worldviews, is the way to go. He will, therefore, empathize with them all lest the classroom be enveloped in Cardinal Newman's Arctic winter<sup>1446</sup>, and always remember that the dialectical evolution of life dictates that contrasts are vital for the development of each of the features of life and cognition, resulting in the beautiful diversity of being, which we can take pleasure in everywhere we look.

After all, values and modes of expression of new generations are easiest to grasp if we have a chance to face in parallel the supposedly obsolete and passé behavioral and communicational means embraced by the older generations. Whereas we could spend a plenty of time vainly trying to understand the aesthetics of the new voices that color the world of modernity, the moment when we reflect them against those that typified the previous generation, the understanding thereof may suddenly dawn on us. This brings to mind the ancient story about the Anatolian painters who specialized in drawing fine details and the Greek who were masters in polishing and producing uniformly colored facades and canvases. The astute Byzantine emperor wanted to get most of both of them and, therefore, made them face each other's work by having them paint the opposite walls of his palace. The palace, as the story goes, became known for the beauty of its interior design all over the kingdom and we, who have but a legend of it in our hands, remain instructed about the inescapably dialectical nature of the evolution of the world, in which being the same and being different matters equally. If we were to inspect the

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<sup>1444</sup> Watch Sarah Kay's TED talk: If I Should Have a Daughter..., available at

[http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah\\_kay\\_if\\_i\\_should\\_have\\_a\\_daughter.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah_kay_if_i_should_have_a_daughter.html) (March 2011).

<sup>1445</sup> See Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Dawn*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA (1881).

<sup>1446</sup> This is the reference to a passage from John Henry Newman's *Rise and Progress of Universities* (University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, IN (1856)): "An academical system without the personal influence of teachers upon pupils is an Arctic winter; it will create an ice-bound, petrified, cast-iron University, and nothing else".

cultural progress of humanity during the past couple of centuries, we would be able to realize that there was a constant dialectical reaction against the predecessor: thus, the irregularity and chaos of art in the medieval ages resulted in the emphasis on order, symmetry and proportion during Renaissance, which got challenged by the Baroque era, which idealized art and human cultures as literally *barocco*, a Portuguese word for “flawed pearl”, and insisted on asymmetry, modulations and dissonances and even bizarre, odd elements, especially in its late, Rococo phase, but which received a reactionary response in the society and resulted in the rise of the neoclassicist, so-called Empire style, proponed by Napoleon amongst others, where order and seriousness became reestablished, but which served as a dialectical base for the birth of romanticism, which, on the other hand, paved way for the dawn of the Industrial Age, along with all the conservatism that it implied, acting as a wakeup call for modernism, including expressionism, Dadaism, surrealism, atonality, abstract art and other powerful forces that reawakened freedoms, but pushed the world into two World Wars due to the rise of fascism, which brought about the period where racism and colonialism ended, where civil rights movement flourished and where (inter)sexual liberties and women’s rights prospered, but, alas, only to give rise to the Thatcherism and the Reaganomics of the 1980s, which paved way for the grunge, drum & bass, post rock and subversive electro sound and early Internet days of the 1990s, but which got drowned in just another wave of conservative political ideologies that today advocate the lifting of the walls and the deployment of the barbed wires, that blatantly employ online espionage, that adopt the cruelest capitalist modes of running the social machinery, that corrupt the human souls by forcing their conversion from free spirits that can freely and altruistically highlight the beauty and the grandeur of another to self-advertising sardines in a can in this era where marketing is the mother of all business, and that produced pervasive complacency with the transformation of the initially liberal high-tech business models into apparatuses of avarice and of academia into shallow corporate schemes, which is where we stand now, hoping to spur a bounce back into the realm of genuinely freer modes of being, where unrestrained flights of timeless beauties would stream on the air of divine inspiration, as moneyless, egoless and anarchic as they could be. One thing that becomes noticeable from this trend is that there are no losers in this sinusoidal pattern of change: all one needs to do is wait for long enough before the ideals one supported receive their revival in the society, albeit in fresh new forms. But one thing that is harder to notice and that requires a finer historical microscope to magnify the events surrounding the periods of transition between the two successive eras is that the new styles arose not by the pure reaction against their old counterparts, but by combining this repulsive reaction with confirmatory attitudes, that is, with a whole a lot of respect and mimicry of the exact preceding phase that one rebelled against. If it were not for this adoption of the language of the “enemy”, the progressive ideas that revolutionized the society might not have resonated with it and produced the desired change. This serves to remind us that alternately (I) facing another and empathizing therewith, and (II) turning one’s back to and differing is the key to creative acting. This insight also explains why parents present great models to follow, but are also mirrors of how things should not be done. This explains why on top of his insistence on love and respect of parents and brothers (Matthew 19:19), the Christ also said the following: “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For, I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household” (Matthew 10:34-36). He certainly said so in the spirit of a true rebel, the one who is aware that only insofar as we go against the stream and refuse to be a passive follower in life do we have a chance to

become a genuine source of progress in life. To love, respect and never fall out of embrace of the tradition upon which we stand and yet to incessantly keep our eyes on traits thereof that should be erased and transformed into something more advanced and beautiful, being a follower and a rebel at the same time, is the way which all the progressive personalities ought to follow. Combining the spirits of empathic respect and rebellious ruination in our hearts, going in step and against the stream at the same time, as seemingly impossible as it is, is the task accomplished by all those who hold a ticket for the most exciting skyward ride of their lives, from the slums to the stars. After all, the babies I mentioned earlier, deconstructing the world and breaking it into pieces in the initial phases of their learning to interact with it are saved due to the divine span of their wonder and an innate empathy that prompts them to look up to the adults with respect and develop by tirelessly imitating their actions, just like seven-month old Theo sitting in my lap as I singlehandedly write this sentence attempts to type on this very same keyboard, having seen myself doing it, even though a not so constructive end result of his typing it would be (alas, he has just slid his hand over the keyboard and magically managed to magnify the screen, perhaps as a sign of success of my hitting the right spot with this stylistically outrageous parallel). In fact, such is the scope of their Wonder and Love, the two central columns on which the whole universe rests, as big as the vastest dome of stars, that impression is that babies have an implicit role to teach the grownups that when these two qualities shine like suns within us, anything we do, be it the most destructive actions, will turn out alright, for ourselves and the world alike, alongside further telling us that destruction is inevitable on the road of every conceivable evolution, that progress could be unimaginable without it and that Wonder and Love instilled in us may turn the tears that its experience would otherwise tend to invoke into the eruptions of most magnificent cosmic joys. For, had it not been for the rebellious act of breaking rules and standards of thinking and behaving, no progress in this world would have been imaginable. The wisest teachers are aware of this, which is why they equally foster the development of those who are inclined to become obedient edifiers of the tradition and of those who are predestined to become revolutionary thinkers who will, in the end, be those to truly shift the boundaries of human knowledge and shed starry seeds of evolutionary thinking over the soils of human minds and the whole wide world that we inhabit.

Yet, despite the given Chargaff's and McCulloch's norms that point at the importance of encouraging difference in opinions, independent thinking and an unending quest for uniqueness and originality in one's approach to discovering the secrets of Nature, teachers that act in accordance with this guideline are still rare, as our civilization has been throughout its entire existence dominated by leaders that craved for crafting armies of followers and not those who would be ready to freely confront their opinions and correct them in their approach. In such a way, these faulty leaders, the teachers who are into fashioning armies of dull myrmidons instead of unique creative dissenters, appear as if they have forgotten or never truly grasped the importance of dialectical confrontations of opposing outlooks for the development of our knowledge. They also seem not to have carefully thought over the fact that all the political, religious and epistemological systems that spurred blind obedience to rules set forth by given authorities instead of finding value in fostering freedom of thought, from Communism to Christianity of the Dark Ages to any type of thinking where relationships are held together by rigid links of dogma rather than flexibly waving through the balance of faith and wonder, were predestined for failure. Innumerable political systems and autocratic governances have failed because they did not allow for freedom of will, thought and choice to be fully expressed within their realms. Empirical sciences have begun to flourish during the era of the so-called

enlightenment, as the Western world opened itself to expression of free doubt and unconstrained inquiry about Nature on the account of insistence on dogmatic norms of thinking imposed by the Church. The Christ angered his contemporaries most by placing the divine reference into the heart of each and every one in the world, irrespective of one's faith, caste or ethnic origins, for as long as the light of goodness and love illuminated one's heart, proclaiming the famous "Ye are Gods" (John 10:34) on the way. Yet, when hearing this, the angry Jews in his vicinity grabbed stones ready to throw them on him, saying how this was "because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (John 10:33). However, the nature of the core of human thinking has not changed significantly since the dawn of human race, as there has always been an incessant tendency resting in all of us to replace this divine voice that guides us from the inside by blind obedience of the world's authorities, be they scientific committees, powerful figures in our lives, common opinions of the social era, or even the very Christ. This undoubtedly prompted many progressive thinkers who have advocated healthy disrespect of the authority to agree that true Christians or, I should better say, Christ-like creatures of the modern day would be going against the grain of the traditional Christian teaching and try to return to its core which teaches ceaseless rebellion against one such blind adoration of anything in life. As pointed out by the bicycling guitarist, Chris Watson, "Christianity does not teach the religion of Jesus, which was the realization of divine Sonship, but the religion about Jesus, a castrated version of the Gospel that puts Jesus on a pedestal and says that only He, and nobody else, is divine"<sup>1447</sup>, prompting us to think about people's continuously opting to be creatively caged by conformist thinking and acting, letting the immensely beautiful creative essence of their beings that glows from the inside be warped by the peer pressure, while discarding the inner voice that guides them towards unique expressions of divine beauty, the same mistake that humans have been making over and over again through the history. Two millennia ago, the common people preferred to reject one such lantern of self-responsible thinking and acting that the Christ brought, with all the inexhaustible potentials for their spiritual development that it would have enkindled in them, and opted for rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah. Today, the fate that those who differ and walk along truly progressive paths in life, aside from being ready to openly stand against hypocrisies and injustices of the world, is such that they must be prepared to face similar rejection and doors shut in front of their faces by the gate-guarding teachers of the world, who "have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered" (Luke 11:52). Or, as stands inscribed on the tombstone of the Serbian poet and politician from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Petar Kočić, "Who sincerely and passionately loves Truth, Freedom and Homeland, free and fearless he is like God, but despised and hungry like a dog"<sup>1448</sup>. Despite innumerable pieces of art and religious parables that have outlined the tragic mistake that human societies have carried out since antiquity with their unfair rejection of those who bravely and progressively differed from the stale social clichés, norms and standards, it is as if the bulk of humankind has not learned much from them; for, still, being on the road to become special and unique equals being on the road to persecution by the worldly judges, mediocre and conformity-seeking by default. Yet, to spread the message of relevance of each of us, to install the belief that everyone hides a sprout of a new Messiah within one's heart and mind, to open the skies for each

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<sup>1447</sup> See Chris Watson's *Ye are Gods*, available at [http://www.thebicyclingguitarist.net/philosophy/ye\\_are\\_gods.htm](http://www.thebicyclingguitarist.net/philosophy/ye_are_gods.htm) (2007).

<sup>1448</sup> "Ко искрено и страсно љуби Истину, Слободу и Отаџбину, слободан је и неустрашив као Бог, а презрен и гладан као пас". See the documentary *Petar Kočić, pobunjeni Srbin* directed by Milica Matić, RTS, Belgrade (2016).

and every creature's flight to spiritual fulfillment and happiness, has been the ideal of the Christ and all the great teachers of this world alike. What one can glimpse from this array of thoughts is also the similarity between the core of Christian teaching and that which lies at the heart of bountiful scientific enterprise. Namely, both are ultimately about sowing the soil of human minds with seeds of independent thinking and the sense of responsibility in front of the inspiring and divine music that reverberates across the space of one's mind and heart more than blindly following the norms set forth by powers that be. It is imaginative rebellion against the existing mainstays and trends in being and thinking as much as devotional respect thereof and finding of immense sources of inspiration therein that comprises the path of creativity in this life.

In essence, as a reminder, to be creatively different from and empathically the same as others arises as a natural need from the Way of Love. Every way in Nature symbolizes exactly that: simultaneous separateness and connectedness. Therefore, the entire life can be envisaged as a dance during which we constantly dig moves that are different from those that the creature we face pulls off, and yet in certain aspects and elements unceasingly mirror and imitate them. To that end, when Federico Fellini notices that "when an artist is happy and spontaneous, he is successful because he reaches the unconscious and translates it with a minimum of interference"<sup>1449</sup>, he hints at one, meditative pole of the Way of Love, suggestive of perfect withdrawnness from the world that we dance with, all so as to dig the wonderful moves freed from the corruptive social influence that the Italian cinema wizard had in mind when he continued his rumination: "Unfortunately, we all make mistakes, because education, culture, personal tics, and personal taste deform things that otherwise would be so pure and instead mark them with the taint of our conditioning"<sup>1450</sup>. Such behavioral impulses brought forth from the deepest and the divinest rooms of our psyche serve the purposes of astonishing both ourselves, their bearers, with the inexhaustible sally of starry signs as well as the world spinning around us like a carousel of infinite wonder. On the other hand, without simultaneously residing in the diametrically opposite pole of perfect empathy with this very same world that we deliberately distance ourselves from for the sake of beautifying and saving it, regardless of how impossible this may seem, we would be streaming toward a state of spiritual parchedness, the same one that awaits those who forget to dwell in the divine depths of their beings and become submissive puppets on the strings of social lures. Yet, once we set our spirit along the fine line of balance described by the Way of Love, such acting which blends what does not seem compatible and possible to blend at all will become natural to us and unutterably enchanting to the world that watches us. And what is more, whenever it seems as if we have found an ultimate balance, as perfect as it can be, break it! For, only a balance between balance and a lack of balance can be said to present the ultimate systemic balance in this life, the balance that propels us forward during the evolution of our beings and the entire life.

After all, without breaking the laws imposed by standards and norms in our probing the world of our experience, we would have never evolved to what we are now nor would we ever continue to evolve beyond what we are now. Whether we break the rules imposed by grammar and vocabulary and thus promote linguistic novelties which will later be widely adopted, or we break the behavioral clichés by introducing never foreseen gestures and moves in communication, which would later settle in our culture, or we break the regular and predictable stream of thoughts by giving rise to new ideas, which may later turn out to have presented new

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<sup>1449</sup> See Charles B. Ketcham's *Federico Fellini: The Search for a New Mythology*, Paulist Press, New York, NY (1976), pp. 20.

<sup>1450</sup> *Ibid.*

branches in the tree of knowledge of the entire humanity, we should be aware that the evolution of anything in this life inherently depends on its braveness to break the rules of one sort or another. World Wide Web, for one, has revolutionized the processes of information collection and distribution, enabling an unprecedentedly quick access thereto, in great abundance and with an immense diversity of sources, specifically due to its intrinsic rebelliousness against the corporate and capitalist culture of selfish reciprocity in sharing knowledge with the culture rooted in a lack of censorship, almost unlimited transparency and selfless sharing. And when my peers make fun of me for writing papers with one such perfectly transparent state of mind, determined to conceal nothing and share everything, because I mention in them things that, they deem, belong to grant proposals, things that they would carefully protect from being stolen and share with others only after they earn money for them from the funding agencies, my response is either a careless shrug of the shoulders or a hollered reminder that sharing, as humble and egoless as it can get, is an act through which science and scientific creativity put themselves on the diametrically opposite side from the world of business, where ideas are protected with the veils of shadiness and clandestineness and where people, essentially, stand against one another. But if successful, this limitless sharing of ideas, of practical outcomes and of sharing as an ideal *per se* would distance science away from the rules of the market and the devious demon that the dollar sign is, which spoil its purity ever more with every new day, and bring it back to its original roots, unmaterialistic and romanticist. And if my dreams come true and one such day comes, I would be able to drop dead with a smile on my face. This all makes one want to exclaim the celebrated message crafted by Radiohead, “Hail to the Thief”, and place the law-breaking attitude on the pedestal of human creativity. Resembling the wise bear that stares at the glistening Moon and wishes if he could give it to the thief whom he saw in his house earlier and to whom he could only give his thrifty robes<sup>1451</sup>, or, even better, the bishop from Victor Hugo’s *Les Mis*, Myriel, who, when royal guards brought Jean Valjean back to his church, together with a bag full of silverware that the former captive released on a parole had stolen from the House of God, not only says that it was all a gift, but gives him two more candlesticks to carry, pretending in front of the police as if he had failed to remember to take them too, changing his life for good and transforming him from a robber to a hero of the French Revolution and humanity and beyond, we thence become true thieves in this world, swimming against the standard streams of corrupted and selfish behavior and towards the great mountain peaks where intrinsic goodness and an infinite love for the creatures of this world reside. Whereas the rest of the world will keep on striving to collect as much of the earthly treasures as possible and thereby continuously shrink the scope of the shine of spirit, the approach of one such reverse thief of the modern society is to shock people by giving all that one has, knowing that one’s spirit becomes replenished thereby with many treasures of the soul in return, treasures which serve the only role of tossing them in the wind so as to ornament others therewith. Theo, I remember, was of such a pure and gracious spirit as a toddler that when another kid came and took two of the three little locomotives with which he played on the floor, he ran after the kid to give him the third one too. I, myself, was one such charitable child as well, having had a hard time recognizing selfish inclinations in the neighboring kids and seeing every one of them as inherently goodhearted. If you took a toy from me, your need for it would sadden me so much that I would, just like Theo, chase the pitied you to hand you another toy. And to this very day, whenever envious hands try to grab things I was temporarily given custody over, I apply the same approach I used when an angry abuser took my

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<sup>1451</sup> See the picturesque interpretation of an ancient Zen story by Jon J. Muth in *Zen Shorts*, Scholastic Press, New York, NY (2005).

ball on a basketball court when I was a kid and when instead of entering an argument and attempting to bring the ball back I ran after him and brought him another ball and gleefully tossed it to his arms, saying how “this is how we are - we give away all that we have to those in need”, knowing that one such infinitely loving approach which, remember, does not contain not even a grain of irony or cynicism in it, is the most effective way of humiliating the ignorant delinquents of this world and pointing them at the right ways. For, as the Christ advised, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3)”. After all, only when we pine to reach the stars for the sake of bringing them down to earth and placing them on palms of the hands of fellow earthlings can we, ourselves, become one such star, with its shine instilled deep within the core of our being.

Science, too, has known for a long time that such a selfless scrutiny, which oftentimes undermines one’s own honorable reputation via obeying the values of honesty, humbleness and altruism and disobeying the dictations of the authority, plays a critical role in ensuring the excellence of our scientific endeavors. CUDOS as an acronym used to denote the essential features of a good and trustworthy scientific practice at its beginning and end possesses the clear elements of such selfless acting: Communalism, which means that “scientific results are the common property of the entire scientific community”, and Skepticism, which implies that “scientific claims must be exposed to critical scrutiny before being accepted” and reported<sup>1452</sup>. The same message could be found ingrained in the following words of the Serbian quantum information theoretician and philosopher, Vlatko Vedral: “I maintain that three messages of science are the key in providing us with a broader framework for living a worthwhile existence. The first is this: if a rigorously scrutinized piece of evidence contradicts some of our cherished beliefs, it is time to change the beliefs (and not fake the evidence). In other words, being flexible and honest is very important. Secondly, accept arguments on the basis of evidence alone (and not on the basis of who presents them). In other words, be critical and have a healthy disrespect for authority. Thirdly, even our deepest held convictions could be proven wrong one day. Therefore be open-minded to different views and tolerant of others. Given that most of the world’s conflicts stem from some form of extreme philosophical or religious view, a broad acquaintance with the three scientific messages just outlined would seem highly desirable. A famous Scottish philosopher, David Hume, once said that ‘reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions’. I very much agree with this. Expressed somewhat differently... the heart dictates what the mind thinks. This is why the scientific battle for the hearts of people is a far more important one than that for their minds. And, most likely, it will be a far tougher one to win”<sup>1453</sup>. Hence, to incessantly dig through the tautological and metaphysical foundations of the scientific methods we employ in our explorations of the physical reality - which include not only the intellectual grounds of inquiry, but the emotional drives that dictate our devotion to science too - and subject them to honest and genuinely curious scrutiny, aside from solemnly staring at the sky from which the sense of achievement and celestial fame will dawn on us some day, is the way that leads to successful journeys towards treasures in the fantastic realm of science. Besides, as one of people’s favorite Serbian poets, Duško Radović pointed out, rather ambiguously, “If you want

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<sup>1452</sup> This acronym was coined in 1942 by Robert K. Merton, and aside from C and S, the other guiding principles are: Universalism, which means that “all scientists can contribute to science regardless of race, nationality, culture, or gender”, Disinterestedness, according to which “scientists should not present their results entangled with their personal beliefs or activism for a cause”, and Originality, which means that “claims by researchers must be novel and add something to our knowledge and understanding”.

<sup>1453</sup> See Vlatko Vedral’s *Thou Shalt Study Science*, available at <http://www.good.is/post/thou-shalt-study-science> (2010).

always to be right, you must always change your opinion”<sup>1454</sup>, on one hand condemning those who pliantly switch their opinions in order to gain social acceptance and recognition, but on the other hand commending those who question their deepest convictions and who, selfless as they must be in the most positive of senses, prove themselves wrong from one moment of their introspective existence to another, getting closer and closer to the elusive concept of truth thereby.

The readiness to revisit our methods, premises and deepest beliefs with each sign landing on us within the empirical sphere rather than to falsify the experimental results or warp the interpretations thereof so that they fit our presumptions and expectations is one of the key standards of an honest scientific practice. One such practice implemented daily preserves our minds in a healthy, flexible state, maintaining its juvenile proneness to respond sensibly to the subtlest experiential stimuli, alongside being unattached to any fixed grounds, be they composed of our beliefs, values or approaches to making sense of reality. In contrast, holding onto fixed opinions and stonily steady worldviews implies inertness and closeness to millions of inspiring voices that echo all across the magnificent world of our experience. Irrespective of how sublime these worldviews may be, their unchangeable and unquestioned nature places us on a ride to crafting a monstrous mind of a kind, as in harmony with the verse an angelic harper whispered to William Blake’s ear “on a pleasant bank beside a river by moonlight”, leading the poet by the hand to eventually conclude that “every thing that lives is Holy”: “The man who never alters his opinion is like standing water, & breeds reptiles of the mind”<sup>1455</sup>. The art of revisiting and revising the foundations of our worldviews, whenever it is deemed appropriate or necessary, is vital since, as the blind spot effect has warned us, spending too much time looking at the world from a single perspective or from a same old set of implicit assumptions - which we imperceptibly employ in our observations and which define the state of the mind from which we perceive the world, along with the qualities that we recognize in it - limits the richness of endlessly versatile insights that we would be able to arrive at in our explorations. Eventually, a voice ready to proclaim the punchline from Tom Stoppard’s play *Arcadia*, “The best possible time to be alive is when almost everything you thought you knew is wrong”<sup>1456</sup>, is seen as emerging from an enlightened state of mind, imparting terror onto all the insecure mindsets around it that cling frighteningly onto dogmas of one type or another, so long as they give them a sense of security, albeit false and deceitful. Therefore, a godly device for thought can be said not to be the one rooted fixedly in unquestioned faith in certain ideas, but the one undergoing alternate ruination and edification of its worldviews from their deepest convictions upward. Along the way, the acceptance of arguments based on their correctness and truthfulness rather than on the power of authority that proclaimed them is another element of scientific excellence. To turn the argument around, the stringently ethical pursuit of truth in science is rooted in none other but the art of constructive rebelliousness and benevolent disrespect of the authority. To combine this nonconformist attitude with a resolute respect of the long tradition of knowledge, which both we and our authorities belong to, is yet another task for the magicians of all times, the souls on a mission, as ever, to combine what seems not combinable at all. While Wonder resides in the core of the intellectually rebellious attitude that incessantly begs to differ, to run

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<sup>1454</sup> See "Učutkan" je zbog jedne rečenice, a hiljade drugih citiramo i danas, B92 News (June 3, 2019), retrieved from [https://www.b92.net/zivot/vesti.php?yyyy=2019&mm=06&dd=03&nav\\_id=1550084](https://www.b92.net/zivot/vesti.php?yyyy=2019&mm=06&dd=03&nav_id=1550084).

<sup>1455</sup> See William Blake’s *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, retrieved from [http://www.levity.com/alchemy/blake\\_ma.html](http://www.levity.com/alchemy/blake_ma.html) (1793).

<sup>1456</sup> See Tom Stoppard’s *Arcadia: A Play in Two Acts*, Samuel French, Los Angeles, CA (1993).

away from other people's viewpoints and emerge into ever starrier worldviews, Love is at the centerpiece of outlooks that are always softly rocking and moving towards others, driven to selflessly unite with the eyes through which they see the world, irrespective of the imperfections that they bear. And these two, Wonder and Love, are the two fundamental pillars upon which the edifices of our knowledge and being have been erected and stably sustained. In the balance between unity and diversity that their marriage promotes, the key to our evolution as humankind is concealed. Likewise, in this moving to and fro, the grand symbol of the Way, of simultaneous separateness and connectedness, is drawn, enabling our senses to foretaste the sunrise of the paradisiacal Philosophy explicated on the leaflets of this book.

In that sense, the outpours of empathy that flood our heart and choke our throat with tears of compassion would drive us to respectfully adapt to the conditions and requirements set by our environment, while the sprout of benevolent rebelliousness dormant in us would always push us in the direction of disobedience, independent thinking, originality and creative difference. This crucifying pull in the opposite directions is, however, not something to be despaired about; it is rather a state of being which will instill a starry glow of eternal beauty in us, in a similar fashion as it ascended the Christ to the infinite realm of being. In that sense, our drives to be different from others and the inability to fit in the world around us should be celebrated and gladly looked upon as much as the drives to be one and the same with other people's hearts and the world as we see it. Hereby, we could also recall the following words of Anthony Storr: "Man's adaptation, paradoxically, is through lack of adaptation. We are not accurately and rigidly adjusted to any one set of external conditions by means of inherited patterns of behavior; we have to invent our own"<sup>1457</sup>. By grasping these words, it becomes evident that adapting to anything in a straightforward fashion, without much effort, essentially regresses us on the evolutionary tree, whereas inventively coming up with unexpected behavioral responses that go against the routine and likely ones is what can be said to typify truly progressive interactions with the environment. Simultaneously, to be a maladaptive dissident, unwilling to conform to stale social norms and credos, emerges as a far holier trait than the docile submission to every whim of the power of authority. After all, if the co-evolutionary view of the history of life as we know it teaches us something, it is that both a system and its environment ought to change and mutually adapt to each other if the fabulous story of evolution is to be carried forward. Any insistence on autocratic and unilateral adaptations would lead both the adapted systems and the environment that sets these restrictions to the road to failure. In view of this, we could be sure that the innate urge to rebelliously differ is as vital for our progress as the human race as the drive to be a faithful and trustworthy devotee.

As a matter of fact, many exceptional scientific minds can prove the fact that a vital trait behind their creativity has been defiance of the authority. Albert Einstein, who was forced to drop out of school when he was only fifteen, following a remark of one of his professors that "his mere presence spoils the respect of the class", proclaimed once that "to punish me for my contempt for authority, fate made me an authority myself". Once such people are placed in the position of an authority, the starting point of their reign is summed in the first lines of perhaps the greatest movie monologue, given by Charlie Chaplin in the dying moments of the Great Dictator, "I'm sorry, but I don't want to be an emperor. That's not my business. I don't want to rule or conquer anyone", and is also epitomized in the first principle of the motivational manifesto hanging on one of the walls of my lab, so as to remind the students of the profoundest secrets of scientific creativity: "No authority lives here". Instead of craving to control and

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<sup>1457</sup> See Anthony Storr's *Music and the Mind*, Random House, New York, NY (1992), pp. 176.

manipulate anyone *en route* to original research findings, I have told students that we hold hands in an undertow, swamped by a giant wave of the sea of this mysterious spiritual energy that we all float on, influencing one another, the students the professor and the professor the students, and evolving in unknown directions that are subject to no one's plans, the method of which is, doubtlessly, bound to be perceived as dangerous radical by the reigning academic authorities that base their rule on obedience, discipline and tyrannically unilateral visions. Taking the stance of a rebel is, to that end, an inevitable fate of those who have the urge to question the foundations of being in full honesty of their hearts, since, as such, they will sooner or later face the opposition of the mainstream scientific minds of the modern day, which are all about securing prestige and tenure, first and foremost, and only then looking after glimpsing into the heart of reality. Such an opposition could be, though, seen as indicative of one's level of commitment to pursuance of the line of intellectual progress and creativity. Or, as Peter Lawrence noticed, "Science is not like some kind of an army, with a large number of people who make the main steps forward together; you need to have individually creative people who are making breakthroughs - who make things different"<sup>1458</sup>. Yet, the same verdict that the 1973 Nobel Laureate in economic sciences, Wassily Leontief reached in his analysis of academic centers where the science of economics was taught could undoubtedly be extended to most other natural science departments: "The methods used to maintain intellectual discipline in this country's most influential economics departments can occasionally remind one of those employed by the Marines to maintain discipline on Parris Island"<sup>1459</sup>. To oppose this tragically rigid state of affairs where unimaginative obedience is valued more than groundbreaking creativity, many innovative youngsters are nowadays bringing a new cultural face to academia, somewhat going along the line of the motto adopted by Facebook, Inc.: "Move fast and break things". In the book *Scientist as Rebel*, Freeman Dyson, who claimed that the role of scientists is not only to be questioning and dissenting, but to be subversive too, aimed at not only confronting and challenging authorities, but actually openly "intending to overthrow or undermine an established government"<sup>1460</sup>, took a step further by defining science as "an alliance of free spirits rebelling against the restrictions imposed by the locally prevailing culture"<sup>1461</sup>. To illustrate this, he gave the example of his chemistry teacher, who would climb with his pupils over Winchester rooftops, up the chapel tower and, instead of teaching them about "ferrous and ferric oxides", read aloud the "latest poems of Auden and Isherwood and Dylan Thomas"<sup>1462</sup>. Thus Freeman Dyson deduced that rebelliousness at heart and professional competence in a chosen scientific discipline go hand-in-hand, and proceeded to give an array of examples of renowned scientists who were intellectual and societal rebels in favor of this argument, ranging from Galileo Galilei and Giordano Bruno to Benjamin Franklin to Norbert Wiener to Desmond Bernal to Dick Feynman. "Our undisciplinables are our proudest products", William James is known to have said a century ago at a Harvard Commencement Dinner<sup>1463</sup>, prompting the Harvard University President, Drew Faust, to welcome a new

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<sup>1458</sup> See *The Heart of Research is Sick: A Conversation with Peter Lawrence*, *Lab Times* (February 2011), pp. 24 – 31.

<sup>1459</sup> See Wassily Leontief's Foreword to *Why Economics is Not Yet a Science*, edited by Alfred S. Eichner, M. E. Sharpe, Inc., Armonk, NY (1983), pp. xi.

<sup>1460</sup> Taken from the Free Online Dictionary definition of the word "subversive"; available at <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/subversive> (2011).

<sup>1461</sup> See Freeman Dyson's *The Scientist as Rebel*, New York Review Books, New York, NY (2006).

<sup>1462</sup> See Freeman Dyson's *The Scientist as Rebel*, New York Review Books, New York, NY (2006).

<sup>1463</sup> See Harry Redner's *The Ends of Science: An Essay in Scientific Authority*, Westview Press, Boulder, CO (1987), pp. 312.

generation of freshmen these days by telling them that “what is prone to make mistakes in you is your most worth”<sup>1464</sup> and touching the heart of the issue at hand by reminding us that creative science is inextricably tied to a passionate struggle against paradigm-, cliché- and standard-imposing authorities, the same one on the wings of which science arose like Phoenix from the ashes of the times of Inquisition. And yet, as it usually happens as time goes by, revolutionaries tend to forget the seeds from which their very intellectual insurrectionism and benevolent non-conformism sprang to life. Science itself, once the epitome of freedom of thought and unbound wonder over it all, has thus become a fertile ground for exhibitions of conceited convictions like no other in the modern world, finding itself on the other extreme, the one where mind-narrowing dogmas and unquestioning beliefs reside. For, in parallel with the rise of arrogant dogmatism among the mainstream scientific mindsets, a fascinating darkness caused by disinterest in anything that lies outside and beyond one’s immediate, specialized field of interest, let alone that which supports one’s worldviews at its foundations, began to lurk over these common scientific minds, gradually inducing a narrow, tunnel vision of their intellects. “(Scientific revolution) implied opposition to laws, statutes and privileges by which schools and universities and the monopolies of knowledge exercised by the corporate professions (medicine in particular) were shielded from the freedom of philosophic thinking”<sup>1465</sup>, thus claims the German sociologist of science, Wolfgang van den Daele, refreshing our awareness of the antiauthoritarian nature of the most genuine scientific thought and its ability to remain as such only insofar as it retains a constant touch with its philosophical grounds and metaphysical skies. And yet, although familiarity with the philosophical premises behind the scientific thought is vital in preventing our minds from slipping into these tunnels of blind faith, nothing but a most modest dose of common reason is required for us to realize that coming up with expressions, ideas or discoveries that stand out with their originality and innovativeness inevitably implies breaking the norms of standardized and predictable, mainstream thinking. Therefore, since every original thought ingrains a miniscule insurrectionist spirit in it, even genuine scientists and artists who have not been marked as renegades based on their extravagant social appearance or political choice can claim the attribute of a rebel bona fide as truly theirs.

Yet, constructive wonder can exist only on the grounds of a firm belief in specific fixed presumptions and, likewise, even the most notorious rebelliousness sprouts from obedience to certain principles in this life wherein, as Tai-chi-tu emblem illustrates, all qualities conceal their diametrical opposites in their hearts. Hence, the rebellious drive in the space of the most creative scientific minds springs directly from being true to and obeying one of the most critical requirements for a fair and honest scientific practice, which is selfless doubt and unbiased questioning of all experiential phenomena, something that, as we see, can exist only on the basis of faith in the solidity of specific premises underlying their inquisitive attitudes. This furthermore implies that fair scientific practice implies one’s incessantly being in touch with the foundations of one’s worldviews, from which the graceful pillars of our values, anticipations, intentions and aspirations with which we approach and question the world of our experience rise and sustain the buildings of our knowledge and the very being in this world. Needless to add, this attitude, which is inevitably pervaded with honesty and flexibility, both of which are vital traits of a creative mind, stands in contrast with the one of blindly obeying the powers of authority in our world,

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<sup>1464</sup> Watch the documentary movie *Ivory Tower*, directed by Andrew Rossi (2014).

<sup>1465</sup> See Wolfgang van den Daele’s *The Social Construction of Science: Institutionalization and Definition of Positive Science in the Latter Half of the Seventeenth Century*, In: *The Social Production of Scientific Knowledge*, edited by E. Mendelsohn, P. Weingart and R. Whitley, Reidel, Dordrecht (1977), pp. 32.

which is, sadly, incredibly common in the modern scientific arena. Scientific educators who know how to appreciate the merits of rebellious thinking in class or in a research team are not too many nowadays. The majority of scientific leaders in the modern world still prefer obedience and conformity over creatively reckless and independent thinkers, even though the former traits almost always come at the cost of comparatively lower talent and drive with respect to genuine scientific creativeness. The scientific enterprise today is therefore almost fully in demand of not the lucid, passionate and quixotic Philosopher, but of the unquestioning, obtuse and obedient Worker, if we were to use the ancient Greek dichotomy. This state of affairs could be seen as a natural consequence of wide implementation of what Alfred North Whitehead claimed to have been the greatest scientific invention of the 18th Century: the method of scientific invention<sup>1466</sup>, faithful following of which is nowadays implicitly presumed to be enough to ensure a secure ascent along the projected line of scientific progress. Despite this, the contemporary scientific authorities that look after hiring hardworking robots to follow predetermined research algorithms rather than inherently rebellious scientific geni should know that the greatest ideas are born out of a clash of confusing chaos and sunshiny clarity rather than from sterilely ordered, overly disciplined and robotized mindsets and approaches. Still, with competitive science increasingly depending on expensive devices and millions of dollars in investments, making scientific research resemble a hardnosed business more than romantic and passionate endeavors of a wild and wondering, inherently adventurous human spirit, this trend of breeding passive followers and wasting potentially groundbreaking prodigies is expected to worsen in the decades to come. For, it is a general impression that those who approach the process of scientific discovery with a sacred sense of wonder and accept all the human rewards that they will be endowed with along this academic voyage of theirs a thing of minor importance which can easily distract creative mind if it is being paid too much attention have become as rare among scientists as diamond in the dust. On the other hand, the stereotypical scientist of the modern day can be said to be the one for whom professional prestige, fatty paychecks, travels to exotic destinations for conferences and other benefits that entail academic reputation present prime aims that he is running to attain, while science itself is, sadly, considered a necessary evil that one has to put up with during this egotistic run after comfort and fame. Once a disheveled bohemian and a quixotic dreamer, the stereotypical image of a scientist has undergone a tremendous change in the last few decades, and now it resembles more an insecure and coy individual in a business suit, narcissistically centered on the self and the aura of prestige surrounding it more than on anything or anyone else in his narrow-minded pantheon from which the muses of love, beauty, poetry, dancing and healing were expelled oh so many years ago and in whose corners the scales of cosmic justice were left to rust, with the ravenous monsters of ego prowling ungainly around them. For, just like money, the root of all evil (Timothy I 6:10), tends to corrupt the human soul, so is it prone to spoil the purity of any social edifice, including the once impeccably humble outlook of the academic enterprise, a social realm that has now been made equivalent to moral lowlands of life, mainly inhabited by voracious and vulgarly tasteless egomaniacs, with “only a few angels out there”<sup>1467</sup>. Of course, these laments over the decline of Romanticism and the upsurge of soulless materialism may be ageless, as old as science perhaps, and this can be illustrated by Henry Edward Bird’s complaint over the dying romantic spirit in chess in the

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<sup>1466</sup> See Alfred North Whitehead’s *Science and the Modern World*, Nolit, Belgrade, Serbia (1925).

<sup>1467</sup> These were the words Sheila Florance had mumbled on her deathbed in Paul Cox’s *A Woman’s Tale*, before she uttered, “Keep Love Live” and sailed away from this planet and into cosmic etherealness, to be carried on the winds of karma onto some distant planets of this or some other universe.

preface to his compilation of 157 most brilliant chess games of his times published in 1875, two and a half decades after the first international chess tournaments, a decade or so before the first world championship in chess, preceding the day when Marcel Duchamp gave up on visual arts, declared chess the greatest art of them all and focus solely on it in his work, and the magic on the board displayed in the next century and a half by Lasker, Bronstein, Spielmann, Nezhmetdinov, Tal, Ivanchuk, Morozevich, Rapport and others. During the days when Romantic chess was still the dominant style, Bird blamed the fact that “there has been no first-class play during the past few years and emulatory games, formerly so popular and frequent, are now of rare occurrence”<sup>1468</sup> on the players’ obsession with money, when the world’s best players of those times would be classified as bums by today’s standards. Still, although these laments may be timeless, this does not mean that they are unjustified, for should these calls be heard in time, the fall into chasms of deadened creativity and withered imagination, to which the current lines of development lead, having love for money and prestige as guides and destinations rather than means and auxiliaries, could be avoided. The wakeup calls should thus continue to be made, in which sense it is worth recalling that shortly before leaving the academic realm of science for good and setting off to found the San Francisco Exploratorium, with much sadness Frank Oppenheimer noticed that “physics had undergone a radical transformation”<sup>1469</sup>. He was said to have grown “disoriented and distressed by these changes, despairing of the ‘cutthroat competition’... as if getting credit for a discovery had become more important than knowledge itself”<sup>1470</sup>. Once “a haven for eccentric, adventurous intellectuals who mixed art and philosophy with their science and generally looked down on material gain as irrelevant, if not somehow immoral”, the academic world, in his opinion, experienced an influx of “a new generation of physicists (who) began to look at it as just another job... and became increasingly conformist – in a nationwide survey of college graduates in 1961, future physicists chose ‘making a lot of money’ as their prime motivator for going into the field”<sup>1471</sup>. And so, year after year of spurring conformism rather than dissent turned universities worldwide not into harbors of intellectual adventurism and genuine sense of wonder, as they should be, but rather into sites of worship of the sheepish pursuance of convention and superficial search for prestige and material wealth. Failing to balance the spirit of humbleness and humility of the intellect with poetic passions and unbound wonders that shatter the boundaries of clichéd convention with its sympathetic rebelliousness has thus yielded the ill state of suppressed dissent in which science finds itself today. And we all know from the famous Milgram experiments on obedience to authority figures<sup>1472</sup> that the tendency to dutifully comply with the orders of human authorities oftentimes eclipses the moral beliefs of people via shifts of responsibilities and can be said to be inherently toxic to the human spirit and society in any form. “The tendency toward obedience is one of the most sinister human traits”<sup>1473</sup>, Anthony Storr put it, and whenever we fail to take personal responsibility and question authorities regarding anything that seems inappropriate or unfair to us, we should be denounced as inherently sinful, by ourselves, first and foremost, if no one else is in the room. As a matter of fact, the moment in the Milgram experiment when one of the

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<sup>1468</sup> See Andrew Soltis’ *The 100 Best Chess Games of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Ranked*, McFarland & Company, Jefferson, NC (2006).

<sup>1469</sup> See K. C. Cole’s *Something Wonderful Happens: Frank Oppenheimer and the World He Made Up*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston, MA (2009), pp. 131.

<sup>1470</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 132.

<sup>1471</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 131.

<sup>1472</sup> See Stanley Milgram’s *Obedience to Authority*, Harper Perennial, New York, NY (1974).

<sup>1473</sup> See Anthony Storr’s *Human Destructiveness*, Routledge, London, UK (1991), pp. 107-109.

participants stands up and bravely declines to follow the orders from the authority to continue punishing the unknown person on the other side of the wall with electric shocks, initiating an avalanche of resistance from the previously unquestioningly obedient individuals, still stands as one of the most lucid “punch lines” of any scientific experiment ever conducted and is enough to bring one to tears any day with the inexhaustible ocean of beautiful meanings that it connotes. For, if we equalize creativity with intrinsic rebelliousness, we could indeed conclude that our civilization rests primarily on the shoulders of intellectual renegades rather than on the bricks laid by submissive executors of authoritatively imposed ideas and commands. Someone has observed that infants freshly arrived from the stars to this planet exhibit up to 99 % of their innate creative capabilities, but due to faulty education that insists on reproducibility instead of originality this percentage falls down to no more than 15 % once they become schooled to the nines and trained to be reliable screws in the social order machinery. The Summerhill school conceived as an environment that fits children rather than the other way around<sup>1474</sup>, offering strictly optional classes without relying on conditioning or molding behavioral patterns by any means, as well as John Holt’s classic study<sup>1475</sup> demonstrating the enormous extent to which forcing kids to learn lowers their creative potentials, speak in favor of the devastating effects that authoritative command and aspirations to control have on human creatures in development. The key on how to continue living up to the boundless divine potentials dormant within us and find our ways to stars on earth with enlightening outbursts of creativity from here on lies in challenging the powers of authority everywhere around us and sanely going against the stream whenever our stellar hearts prompt us to do so, notwithstanding that we must be ready to be severely punished by these authorities along the way. For, if this route be chosen to pursue, we would find our way to many courtroom docks where “a judge’s murder in a judge’s court”<sup>1476</sup> will be committed before our just eyes, but where we, an exile on a starlit avenue, like that “sweet black angel in danger, a gal in chains”<sup>1477</sup>, will “keep on pushing”<sup>1478</sup> and pushing and pushing the rock that will crush everything feign, sterile and spiritless that these guardians of the gate have represented.

Science today, more in demand of obedient workers than of argumentative, independent and groundbreaking thinkers, thus increasingly resembles the procession of blind men that follow a blind leader and fall altogether in a ditch, which the Christ depicted in one of his parables (Luke 6:39). Yet, ever since the dawn of science, the crucial inputs that strengthened its edifices have come from nonconformist spirits, those who readily, often at the risk of their lives questioned it all and knew that going against the grain of habit and ordinary beliefs is required for arrivals at the doorstep of great new discoveries. As such, the provision of something truly valuable in the scientific domain almost always depends on one’s keenness to cut the branches on which one is academically nested, professionally visible and socially renowned. Today, however, those who hold that only intellectual rebels, thinkers that tend to turn their worlds upside down with the radical nature of their approaches and ideas can aspire to become true wizards of science and who would find the following retelling of Dostoyevsky’s story about the Grand Inquisitor by Heinz von Foerster in his revolutionary paper on scientific education

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<sup>1474</sup> See Alexander Sutherland Neill’s *Summerhill School: A Radical Approach to Child Learning*, Pocket Books, New York, NY (1984).

<sup>1475</sup> See John Holt’s and Pat Farenga’s *Teach Your Own: The John Holt Book of Homeschooling*, Perseus, Cambridge, MA (2003).

<sup>1476</sup> Listen to the Rolling Stones’ *Sweet Black Angel on Exile on Main St.*, Rolling Stones (1972).

<sup>1477</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1478</sup> *Ibid.*

beautiful are as rare as gems in the dust: “Maybe you remember the story Ivan Karamazov makes up in order to intellectually needle his younger brother Alyosha. The story is that of the Great Inquisitor. As you recall, the Great Inquisitor walks on a very pleasant afternoon through his town, I believe it is Salamanca; he is in good spirits. In the morning he has burned at the stakes about a hundred and twenty heretics, he has done a good job, everything is fine. Suddenly there is a crowd of people in front of him, he moves closer to see what's going on, and he sees a stranger who is putting his hand onto a lame person, and that lame one can walk. Then a blind girl is brought before him, the stranger is putting his hand on her eyes, and she can see. The Great Inquisitor knows immediately who He is, and he says to his henchmen: ‘Arrest this man’. They jump and arrest this man and put Him into jail. In the night the Great Inquisitor visits the stranger in his cell and he says: ‘Look, I know who You are, troublemaker. It took us one thousand and five hundred years to straighten out the troubles you have sown. You know very well that people can't make decisions by themselves. You know very well people can't be free. *We* have to make their decisions. *We* tell them who they are to be. You know that very well. Therefore, I shall burn You at the stakes tomorrow’. The stranger stands up, embraces the Great Inquisitor and kisses him. The Great Inquisitor walks out, but, as he leaves the cell, he does not close the door, and the stranger disappears in the darkness of the night. Let us remember this story when we meet those troublemakers, and let us keep the door open for them. We shall recognize them by an act of creation: ‘Let there be vision: and there was light’<sup>1479</sup>. Therefore, confronted with a disobedient rebel in the classroom, I never dismiss or ignore; rather, I make a nucleus out of him/her, from which the crystallization of the epistemic system with students’ heads instead of atoms into something ever more beautiful and creative would start. A chatty student may thus be invited over to the podium to lead a discussion in whichever direction he wishes, while a sleepy one may cause a hushed silence to descend over the classroom for a while, allowing all the intense thoughts sent into the air to settle down and precipitate into a solid and coherent structure, on which the restless spirits invading the space could bounce in gilded glory for as long as they wish. In a way, like Athena in Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*, a goddess of justice who “disdaineth the power and praise that is miscreate, with the just is her home and her ways are the ways of Fate”<sup>1480</sup>, acquitting Orestes, a man who had killed his mother, and deciding not to obey the revengeful voice of furies who called for his penance, but include them in the governance of Athens instead<sup>1481</sup>, thus diminishing their anger and making them blissful and benevolent once again, so have I chosen not to listen to the vindictive voice of the classroom furies who shoot venomous arrows straight into the hearts of those whom they see as unworthy of their grace and as guilty of one thing or another, let alone punish them for their sowing the seeds of hatred; rather, I put them in the spotlight and ask them for their guidance, knowing that

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<sup>1479</sup> Heinz Von Foerster – “Perception of the Future and the Future of Perception”, *Instructional Science* 1 (1) 31 – 43 (1972).

<sup>1480</sup> See the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus, Translated by George C. W. Warr, George Allen, London, UK (1900), retrieved from [https://archive.org/stream/oresteiaofaeschy00aesciala/oresteiaofaeschy00aesciala\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/oresteiaofaeschy00aesciala/oresteiaofaeschy00aesciala_djvu.txt).

<sup>1481</sup> “Nay, heard ye not the blazon that went forth from Zeus? Prophet and witness spake as one, to quit Orestes of his penalty. Oh spare to fling your angry malison in wasteful blight upon the land, nor shed your cancerous tears in dire unearthly dew to batten sourly on the velvet blade. Lo, ‘tis a faithful promise; ye shall have your dark sequestered shrines amid a land made righteous; yea, your altar-stones shall flow with fatness, and my burgh shall be your pride... Welcome your love, who freely grant to my dear land your covenant; and blest be Suasion, whose sooth look controlled my lips and tongue, and shook grim hearts that turned askant. O willing captives and devote to Zeus, the guardian of the mote, Victors for ever, ye and I in rivalry of grace will vie”, said Athena to the chorus of furies. See the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus, Translated by George C. W. Warr, George Allen, London, UK (1900), retrieved from [https://archive.org/stream/oresteiaofaeschy00aesciala/oresteiaofaeschy00aesciala\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/oresteiaofaeschy00aesciala/oresteiaofaeschy00aesciala_djvu.txt).

such would be the best way to heal their ailing hearts roasted on the fire of detestation and intolerance. After all, in this reality wherein things always take a surprising turn and wherein villains are dressed like heroes and *vice versa*, it is only a matter of time when those genuine lifesavers, looking least like ones, will be proven as such, though after long strings of debasements, reprehensions, insults and injury.

In that sense, it is worth recalling that the world has not fundamentally changed since the times when the Christ was marked not as a savior and an extraordinarily progressive creature, but as a human null and void, worth even less than the bandit Barabbas (John 18:40). It has neither changed much since the times when Joan of Arc was denounced as a witch rather than celebrated as a saint, nor the times when Giordano Bruno was condemned as a heretic instead of being praised for his free thought and magnificent imagination. To be burned at the stake, like these two martyrs, literally or metaphorically, is thus an inevitable fate of all those who have fiercely exposed ideas more progressive than the mainstream views. The words with which John the Apostle started off his Gospel, “The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (John 1:5), echoing those of the prophet Isaiah, written down almost a millennium earlier, “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined” (Isaiah 9:2), thus, I am afraid, may possess potentially eternal meaningfulness on this planet of ours. For, the world is still overcrowded with mindsets that hypocritically pay lip service of respect to those who are different and unprecedentedly progressive, praising them when they look them in the eye, but then rejecting them as soon as they swing around the corner, preferring the unquestioningly obedient followers instead, just as Pontius Pilate did with the Christ brought to his feet, showing sympathy for him and “marveling greatly” (Matthew 27:14), but then cold-bloodedly rejecting him and turning his back thereto when the masses desired to have him crucified (Matthew 27:26), in this early defeat of the ostensibly noble concept of democracy. It is as if the history of human race has taught the world nothing. Those who think with their own heads and in that sense rebel against the curses of mainstream thinking, knowing that “only things alive can swim against the stream, whereas dead ones always flow with it”<sup>1482</sup>, as G. K. Chesterton observed, remaining free from the shackles of the blind obedience of authority, be they a new Socrates, Christ, Nietzsche or Thoreau, are still considered as lunatics and rejects by most rather than the most advanced voices we could hear in the world today. Like Fellini’s Gelsomina, crushed by the surging crowd of people and thrown against the wall with a sign on it symbolically saying *Madonna Immacolata*, perhaps to tell the observer that “the real saints of this world never seem to be recognized by those more intent on celebrating saintliness than embodying it”<sup>1483</sup>, any true embodiment of the spirit divine, any veritable emanation of Wonder and Love that make the world go ‘round, has a higher chance of being shoved into ditches and gutters by the worldly authorities than lifted to the stars where it belongs. And as one gazes wistfully at stars from these gutters that he has ended up in, trying to untangle where things had gotten wrong, sooner or later, he, like myself, would recognize that there is no need to despair for being a Mozart and not making it to Billboard Top 40 or for being a Godard and not making it to Hollywood studios and cinemas because social acceptance in the mainstream circles is not only determined by compliance with the dominant stylistic trends, but is also most commonly the inverse measure of

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<sup>1482</sup> See Gilbert Keith Chesterton’s *The Everlasting Man*, Part II: On the Man Called Christ, Greenwood Press, Westport, CT (1925).

<sup>1483</sup> See Charles B. Ketcham’s *Federico Fellini: The Search for a New Mythology*, Paulist Press, New York, NY (1976), pp. 46.

a true, long-standing quality of one's work. Although decently effective in discarding the instances of complete treachery or lunacy, social assessments, be they as sophisticated as in academia or arts, or as plebeian and crude as in "bars dark and lonely where talk is often cheap and filled with air"<sup>1484</sup>, have always been terribly ineffective in recognizing works that are extraordinarily progressive and that stand out from the clichés of the current times far beyond what the eyes of the popular critic, whose voice is heard out loud, can see. And indeed, science today has come to employ a whole set of unwritten standards to swift those passing through its crooked realm and make sure that no startlingly sublime and truly ingenious spirits make it through to its Kafkaesque tops. With its insistence on humility of the intellect rather than on poetic passions, science has produced yet another "barbwire and watchtower" governance in its realm, subtle and inconspicuous at times, but indisputably existent. As such, science has fallen into the same trap as the one from which it initially escaped during the Enlightenment era by employing the liberating force of free questioning, doubt and dissent, and breaking apart the dogmatic shackles that the institutionalized religion once had imposed on the human thought. Just as the Church then embraced the world of spirit so as to inflict the faithless spirits physically with the tortures of the Inquisition, so does science of the modern day, equally based on dogmatic premises of objectivity, highly specific, idiosyncratic and technical lingo and paradigmatic propositions, sets of beliefs and methods that dominate a particular discipline, adopt the attitude of clannishness and, in the wake of imposing criteria that embrace the mediocracy and exclude the extraordinariness, enforce a form of spiritual terror on the most imaginative and independent of scientific spirits. The reality of this spiritual anguish can become obvious to any warmhearted eyes of spirit that were to pay a visit to a regular scientific institution inhabited by timid, passive-aggressive spirits appearing as if cornered by the invisible, Orwellian powers of authority and fettered in the shackles of ego and greedy cravings for fame, living up to the epitomes of the aforementioned Lord Byron's words: "Sorrow is knowledge: they who know the most must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth, the Tree of Knowledge is not that of life"<sup>1485</sup>. On top of this, institutionalization of anything, religion and science included, requires conformity to the ways of expressing that is peculiar to the given sociopolitical group, lest one be banished from its order, neglecting the vast extent to which this intrinsically fostered conformity adversely affects creativity, which feeds on free inquiry, on exploratory attitudes, on questioning everything with wonder and love, not fear of reprimands, as anti-authoritatively and anarchically as it can be. Therefore, it should not surprise us that spirits bred in a heavily authoritarian system that today's science embodies lack imagination and creativity, but have thirsts to impose ever more of discipline and dogmatism in abundance and fears, those equities of profit<sup>1486</sup> and gateways to the netherworld, in excess, living in spiritual darkness, shielded from the sunshine of the holy mind liberated from the shackles of submission to any authoritative ideology or ideological authority.

Evocation of this perspective that looks with much sadness at the reigning state of the world wherein self-centeredness has eclipsed empathic looking at it from the eyes of another is not to say that meditative inwardness is not a predisposition for the blasts of creative energy to emanate outwardly from this inner focus of our being; because it is, and the deeper we descend

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<sup>1484</sup> Listen to My Morning Jacket's Golden on It Still Moves, ATO (2003).

<sup>1485</sup> See Lord Byron's Manfred: Act I, Scene I, retrieved from <http://www.bartleby.com/18/6/11.html> (1817).

<sup>1486</sup> See Jovana Popović's interview with Zoran Kostić Cane: Moderni čovek je zaboravio ljubav, Večernje novosti (June 13, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/scena.147.html:609917-Zoran-Kostic-Cane-Moderni-covek-je-zaboravio-ljubav>.

into the ocean of our heart, the greater and the more inspiring the explosions of starry energy of love all around us will be, and *vice versa*. If we look close enough, we would realize that this focus of creative attention onto the deepest foundations of our views of the world is common not only to a genuine scientific practice, but to the sublime mindset which I have named the Way of Love too. Namely, the Way of Love is thoroughly built on the premises of the co-creational thesis, the idea that all the details of one's experience are partly products of one's inner creativeness, which conceals one's biological predispositions, presumptions, anticipations and values at its core, and partly are products of the reality that surrounds us, though never perceivable or knowable in such, as-it-is, objective form. Likewise, this sublime mindset, which I have claimed to possess utmost creative potentials, adopts the same thin line that stretches right between the poles of objectivism and idealism. In other words, in such a state of mind, one tends to reach empathic unison with the worldviews of others, while driven by the objective premises of shareable experiences, but at the same time dwells deep within the core circles of one's consciousness, right within the heart of the sun of one's spirit, from where one digs wonderful creative expressions and thoughts to the surface of one's being. The empathic force pulls these inner impressions out to the surface of one's being and turns them into a true shininess of one's spirit. At the same time, it prevents the collapse of one's being into a desolate meditative dot, while the pull of "gravity" of one's creative mind inside prevents its uncontrolled outward dissipation. One such balance between the force of gravity that leads to fusion of light elements and release of great amounts of energy, and the explosive force caused by the high-energy momentum of light waves and particles that tend to move away from the surface is common to all stars that bless the skies of our worlds with their shine. What this entire book aims at pointing is that the Way of Love is one such guideline on how to become a star in the sphere of human spirit, a star not in the common, popular and rather shallow sense of the word, such that it is tied to the idolatry reinforced through mass media, but a star in a truer and more literally metaphoric sense, that is, a spirit that, simply, shines, regardless of how popular, worshipped or appreciated by the masses it is. Besides, stars do not reside in the spotlights of multitudes of stars bravoing ecstatically, but in an eternal cosmic night wherefrom they illuminate all things dark in our worlds. Whether this starry spirit is dressed in sparkly nightgowns, in garments for gamines or in "a wisp of mystic haze instead of a tinselly dress"<sup>1487</sup>, it makes the holiest emotions and figments pop up around her effortlessly, with each swirl of her silhouette, with each quiver of her eyes, with mere being herself.

Yet, as we see, the dominant objectivistic premises in scientific models of the world and the ways of thinking that science promotes are taking their toll in terms of overly inclining scientists to blindly and unquestioningly obey the authorities of the world and thereby suffocate the inner voice of creative self-responsibility that reverberates with precious sounds from deep inside. As anyone can notice after spending some time in any contemporary research institutions, the followers and edifiers are nowadays many, whereas paradigm shifters and revolutionary thinkers, those whose aim is to remove the carpets of foundations underneath people's feet and deeply shake their understanding of the world by inviting them to look at the same old things with new eyes and thereby discover a plethora of wonderful insights to which they were insensitive earlier, are but a few. Needless to add, in any other social domain the situation is the same: earthlings have abandoned the precious guiding voices of their inner worlds and entered the objectivistic realms, thus living in discord with the balance described by the Way of Love. It

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<sup>1487</sup> See Jovan Dučić's *My Poetry* (early 20<sup>th</sup> Century), available at <https://sites.google.com/site/projectgoethe/Home/jovan-ducic/moja-poezija>.

is as if people have left the following guiding words of Carl Gustav Jung that point at living in harmony with the inner voice of one's being by the road of their spiritual striving to the stars, subconsciously deciding to insecurely lean onto walls of other people's opinions, thereby extinguishing the sun of spirit from which enlightening creative powers of theirs could be radiated towards the world: "The fact that a man who goes his own way ends in ruin means nothing... He must obey his own law, as if it were a daemon whispering to him of new and wonderful paths... The only meaningful life is a life that strives for the individual realization - absolute and unconditional - of its own particular law. To the extent that a man is untrue to the law of his being he has failed to realize his own life's meaning... Classical Chinese philosophy names this interior way Tao, and likens it to a flow of water that moves irresistibly towards its goal. To rest in Tao means fulfillment, wholeness, one's destination reached, one's mission done; the beginning, end, and perfect realization of the meaning of existence innate in all things"<sup>1488</sup>. Hence, whenever we are present at a party or at any other social gathering, what we could notice are people ceaselessly judging each other<sup>1489</sup> while remaining essentially frozen, confused and unable to dig mesmerizingly creative moves and words that enlighten the world from the inside out, all because of their preoccupation with the desire to satisfy other people's expectations and imaginary powers of authorities that they ascribe to their opinions and impressions. No wonder then that Nature incessantly gives us the metaphor of our circling around the Sun with every new day on this planet. Whenever we look up into the sky, we could see our spirit and the Sun in their enchanting dance, and yet the reigning scientific models remind us that it is ourselves that are inertly and helplessly revolving around that very same Sun. In view of this, our aim is clear: to turn into an actively shining star and leave this passive satellite behind, somewhat similar to what the Christ did by turning its spirit into a sun and escaping the bounds of objectivistic humanity, wherein pathetic visions of the world keep each other locked in chains, constraining each other's creative expressions, which otherwise have the potential to heal the world in its entirety and move the mountains with their powerfulness.

Now, years after my tagging the school walls with anarchistic messages and confronting the teachers' presence with apoplectic looks, I learned to see a parallel between the literal meaning of "debasement" and the one inscribed in its roots: to shake something at its bases so as to examine them and subject to an honest scrutiny. Thus I realized that the evolution of science proceeds by journeying of its trains along parallel rails, one of which looks ahead with visionary zeal, wishing with the wholeness of one's heart to answer unanswered questions, and the other one of which strives to cautiously look backwards by questioning unquestioned answers. Hence, the key to ultimately creative being can be said to lie in stretching the arms of our spirit forward and backward at the same time, streaming through the air with stellar dreams nested within one hemisphere of our minds and simultaneously grazing the dusty foundations of it all within the other pole of our consciousness, keeping all the while the following words of Arthur Koestler tightly tied to our heart: "The great discoveries of science often consist ... in the uncovering of a truth buried under the rubble of traditional prejudice, in getting out of cul-de-sacs into which formal reasoning divorced from reality leads; in liberating the mind trapped between the iron teeth of dogma"<sup>1490</sup>. Both of these approaches are undoubtedly vital for the healthy progress of scientific thought.

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<sup>1488</sup> See Carl Gustav Jung's *The Development of Personality*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ (1954).

<sup>1489</sup> Recall here that judging is one of the essential traits of objectivistic thinking, which disregards the effects of the observer in the observation act and the fact that beauty is always partially hidden in the eye of beholder.

<sup>1490</sup> See Arthur Koestler's *The Sleepwalkers*, MacMillan, New York, NY (1959).

Yet, mindsets of scientists are different, and, along the line of the previous discussion, we can conclude that the majority of them are predisposed to be obedient followers of the tradition and edify the already existing towers of knowledge in a brick-by-brick fashion. Even outside of the scientific realm, such people can be recognized as opportunists and slaves to authority, joining parties, associations, councils and workgroups for their own benefit only rather than for the sake of acting so as to personify wonderful ideals for the benefit of all and particularly the weak ones of this world. For, today's science is capitalist social system *par excellence*, where the skill of acquiring and managing the capital is the prime determinant of success in lieu of the work ethic, the creative capabilities or other parameters that should be the criteria of success in an ideal world. When the consequences of this state of affairs have been (i) the decline in paradigm-shifting, bold-to-the-bone research and teaching and the proliferation of their conformist antipodes instead, and (ii) the relentless exploitation of the powerless scientists who find themselves at the lower rungs of the ladder of the academic hierarchy, then someone who has spent sufficient time as a part of this system, such as myself, has no other path in front of him than to declare oneself an anticapitalist - a fierce opponent of the rules of the game where the primary driver of progress is the capital and not the spirit and the beauty and all the other values that poets and seers have professed about all through the ages - and fight for the better world, using poetry, not bombs, as the weapon. In due time, however, as I would like to believe, an increasing percentage of scientists would start to share the traits of such carefree mindsets that question everything and are courageous enough to always think and act selflessly, driven by the desire to save the world, even if it implies threats to their safety and comfort, which is practically always bound to be the case. Such genuinely innovative mindsets are meant to become rebellious paradigm shifters, if only they manage to find the way through the jungle of traps and barriers posed by those who rigidly guard the gates leading to the heart of the "castle" of science, if we were to use Kafka's metaphor of the academic establishment.

No wonder then that Shiva, the supreme God in the Hindu mythology, was conceived as one who creates the world, but also destroys it when the right time comes. Angry Zeus kicked the Earth as it spun around the Sun and made it tilted; at least, that is what the ancient Greeks put forth as an explanation for this strange astronomical phenomenon. More than anything, this may teach us that the evolution of the blue planet upon which we stand is critically dependent on its revolution, and that we can stream forward along the line of progress only insofar as we balance the paradigmatic and trustful building of the towers of knowledge on one side and revolutionarily inquiring about the stability of their foundations, revisiting and improving them every once in a while on the other. And whatever the detail of the natural world that we focus our attention to, from human creatures that behave most beautifully when they let their stringent rationality be softened up by the waves of instinctual spontaneity, to harmonious ecosystems that fluctuate between unrepeatable states while journeying along the line of balanced recurrence and randomness, to birdsongs that "illustrate the aesthetic mean between chaotic irregularity and monotonous regularity"<sup>1491</sup>, to atomic patterns in material objects that periodically vibrate, rotate and spin, though always on the grounds of quantum probability, the secret key is given to us as to what is needed for the world to reach a sustainable evolutionary harmony: not mere law and order nor sole chaos and entropy, but the two mixed in harmonious proportion. For, as the second law of thermodynamics tells us, not only are all our strivings to build order within ourselves or any other natural system equivalent to investing work to continue increasing entropy outside of them, but no transitions to higher levels of order, the process that we call evolution,

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<sup>1491</sup> See Anthony Storr's *Music and the Mind*, Random House, New York, NY (1992), pp. 4.

are conceivable without the feeding of the systems in question on entropies surrounding them. Or, in other words, order and chaos do always go hand-in-hand. Order and chaos, laws and entropy, predictability and randomness, periodicity and novelty all need to be carefully balanced if we wish the lovely blue planet which we keep engulfed with starry joy and cosmic love in our chests to keep on @evolving for a long time. “Two dangers constantly threaten the world: order and disorder”, the French dissenter, Paul Valery observed once, reminding us of how too much of one or the other on the account of neglecting to promote their opposites at the same time brings about imbalanced states marked by either stiff, overly disciplined and boring organizations or disarrayed and lawless ones, both of which will eventually crack, crumble and fall apart. This is exemplified by the almost simultaneous failure of the two educational systems, one that was antiauthoritarian and supportive of complete freedom of behavior and thought, conceived by Bertrand Russell as the Beacon Hill high school project he had founded in 1927, and the other one that was rooted in discipline, intense physical conditioning and extreme authoritativeness, employed by Ludwig Wittgenstein, Russell’s most famous protégé, in the elementary schools in and around the town of Trattenbach between the years of 1920 and 1928. What the historians analyzing this curious parallel inferred was that both of these extremes, one embracing order and ignoring freedoms and the other one adopting the opposite approach, are equally ineffective in practice<sup>1492</sup>, at least on this plane of reality whereon we must learn how to concoct order and disorder in everything we do.

Asked for the secret of creativity in the realm of science recently, my answer was that “too much logic, order and discipline is dangerous as much as too much imaginativeness, instinct and messiness is; but holding one in one hand and another in another and then bringing them both close to our heart, as if in a prayer, is the key to success”. Letting our orderly and rigorous analytical attention be a ship that floats and waves on the sea of warmhearted emotions and other divine feelings that wash over the coasts of our mind is how I envisage the road to a beautiful scientific mind. And to prove to myself that chaos and crystal clarity infused together within the core of one’s mind lie at the root of creative thinking and being, I may pay a visit to any given science lab. Dusty benches and shelves, hundreds of sloppily labeled samples and solutions, lab notebooks stained with chemicals, tables overflowed with papers, pens and formulas and scientists walking around in yellowish lab coats burnt by acid whilst spinning wondrous thoughts that reflect a similarly brilliant chaos as the one evident in the lab interior, could be found there. And exactly because of one such beautiful blend of chaos and analyticity, the greatest discoveries and seeds of progress arise from these places and not from sterilely clean and overly organized fabrics, administrative offices or other working milieus dominated by too much order and discipline. Therefore, when I, in search for an inspiration, escape from the stuffy office and into the open air, be it in a bustling city or even livelier nature, and get reprimanded for that by the absurd request of the authorities to remain locked inside the office at all times, I may think of my four-year old daughter’s painting called House, reprinted right under this paragraph, and of how veritably it represents what a house full of creative, loving energies appears like to a hypersensitive child, echoing my own dreams of a perfect closed space, disheveled and disarrayed, aurally representable by the aesthetics of Pet Sounds, of dozens of subtle instruments playing in synchrony, emerging to the foreground and then disappearing into the darkest and least audible background, like the semantic vibes comprising this sentence and like the mess of visual stimuli dawning on one from the random, but infinitely endearing objects scattered all

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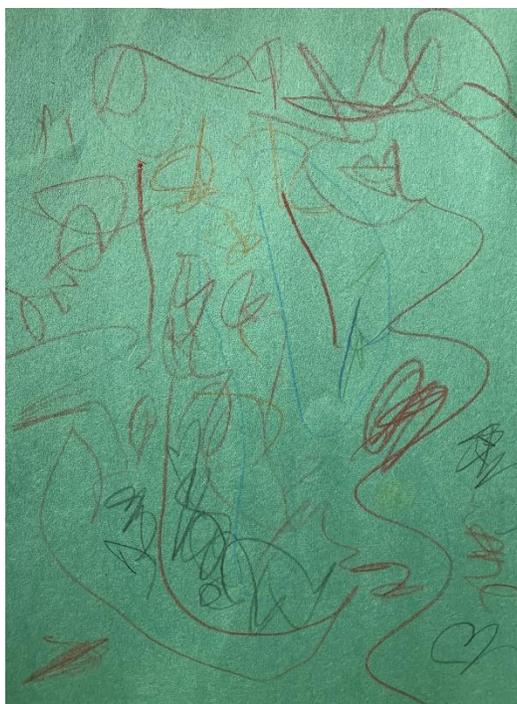
<sup>1492</sup> See Apostolos Doxiadis’ and Christos H. Papadimitriou’s *Logicomix: An Epic Search for Truth*”, Bloomsbury, New York, NY (2009), pp. 281.

over the floors, corners, tables and walls of one such space that deserves the attribute of holy in my universe. But when shipshape, sterilely ordered offices are confined spaces wherein one is expected to sit and furnish the world with creative ideas, then one have no choice but to smash their walls and escape to the open. In the end, that is how the impressionists revolutionized visual arts and sent the academic art into the darkest gutters of human history: with their intense dislike of working in ateliers or any other closed spaces. Namely, while the academicians in the art departments in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century worked in their cozy studios and offices, first producing elaborate drawings, then oil sketches, then painting each line delicately, to meet the finest stylistic standards, before polishing it all to remove any traces of texture and create the impression that no human hand ever moved across the canvas, the impressionists turned all of this up on its head by painting outdoors, sketchily, guided by the eye of the moment and finishing a painting in a matter of hours, if not minutes, but producing with a single work oftentimes a far livelier and historically more meaningful artistic experience than the entire aforementioned art departments did in their full academic careers. All this is to instruct us that unruliness, disarray and dissidence are essential ingredients of productive scientific behavior and that scientists should learn how to reflect the balance between order and chaos in each one of the aspects of their personalities, let alone research methodologies and pedagogical approaches. From this perspective, it also becomes clear why the contemporary insistence of funding agencies in the scientific world on programmatically following the preset directions of research plans without letting scientists keep an open mind and be incessantly ready to step on an exciting sidetrack of thought if they sense it would embark them on a road to an unexpected and great discovery is nothing but fundamentally futile and flawed. One consequence of such systematic stiffening of science is that industrial research, oddly enough, has frequently overrun the academic one in terms of freedoms assigned to researchers, even though the former has traditionally stood as the epitome of restricted and rigidly utilitarian exploration of physical phenomena, unlike the latter, which still personifies among the laymen a realm of freethinking and boundlessly imaginative ways of approaching the study of Nature. But this is not so anymore in this world that is neither brave nor new, but rather cowardly and conformist, the world where the priority in innovation is to make things faster and more powerful, not fundamentally newer, the implication of which has been the favoring of incremental advances over the revolutionary, groundbreaking ones, which, as it is widely known, cannot arise from the confinement to a box or from following a prefabricated algorithm runnable by a computer program. This is why the current era will go down in history of science and humanity as the new industrial age, the time of systematic eviction of ideas that burst with imagination and that place things up on their heads, quite like those that flourished in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, for example, when the fields of quantum mechanics, relativistic physics, electromagnetism and statistical thermodynamics were born. For ideas such as those typifying these fields to be born today is unthinkable, lest the editors publishing such revolutionary concepts be mocked and banned from doing science for lifetimes. Yet, findings such as these simply cannot be reached by treading a predefined route, narrow-mindedly, without looking left or right, the way most scientists today are forced to do their research. Just like jewel caskets full of gold on a tropical island could never be found if one is to blindly follow a preset algorithm as to what steps are to be made after disembarking, without ever diverging from the preconceived rules based on intuitive insights of the moment, or deciding to explore the sideways routes and narrow straits, which are usually those that, unlike broad boulevards and well-lighted avenues, lead to treasures in life, so is it with scientific research, in each and every one of its aspects. Archeologists had wondered for decades how the

buildings of Petra, having been carved into mountain rock from the first one to the last, were built and only when they looked in the lateral direction for the sign, to the faint outlines left engraved on the flat rocky walls adjacent to these buildings did they discern a series of parallel steps on them, suggesting that the masons stood on them as they were creating their masterwork from the top to the bottom (rather than the other way around, as it is usually done), chiseling the rock that was to become the building and the rocky steps on which they stood in parallel. Likewise, without allowing ourselves the liberty to be diverted from a preplanned path as we progressively make steps towards the treasure and the liberty to ceaselessly seek inspiration from sideway glances, intellectual and sensual alike, our scientific quests would be predetermined for definite failure. Scientific serendipity, from this standpoint, has been defined once<sup>1493</sup> not as an accidental discovery of new phenomena or new models, but as the openness to change the course of action and redirect the focus of research along the way and to take on that tangent that no one anticipated, but everybody feared. Science, after all, is a most beautiful adventure of the human mind and each facet of the latter has to reflect this adventurous spirit in order to be able to arrive at wonderful treasure pots hidden behind some distant rainbows which, as we know, arise right between suns in the human eyes and the Sun of Nature. For, as the co-creational thesis suggests, each detail of the world of our experience and each scientific picture spring forth from a dialogue between human mind and Nature, and it is as if every time it appears in the sky, rainbow sympathetically winks at us, hiding the secret smile of Nature at the idea of this grand dialogue arising like a silhouette of a celestial muse from our hearts and minds. Scientific understanding of how rainbows arise thus points at insights of philosophical and artistic meaning, holding a profound aesthetic potential deep within. On the other hand, each one of these systemic insights can serve as a precious guideline of thought in conducting scientific research on any scale conceivable. Free flights of fancy thus take us to wonderful scientific discoveries on their wings as much as our imagination is nowadays sparked more than in any other era in human history owing to scientific discoveries ingrained in the surface of the planet which we inhabit. And like the fancy of arts and the rigor of science, so do chaos and order hold their hands together as humanity evolves towards ever more enchanting horizons of being.

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<sup>1493</sup> Definition was provided by Bruce Chase of University of Delaware at the lecture titled Science, Serendipity and Sustainability given at the 255<sup>th</sup> American Chemical Society Conference in New Orleans, LA (March 19, 2018).



Asked recently about the reasons for my utterly chaotic approach to mentoring students in the lab, I took a marker in my hand and drew a line across a whiteboard. Swiftly, I turned around and lost myself in space and time for a minute or so, dreamingly gazing through the window without a word spoken, imagining pirouettes made by a glowing muse in my head above the Moon's surface, with diamonds sparkling all around her with every enchanting move pulled off the greatest oceanic depths of her celestial heart. I reckoned in a blissful second or so that, as per my mystical musings, art and entertainment were slowly turning into social spheres saturated with stardom and that as our civilization continued to intellectualize itself, it was bound to engage in search of stars in more intellectual domains, primarily science. Then I saw scientists of the present day becoming stars in the future, first in the eyes of historians and then in the star-struck eyes of the commoners. The expanse of the starry sky thence covered the backdrop of my mind, just like that which will cover the minds of the scientific stars of the future, as they focus on a tiny symbol in an equally tiny equation written on a yellowish piece of paper or the dusty computer screen in search of the sign, thus balancing the holy spirit of remoteness, prayerful and in love with the infinite, with an equally holy tie to the minutest detail of here and now. As I reawakened myself from this ephemeral daydream and faced the board again, I made an axis out of the line, representing a wide range of human professions on it. I placed soldiers on one side of this spectrum and administrators right next to them, alluding to their inherently obedient nature which predisposes them to coldly and compliantly follow orders. On the opposite side I placed artists and, right beside them, scientists; for, if there is something I have genuinely devoted my scientific career to, it is demonstrating that science and arts are, essentially, akin to each other like a brother and a sister. So I continue: "Whatever the epithet you endow productive soldiers and administrators with, you should be sure that their antipodes can be attributed to creative artists and scientists, respectively. For example, if you follow my ideas as if they are commands to be cold-bloodedly executed and compliantly nod your heads to all things I say, let alone begin to spontaneously copy my body language, attitude or thinking style, I would know that you are

close to the administrative end of this spectrum and you will deserve to be reprimanded for that. In contrast, if I find you openly disagreeing with the paths I have drawn, thinking with your own head and dissenting against the reigning authorities, kudos will be reserved for you everywhere you'd go". All in all, the students are thus invited to consider vital traits of scientists as diametrical opposites of those of bureaucrats, which I honestly believe that they are. Of course, how in the world the epithet of "scholarly" degenerated over the past century or so into "administratively dry" will amuse the historians of science analyzing our backward academic selves from some future day, a day when the ideal of science as art, as a Glass Bead Game in its essence, may be a dream come true. As for now, the merits of wild, tumultuous thought should be highlighted on every possible occasion, as not its antidote, the thought that marches down the avenue arrogantly and boastfully to the beat of military percussions, but the thought in which visions and memories and analogical associations fly uncontrollably and unstoppably through the mental celestial sphere is the one destined for arrivals at lifesaving discoveries. There needs to be some order in our experimentation and thinking, of course, but these regularities ought to be always surrounded by a swirling chaos of thought, lest our mental universe become a machinelike epitome of predictability, a mind-numbing clockwork from which all the birds of wonder have long flown south. And so, whenever I find students slumped over a desk or with faces buried in their hands, thoroughly confused by my contradictory statements and made wonder whether there is anything systematic in my approach to research through which I ruthlessly confront the spirit of dreadful discipline every time I come across it, I know that the time has come for me to give them a wink and a subtle sign that the moment we hit the space pervaded with uncertainties during the journey through our psyche, the opportunity for progress has arisen. After all, uncertainty, a rebellion against an overly ordered and predictable thought, drives the wheels of wonder engrained in the very heart of scientific enterprise. Creative thought *per se* is inextricably tied to a revolt against dogmatic principles embedded in the bedrock of our logical propositions, submitting every single thing, action and idea to scrutiny in the endless adventure of the mind that we may call scientific experience. As a matter of fact, the entire fairytale of life could be represented as a walk amidst countless blind spots, falling into which sends parts of our beings into abysses from which returns are almost always incredibly challenging or even impossible until the memory fields of our existence become erased and we reach the next level in the karmic game called life on multiple planets of limitless Cosmos. Adventurous cruising in wonder around all these things is what prevents us from occupying a fixed stance and being swallowed by the blind spots that hungrily await our stagnation and entrance into a static realm of being. Many of those who have known me have also known that, in the spirit of Carlos Castaneda's teaching, I have been very much drug-friendly all my life, knowing that psychedelic experiences could be excellent means for glimpsing the blind spots into which we have fallen while essentially standing still in time and space. Of course, a powerful vision has to be placed at all times ahead of us, beyond the horizon on the screensaver of our consciousness, so as to guide us out of these Orphic journeys into spiritual darkness in search of muses' hearts, straight back to the daylight of being after we have reached these precious insights by the hand. Hence, not only did I jokingly consider opening the school of baaing, that is, hanging around and doing nothing in the Serbian slang, once I return to my homeland with a hat on my cue-balled head and a guitar on my lap, teaching the merits of adventurously roaming through the streets seemingly futilely, though digging treasure troves from ordinary details of the world by applying the principles of systemic reasoning, thus proving that small is beautiful and that the crazier our beings get, just like the rollercoaster ride of words

that this sentence is becoming, going against the grain of established and standard ways of expression, the greater and more versatile paths of progress open in front of one. I would also open the one of professional uprising, conveying the right *attitude* as the essence of creativity, always closely tied to rebelliousness of one kind or another, rather than passing on mere *facts*, as most schools and universities are all about. For, as I pointed out on numerous occasions, not the surface, but the essence determines the fruitfulness of our actions in the world, which is why a thief in heart preaching goodness will always trail in the eyes of Heavens behind those who shed obscenities and rudeness from every aspect of their appearance, while relentlessly polishing their hearts so that they could shine in purity for the benefit of another, faintly and imperceptibly to human eyes not trained how to penetrate through the surface and visualize the invisible. In my eyes, thus, a parent or a tutor that blabbers the most instructive words in the world mechanically, with no underlying emotion at all, trails a million light years behind the one who may either not utter a single word or talk complete gibberish, or uttermost heresies, but whose heart shivers in empathy with every single look at the child whom he looks after, allowing the same waves of wonder and joy and fear and anger and a myriad of other emotions that traverse the sea of spirit of the little one to wash over the coasts of his soul too. With love and wonder underlying the foundations of our expression, emotion and thought, even inarticulate moans – such as Onallee’s in Roni Size and Reprazent’s *Brown Paper Bag*<sup>1494</sup>, to this day being a secret signal that momentarily sends ravers all the world over into liberating motion - would move the world more deeply than the most eloquent threads of thoughts hanging on the ropes of a dried, disinterested spirit. Consequently, handing over mere facts, while ignoring to teach the right attitude, which students pick anyway via the example given out by their teachers’ very being, is by no means the way to fecundate the fields of juvenile minds and light up the creative blaze within them with the torch of one’s already lit creativity. And in order to teach ultimate rebelliousness as the essence of creativity, any method used would imply quite a hypocritical stance. An ultimate wonder equals perfect freedom, which is why I demand nothing to be demanded from students, in an ultimate anarchist spirit that recognizes no authority in Heaven or Hell<sup>1495</sup>. For, how could stances that lie beyond all methods, ready to question them all with genuine curiosity, be reached while using the ladders of rigid principles and methods? In other words, it takes infinite wonder and readiness to smash the principles and doctrines that hold our beings confined in shackles of habit, fear and indolence to disseminate the wonder of stars all across the Earth.

Therefore, whenever we find ourselves in overly predictable, structured and conventional states, we should recall that “only chaos can give rise to a dancing star”, as Friedrich Nietzsche stressed out once<sup>1496</sup>. We could connect this majestic guiding line with knowing that entropy acts as a food for multiplication of order in life, according to the laws of thermodynamics. A perfectly ordered world endowed with zero entropy would stop evolving and could only stream towards increased disorder from that point onward. Entropy as a measure of freedom of movement and choice is, furthermore, closely related to random events in natural systems, as the statistical definition thereof has suggested. Moreover, as per the basic principles of systems science and cybernetics<sup>1497</sup>, the sources of randomness are inevitably present in each self-organizing and evolving system. That chaos and order are entwined in every dynamically evolving system is a

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<sup>1494</sup> Listen to Roni Size’s *New Forms*, *Talkin’ Loud* (1997).

<sup>1495</sup> The key on how to prevent this utmost tolerance from becoming deadening indifference is, of course, one: Love.

<sup>1496</sup> See Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Prologue to Thus Spake Zarathustra*, translated by Thomas Common, retrieved from [eserver.org/philosophy/nietzsche-zarathustra.txt](http://eserver.org/philosophy/nietzsche-zarathustra.txt) (1883).

<sup>1497</sup> See Ross W. Ashby’s *Introduction to Cybernetics*, Chapman & Hall, London, UK (1956).

general, systemic rule that applies irrespective of the complexity of the system in question, be it a creative brain in which imaginations, thoughts and visions appear dancingly and disorderly through the veil of chaotically thoughtful stardust and in front of the well-ordered and logically connected starry train of thoughts of ours, or hearts of our cells in which genetic sequences are incessantly randomly mutated and shuffled, possibly leading to organisms with superb features compared to the dominant social traits of the given times, which will then multiply and bring us closer to the ideals of a superhumanly populated planet of the future. This is why when things at a party or at any other social gathering become overly predictable, ordered and clichéd, you may see me jumping out of the cocoon of my stony musings and ponderings and turning into a joyful social butterfly, flying from one cheek to another, breathing chaos into my surrounding, screaming how “becoming Calvin, a menace and a pest has been my mission in life”, stealing cherries from the guests’ plates and throwing cakes in the air, thus bringing back the balance between orderliness and chaos, which, we all know, is vital for the bursts of creativity to keep on being released from our being, like geysers of love and inspiration, and washing over creatures around us, cleansing their stiffly ingrained communicational habits and making them surprisingly look at the world from new angles, from new cosmic panoramas of thought. After all, ever since I plunged into the charms of the Glass Bead Game and silently decided to dedicate my life to reanimating the balance between science and arts in every aspect of the world as I had known it, I have tried my best to infuse the overly chaotic world of arts with logic and rationality, as well as to break apart the conceptual and expressional rigidity of the modern science by blending it with the poetic and highly aesthetic forms of expression. What has moved me in this, quite possibly profoundest interdisciplinary endeavor out there was the belief that such intromission of sciences and arts could make science more elating for the human spirit, presentable in less cold and more heartwarmingly inspiring and poetic fashion thereby, as well as make arts less Dadaistically impulsive or coldly conceptual and more rigorously studious and analytical, again not in a brainy and emotively detached manner, but in a way that brings about illuminative complementation of rational and intuitive powers of our psyches and creates the fabulous concoction that crowns our creativity with the epithet of divine. Science today has been sustained on the hands of its exceptional insistence on logic and analyticity, although on the account of depreciating the importance of intuition, of spontaneously sprouting feelings, of blissful emotions, prayerfulness and the artistic sense. However, all of the latter can be seen as crucial drives for conducting brilliant scientific endeavors. If neglected, an immense toll would be taken away from the heart of the enterprise of science, ruining its excellence and inspirational character in the long run. Scientific tradition would thus turn into coldblooded machinery that serves the purpose of building intellectual robots for the future, generations of people who will blindly follow its programmatic projection of progress, without ever questioning its foundations. Compliant and obedient, rather than dissentient, self-responsible and revolutionary, they will be scared to even glimpse at the heart of a true scientific explorer, of the one that walks through the realms of science as a true adventurer, with a straw hat resembling the sun over one’s head, like a sailor, with great vigilance looking backwards to the foundations of it all, to the answers unquestioned, as well as gazing forward, visionary and imaginatively, with great optimism, to the coasts not yet arrived at, to the questions unanswered, spinning between these two views incessantly and like a dancing ballerina making pirouettes on the deck of the glorious ship of human knowledge. When a reviewer of my works objected that my writings serve the purpose of making the reader dizzy with their sliding from one starry train of ideas to another on thin, delicate threads of analogies and associations as much as on the sturdy cables of logic and ratio,

bringing forth streams of intellectual clarity and equally making the reader levitate in an open semantic space while surrounded by revolving stars, a firework of creative thought, “a flood and a shower of ideas”, I took it as a greatest compliment of them all, since writing science while tending after beauty, elegance and poetry, in endless, rollercoaster sentences such as the one you are reading at this very moment, and in a manner which occasionally resembles the blending of a breathtaking, Jack-Kerouac-like style of writing when he says how “they danced down the streets like dingedodies, and I shambled after as I’ve been doing all my life after people who interest me, because the only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn, like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue centerlight pop and everybody goes ‘Awww!’”<sup>1498</sup>, with the goal to bring life, that quality that yet another one of the reviewers of my works praised, into a kingdom governed by the dead, yet relying all the while on the simple elegance of scientific reasoning where arguments are woven with an immaculate flow and logical consistency, has been posed as a graceful horizon at sunset towards which my creative being has walked. Somewhere beyond that horizon, an inward-looking pan plays a flute and from it the words building the content of a scientific paper, let alone a regular conversation, emerge with an otherworldly inspiration, resembling poetry more than a prose and being as different from the stiff, orderly way in which they are composed today as Charlie Parker’s anarchic alto sax was different from the suave Tin Pan Alley ditties filled with clichéd phrases that it helped mow down on its way down in history. Like Claude Monet’s rapid and equally anarchic brushstrokes that never resorted to drawing a line and his revolutionary, free-spirited use of light, which invoked harsh criticism by the traditionalists, but which helped move the visual arts beyond stiff realism and into the waters of modernism, abstraction, surrealism, cubism and beyond, so may this new, freer way of writing scientific papers that I envisage for a brighter future day open up the path toward unforeseen forms of expression of the scientific thought, which would, as ever, bounce back and refresh the creative pools of their expressers and help science and humanity as a whole flourish. The SF state of mind, a true science fiction spinning like a movie in our heads, as visionary and neon-like as it can be, a blend of the scientific and the fictive, of analyticity and poetry, of knowledge and beauty, is thus what I have celebrated as an ideal worth striving to attain in the cosmic space of the human mind, the space in which the Sun of unity, orderliness and intellectual clarity, bringing daylight to our reasoning, and the swirling stars of beauty, chaos, freedoms and passions, producing dizzying views of the very eternity, ought to dwell side by side, enkindling each other’s shine. From their marriage, universes within universes could be born and infinity reached in the pettiest and most petite of phenomena.



Balance, balance, balance. In balance lies concealed the secret of fulfilled being. For, everywhere we look in this dualistic world of ours, we see polarities, such as that depicted in Tai-Chi-Tu symbol, interacting, flowing into each other’s heart and yielding the visible reality as the result. From the oppositely charged subatomic particles to complementary brain hemispheres

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<sup>1498</sup> See Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road*, Penguin, New York, NY (1957), pp. 6.

and branches of the autonomic nervous system to system/environment dichotomies in systemic and thermodynamic views of reality to Yang-Yin, Shiva-Shakti, Purush-Prakrti, Tao-Te, Brahman-Atman and Ida-Pingala polarities to clashes of theses and antitheses in the dialectical models of the evolution of being and knowledge to parents as pairs of earthlings needed for the creation of us as their progenies, whether we invoke scientific imagery, Oriental or Western philosophies, common reason or indeed any others models that explain natural phenomena, we would come across pairs of opposites, in balancing of which the keys to prosperity are hidden. If I were to sketch a road on the pages of this book, I would then go on and tell you that it can exist only on the basis of a balance between separation of the souls that stand on its ends and their connectedness by it. One such simultaneity between distantness and coherence is intrinsic to the idea of the Way of Love, the idea that solemnly stands here to remind us that true Love can spring forth exclusively from concordance with the dialectical symbolism of the Way, the one through which ceaseless evolutionary entwining of theses and antitheses and their syntheses and the antitheses of these syntheses and so forth is enabled, spinning the Hegelian wheel of history forward. Thus, for example, whenever we are about to reach out to another with the bliss of our hearts, we should make steps in the opposite direction too, beyond the curtain of silence and into the magic well of our inner spheres. Similarly, when we wish to descend deep into the ocean of our consciousness in search of pearls of precious insights, we should also make steps outwardly, towards the footsteps of another, in compassion and empathy. If you, standing on a modern communication platform that Facebook or its likes are, now begin to chant with the same melody as that employed by the witch from the fairytale about the Snow White and the seven dwarfs, “Facebook Wall, Facebook Wall, do we have to raise you in order to interact with our friends?”<sup>1499</sup>, I may say, Holy Yea. For, first of all, to allow your heart to journey towards another, a separation has to be presumed in the first place, which is why we need to raise a Wall before we can interact with our Facebook friends. Secondly, our defensive confinement to narrow physical limits is a prerequisite for sending the shine of our spirits outwardly and limitlessly. In other words, whenever a step that would bring us closer to infinity is conceived, a line that accentuates the preexisting limits or defines the new ones ought to be drawn too. To open the petals of the flower of our heart to the surrounding life ever more and reveal the divine beauties that rest in its stigma and style so as to bless and beautify all things around us, we need to dig ever deeper into the fields of our consciousness where the sources of the impulses for enlightening action lie hidden. This is all to say that whenever a path forward is being envisaged, backward steps ought to be coupled to our streaming along this path, so that our journey could resemble the shape of a spiral and of our galactic home, lest we neglect the balancing principle outlined herein and fall off the narrow road that we pursue and into some cosmic chasms. A natural derivative of this point is that on top of all of this, as you may remember from the preceding discourse, the ultimate balance is the balance between **balance and imbalance**.

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<sup>1499</sup> On Facebook Walls I wish to say the following too. Namely, the way I see Facebook when I am on it is from the perspective of thousands, if not millions of years from now, when Homo Sapiens as we know it will have become extinct and a new, more advanced form of humanity will reign over Earth and when all that will remain of Facebook will be its crumbly and corroded Walls, covered with rust, corals and sea urchins. Just as we have sent our explorers to dive for the underwater walls of Atlantis and offer us vague cues about this vanished civilization, so will curious humanoids of the future browse through our Facebook Walls in search of a glimpse into who their ancient predecessors, then obsolete and washed away by the tide of time, were. In other words, Facebook will be gone and we with it, but our Walls will remain. With such eyes, futuristic and ancient at the same time, sunrise-echoing and submerged in the teary sea of the past, stellar and supermannish and yet covered with moss, algae and dust, I see Facebook every time I hang on it.

Hence, balance, imbalance, balance, imbalance, stepping in and out of step, alternating in a harmonious manner, delicately resonating with Tao – that is how the world evolves.

And as the blue planet rotates and the days of sunny unity and nights of starry versatility alternate, reflecting the dialectical nature of the progress of human thought and being, we bring to mind that the dualistic character of life calls for creative unifications of multitudes of streams of thought as well as for their incessant diversification. To embrace it all and draw links between the most distant and seemingly most incompatible approaches and ways of thinking in the spirit of Middle Way thinkers, but also to readily make a step that is unique, original, stunningly surprising and different from anything that anyone could have ever expected, is the way adopted by the most masterful dancers on this planet. For, many times we would come across confronted streams of thought that look all but compatible and reconcilable, and yet climbing up to a novel panorama of thought would yield sights from which all opposition between them miraculously evaporates. The Inquisition thus claimed that the Sun circles around the Earth, while Galilean astronomers claimed the opposite, and from the perspective of Einstein's theory of relativity we can draw a model of the solar system that would be compatible with both the Inquisitional and Galilean premises<sup>1500</sup>. Speaking of the planet turning and rolling, years ago an old friend of mine, Željko advised walking not as if we approach things with each step we make, but walking as if we spin the Earth beneath our feet and thus essentially bring things around us to our own vicinity, while we, ourselves, remain the center of the Universe, so to say. No doubt that he did so while whistling the old Serbian folk song in which the drunken protagonist leaves a saloon and blames the street for being drunk<sup>1501</sup>, bringing to mind the real-life knockdowns whereby the boxer feels not that he hit the ground with his face, but *vice versa*, that the ground tilted, made a half-circle and smashed him in the head. And so did we, my homies and I spend hours and hours at a time strolling through Belgrade streets at night, imagining Earth to be a big boulder under our feet that we roll with every step, while remaining immobile, in the center of a galaxy, as it were. Correspondingly, instead of going to work and reaching out to people there, we thought that we could wake up in the morning and do some footwork to bring our work to us. As if we make steps on the work's way to us, we could see "billboards and truck stops pass by the grievous angel"<sup>1502</sup> rather than us, grievous angels at their most beautiful, passing by them. With a little bit of practice, our habitual walking, which has mostly turned over time into an unconscious act, would thus become pervaded with a sublime awareness, bringing some childish satisfaction into our basic moves, into each step and swing of our bodies. A similar revitalization of not walking, but of our sense of time, of the way we experience future and past intersecting in the grand crossroad of now in the center of our being, was hinted at by the Indian visual artist, Raghava KK when he noticed the following: "When I think of the future, I never see myself moving forward in time. I actually see time moving backward towards me"<sup>1503</sup>. The protagonist of Charlie Kaufman's *I'm Thinking of Ending Things*, arrived at a congruous idea when she asked herself and her beau whether people move through time or time moves through their stationary selves. What these examples show us is the importance of adopting a new perspective at the same old things and actions every once in a while so as to avoid the blind spots in which

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<sup>1500</sup> The example was found in Alfred North Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World*, Nolit, Belgrade, Serbia (1925).

<sup>1501</sup> The song's title is *Iz kafane pijan ja izlazim*, or *The Bar, I, Drunk, Leave*, if clumsily translated to English.

<sup>1502</sup> Listen to Gram Parsons' *Return of the Grievous Angel* on *Grievous Angel*, Reprise (1974).

<sup>1503</sup> Watch Raghava KK's Ted talk entitled *What's Your 200-Year Plan?*, available at [http://www.ted.com/talks/raghava\\_kk\\_what\\_s\\_your\\_200\\_year\\_plan.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/raghava_kk_what_s_your_200_year_plan.html) (2012).

our awareness falls following prolonged adoption of single experiential perspectives. In other words, there always needs to be something breaking the balance that we have achieved in order to help us preserve this very same balance. It was for this very same reason that Monsieur Huguet from Jean Vigo's *Zero for Conduct* drew moving pictures for the pupils he wished to teach constructive rebellion while doing a handstand on a classroom table and Professor Keating from *Dead Poets Society* advised similarly standing upside down and jumping onto classroom tables every once in a while, all in order to break the perspectives passively bound to for too long with the chains of our habits, inertia and fear of the unknown and retain our amazement by the world that we live in and avoid leaving its greatly beautiful details unnoticed and coldly and ignorantly passed by.

For a long time, it was thought that attention deficit disorders result strictly from the unintentional shifts of attention away from the objects in focus. However, modern research in cognitive science has placed an epitaph to this obsolete way of thinking by showing that the same blind spot effect in which we fall as we perceive constancies in our perceptive field exists in all domains of our cognition, from elementary sensory perceptions to mental reflections to acquiring new knowledge<sup>1504</sup>. Simply saying, prolonged constant focus on any given object makes it disappear from the domain of our awareness by gradually falling into a blind spot. Just as a word constantly repeated gradually fades into a semantic nothingness while our awareness becomes deprived of not the word but the context in which the word exists, the same happens to any detail of our perceptual and mental milieus at which our attention is continuously directed, without making incessant shifts to contexts which surround it and which partly define the spectrum of its qualities. And just as eyes gazing at an object need to blink, wiggle, refocus and exhibit fine saccadic scanning activity so as to modulate the visual focus and maintain perceptual awareness of the given object, our mind similarly alternates focusing on an object and away from it in comprehensive encounters with any details of our surrounding during which we enrich our knowledge thereof, which is, as the co-creational thesis tells us, always equal to enriching knowledge about ourselves too. Then, writers of the world could confirm that constantly staring at the book one writes deprives one of inspiration after some time, whereas turning one's views away from it every now and then usually lets ideas magically dawn on one from sublime heights of thought. In any case, both uncontrolled shifts of attention and perfect focus that never looks away from the objects examined present imperfect choices in our cognizing. To break the perfection of a perfect focus, although only to return to it after a while, thus switching from balance to imbalance and back, is the way to walk along the line of perfection in our perceptive exploration of the world, which is, as we see, perfect only insofar as it is perfectly imperfect.

Executing the same tasks using the same routes every single time as well as deriving the same judgments from the same perceptions over and over again, thus simply fortifying and solidifying our worldviews rather than letting them flexibly grow, branch and live, can be said to typify dull and monotonous thinking and acting, whereas openness to perform operations, be it mental or physical ones, in always novel ways, thereby avoiding the blind spots that repetitive actions and single perspectives inevitably entail, could be said to present a vital trait of smart and intelligent behavior and thought. In any human profession and creative domain, truly creative performers differ from their robotized and inherently uncreative counterparts by the extent of unpredictable, surprising and rebellious going against the predetermined and standard strategies imposed on their behavior that they exhibit in their incessantly refreshing and changing problem-

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<sup>1504</sup> See, for example, Diana Yates' Brief Diversions Vastly Improve Focus, Researchers Find, Illinois News Bureau (February 8, 2011), available at [http://www.news.illinois.edu/news/11/0208focus\\_AlejandroLleras.html](http://www.news.illinois.edu/news/11/0208focus_AlejandroLleras.html).

solving approaches. Creative innovativeness instilled in the core of one's approach to resolving enigmatic situations in life thus feeds on defying usualness, expectedness and predictability, which explains why the peaks of creative performance are reached only by those who are ready to journey along the path of benevolent rebelliousness. Jared Diamond consequently claimed that the drive to innovate must be the most crucial trait that differed humans from other species and forms of life that preceded them on the evolutionary tree<sup>1505</sup>, given that humans would not have appeared on this planet had it not been for their constant drive to be innovative and seek more advanced ways to restructure oneself and reorganize one's interface with the environment. We could, therefore, agree that humans are, out of all known species, engaged in the most innovative relationship with the physical environment and that, as a result, climbing even higher on the evolutionary tree is a feat reserved for those who could cut the flows of habit more than any man before in their inherently rebellious inventiveness. Moreover, the desire to innovate arises not from the perfect satisfaction with the way certain tasks are accomplished, but from the ability to step out of given blind spots, look at our achievements from novel angles, realize their flaws and start searching for more superior ways of executing them. Again, if such innovativeness stands forth as what has soared humans to the current stage in the evolution of life and consciousness on this planet, we could infer that the greater our ability to hop between cognitive stances and flexibly avoid blind spots in our perceiving the world and reflecting on it, the greater our potential to continue successfully travelling down the road of evolution of our knowledge and our spirits. Certainly, the habit of questioning things, of not being afraid to be an intellectual rebel that subjects everything to rigorous scrutiny, always digging into deeper and deeper foundations of experiential appearances, as opposed to nourishing conformism and aspirations to merely follow and obey, adds fuel to the fire of this inherently intelligent and exploratory attitude of creative human beings. The habit of jumping out of one's own skin, perspectives and positions, empathically and intellectually, which in life often results in the impression that one is cutting the branch on which one's nest is, also requires some selfless honesty and altruism to exist within oneself. Hence, the verse from a 12<sup>th</sup> Century recital I found in the Grace Cathedral pew bookracks: "Bend the stubborn heart and will". Such continuous melting and reshaping of rigid beds along which the rivers of our mental reflections and gestures flow appears to be mandatory for one to establish this intrinsic smartness in one's thought and acts. This also means that someone on the quest for that magic mental pattern, the line of abstract code that unlocks the gates of the Universe, unleashes its enlightening energies and drops them straight to the doorstep of the explorer's heart ought to know that this code changes from one moment to the next and that if found, it must be searched anew every following time, lest the searcher fall down the abysses of insipid existence by tracing the line of unnaturally repetitive and inherently dogmatic thought. The theological concept of repentance may also be said to place us along the same route of incessantly seeking novelty, improvising and always wondrously gazing at the world from new angles in the objective sense, and using new eyes in the subjective sense. For, as the co-creational thesis teaches us, all things that comprise our experience are products of entwined objective and subjective creation, which implies that any change of the world of our experience for better has to involve changes in both domains: objective and subjective.

Alan Fletcher wrote a book composed of fascinating quotes and images and named it *The Art of Looking Sideways*<sup>1506</sup>, as if his aim was to urge us to get rid of the habit to stare at things

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<sup>1505</sup> This is an idea pervading almost each and every book by Jared Diamond, from *The Third Chimpanzee* (1991) to *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (1997) to *Collapse* (2005) to *The World Until Yesterday* (2012).

<sup>1506</sup> See Alan Fletcher's *The Art of Looking Sideways*, Phaidon, London, UK (2001).

and foster uncritical, tunnel vision of the world. By flexibly wiggling around with our eyes we avoid the blind spots that each visual perspective possesses, breathe some captivating liveliness into our looks, and, last but not least, make us enjoy each communication, each visual inspection and every other sensual experience a lot more. If you are shortsighted and have ever wondered why wearing glasses makes you eyesight numb after some time, it is because of the stance of reduced sideway vision that wearing eyeglasses normally forces us to adopt. Needless to add, intellectual numbness and spiritless feelings equally result whenever we deprive our mind of “looking sideways”, of incessantly hopping left and right so as to observe things and ideas from multiple angles, of curiously wiggling with our intellectual focus in all directions, while being driven by genuine wonder that makes our mind resemble a starry sky with thousands of sparkly shines spread all over it in addition to the sunshiny focus depicted by the image of the Sun. Just like bad drivers exhibit prolonged fixed stares on the road ahead of them, quite unlike the good ones who constantly dance with their focus, between the sides of the road and views in the rear mirrors, occasionally even peering behind their shoulder, so do clumsy thinkers tend to focus on certain things drawn by the pencil of their cognitive apparatuses for too long, inducing not penetrative depth but intellectual blindness thereby. In support of the deadening effect that substitution of the sideway wiggle of the rays of our attention with their narrowing towards the center of the field of our intellect brings forth, I may also resort to the insight I derived from my time spent befriending babies, the insight shared by other parents too<sup>1507</sup>: namely, infants not old enough to be able to focus on individual objects in sight tend to be more interested in things to the side of their visual field instead of those that lie directly in front of them. Then, there is no wonder that our journey along the rail of the human lifetime, from childhood pervaded with opportunities for growth and exploration of brilliant expression on each corner to adulthood dominated by expressional dullness and developmental stall, is paralleled by our erasure of the sideway glances that symbolize curiosity and installment of the eagle-like focus that epitomizes cold and robotic determination and imprisonment of human wonder. Consequently, if there is one thing that sucks excitement from daily conversations and makes them dull and dry on most occasions, it is the common pressure to look straight into the person whom we talk to and never wiggle one’s gaze or tail while the conversation lasts. Although some people may object to our tendency to wander with our gaze in all directions whilst communicating with them and find it a sign of our neither paying attention to the topic discussed nor respecting their company, remember that fixed gazes are what hypnotists seek as the sign of success of their suggestive approach<sup>1508</sup>. And just like wandering gazes present the way to retain our sanity and prevent us from being hypnotized, so can they be considered as not dissipating our creative attention, but going along with our genuine creative focus, which is, as we now know, always such that it complies with the art of looking sideways. Whatever people abiding in the shackles of convention have to say, if we were to let ourselves dancingly go with the flow, with our body and eyesight alike, we would be amazed how many striking signs handed to us by Nature we could magically glimpse all around us. Comic books in which the most mundane conversations are breathed life in by means of constant shifts of perspectives, now drawing sketches of gently floating clouds in the rear of the narrator, then the calm ocean behind his back, then losing the speaker out of sight so as to focus on sand beneath his feet or on shadowy figurines that pop up

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<sup>1507</sup> See the comment by Hillary in the discussion thread entitled Following Objects with Their Eyes? available at <http://www.circleofmoms.com/due-in-january-2010/following-objects-with-their-eyes-502023> (2010).

<sup>1508</sup> See Ormond McGill’s Professional Stage Hypnotism, Westwood Publishing, Glendale, CA (1977), pp. 17.

out of nowhere, carrying their own mysterious parallel messages on their delicate hands<sup>1509</sup>, teach us the necessity of incessant wander with our focus around the object of our attention in order to suck the nectar of sweetest impressions from it. James Joyce understood the devastating effect linearization of human thought has on its inspirational content when he engaged himself in trying to imitate the natural stream of consciousness in his writings and what the art of comics can additionally teach us is in this sense is how to invigoratingly switch focus from one perspective or topic of thought to another<sup>1510</sup>, reflecting the naturally occurring mental flashes that teleport us from one vision to another, vaguely connected by threads of analogies and similes, in the course of creative thinking. A systemic insight such as this one is, as you may expect, valid for innumerable domains of our being, from playing in the heart of emotional landscapes of our soul to our mental reflections to dancingly moving through space to capturing elementary perceptions in the butterfly net of our mind. Hence, if we should only reject this rigid habit of fixedly staring at things and start to dance with the rays of our attention around them, great rewards that would spur the process of arrival at novel ideas and yield ever more moving behavior would be reaped. And when it comes to glimpsing the faintest stars of the night sky, we surely know that they are often visible only out of the corner of our eye<sup>1511</sup>, which is an insight that serves as a powerful proof that peripheral vision, of our eyesight and intellect alike, is vital in navigating our mind in the direction of grasping the finest and quite possibly the most beautiful features of reality. The central vision does provide us with a higher resolution<sup>1512</sup>, but in its powerfulness it becomes blind to such faint sources of light, the detection of which is reserved only for those who “glory in infirmities” (Corinthians II 12:9), that is, who sacrifice power and precision over sensitivity, comparative weakness and irresolution. Hence, as ever, it is the balance between focusing and letting loose; not only in the way we look at things visually, but in the way we interact with things in all other contexts too. Whereas patience and analytical keenness impel us to draw boundaries precisely along the well-focused ranges of the fields of our interest, the dancing desire to explore ingrained in us forces us to constantly wander around with our attention. These two, just like the previously mentioned disciplined orderliness and chaotic entropy, ought to walk hand-in-hand if we aim at giving rise to some dancing stars in our eyes.

From Brazilian soccer players who mingle playfulness and breaking of the rigid rules of perfectly predictable positioning and moving on the field together with their great technique, behind which many hours of dedicated practice stand, to Tezuka’s Astro Boy who lightly solves equations on the transcendental blackboard that levitates in front of his mind and at the same time engages their symbols and signs in a childish dance of sublime fanciness<sup>1513</sup>, to some of the greatest scientists of the world who looked for inspiration to solve scientific problems in arts and prayer, the reality abounds with examples of how complementariness of opposites is the key to success. Should we follow any given path in life, we may be sure that in occasionally looking back, up or down towards the seemingly opposing paths leads us to glimpse the balance that will provide us with a precious guidance and a drive to even more effectively advance forward. For, sometimes it is by placing things in our plain views that we make them most effectively obscure to our awareness. Or, as Heinz von Foerster noticed once, “Truisms have the disadvantage that

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<sup>1509</sup> See, for example, Derek Kirk Kim’s *Same Difference*, Top Shelf Productions, Marietta, GA (2004), pp. 78 – 83.

<sup>1510</sup> See, for example, R. Kikuo Johnson’s *Night Fisher*, Fantagraphics Books, Seattle, WA (2005).

<sup>1511</sup> See Lewis Thomas’ *Late Night Thoughts on Listening to Mahler’s Ninth Symphony*, Bantam Books, New York, NY (1983), pp. 12.

<sup>1512</sup> See A. Soranzo’s and M. Newberry’s *The Uncatchable Smile in Leonardo da Vinci’s La Bella Principessa Portrait*, *Vision Research* 113, 78 – 86 (2015).

<sup>1513</sup> See *Astro Boy* animated movie directed by David Bowers, Imagi Animation Studios (2009).

by dulling the senses they obscure the truth”<sup>1514</sup>, reminding us that even the most truthful insights placed on the pedestal of our attention so as to be constantly adored and appreciated gradually turn into their thorough opposites - grand lies in the eyes of the Cosmos - after being looked at long enough. Bob Dylan thus, for example, attempted to uproot idolism from the soil of our heart and liberate us from the unnatural pressures and brakes it imposes on our creativity by letting his own idols freely emerge from the subfields of his psyche into the poetic landscapes he drew in *Desolation Row*<sup>1515</sup>. Talking about gods and religions also over and over again proves as a convenient way for not revealing, but essentially hiding many great things that emanate from a sense of genuine religiousness. Keep on repeating a single word in your thoughts or aloud and notice how semantic visions it normally gives rise to in us slowly disappear and turn into meaningless rambling. Just like words have their meanings only when incorporated within sentences whereby our attention distances from them right before and after their mentioning, so does our careful paying constant, uninterrupted attention to a perceptual detail always employ incessant shifts to and fro with respect to the object of our attention. Likewise, talking openly about certain issues is the way that not always leads to improved understanding thereof. Quite often it results in lasting concealment of the qualities talked about behind the walls of our prejudices and presumptions, proving the old intelligence agents’ maxim that tells us that things that are hardest to see are usually those that stand right in front of our noses, a correlation quite understandable from the bases of our familiarity with the blind spot effect. “To talk much about oneself may also be a means of concealing oneself”<sup>1516</sup>, Friedrich Nietzsche observed once, prompting us to recollect the plethora of people around us who build fences around the towers of their egos with every expression they offer, when they could be melting this kernel of their spirits in the waves of warmhearted emotions of enlightening empathy with every second of their communication with the world. For, more often than not, talk, like all conventions, tends to conceal, not reveal, the essence of our beings that we ought to be communicating to each other ideally; or, as pointed out by the American poet and a scholar, Susan Stewart, this time in the context of artistic expression, “conventions of depiction are a barrier to insight”<sup>1517</sup>. The tragedies of every smile that serves as a mask for the concealment of real feelings, of every song behind which the soul of the singer hides itself, when it should be erupting with emotions all over the bystanders’ faces, and of every phrase uttered so as to escape from the imminent collision of human hearts that makes the Universe shimmer with satisfaction may seem miniscule, but are, in fact, additive, resembling single teardrops from the eyes of Heavens that gradually form streams that tend to wash the conformist human hearts that fall in them away from the oases of utmost spiritual fulfillment.

As we see, gazing straight into the eyes of anything in this life, without ever looking away, is a perfect way to lose the beauty of things stared at from our sight. In contrast, to look away every once in a while is the way to unceasingly enrich the clarity of our visionary views directed far beyond the horizons towards which we head. The eyes bearing infectious wonder within them are thus epitomized not by bulgy stares that resemble deer in headlights, but by twinkly sending the rays of attention in all directions, yielding joy and energy rather than

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<sup>1514</sup> Heinz Von Foerster – “Perception of the Future and the Future of Perception”, *Instructional Science* 1 (1) 31 – 43 (1972).

<sup>1515</sup> Listen to Bob Dylan’s *Desolation Row on Highway 61 Revisited*, Columbia (1965).

<sup>1516</sup> See Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*; Aphorism 169, translated by Helen Zimmern, available at <http://www.authorama.com/beyond-good-and-evil-5.html> (1886).

<sup>1517</sup> See Susan Stewart’s *The Open Studio: Essays on Art and Aesthetics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL (2005), pp. 68.

dullness and insipidity wherever they shed their sparkle. Hence also the vulgarity of rigidly fixed eye contact that is a norm today in most professional settings and the gracefulness of wiggly jiggly glances that incessantly roam around, from the heavens above to the flames and sunsets flickering behind the horizon to the teardrops emerging from their farthest edges to the stardust scattered over the earth below to the eyes of the converser and back, knowing that whole universes would remain unnoticed had our eyes looked straight and straight only. As in the *Maltese Falcon*, sometimes we need to make a trip to the end of the world and back to realize that those sugarcoated ones pleading for help with arms wrapped around our knees are, in fact, those who attempt to murder this beautiful world and us in it. Likewise, to recognize the genuine qualities of things standing directly in front of us, let alone the omnipresent beauties pervading every pixel of this world, we must let go of the tendency toward stale stillness in every aspect of our being and allow ourselves to constantly move on and be reborn in our perceptions and our expressions with every second of our existence. Or else the divinest vibes surrounding us may be discarded as wicked and dull, whereas the darkest things alive may be mistaken for munificent, as insinuated by the following opinion by Pier Paolo Pasolini: “I was born in a fascist age and a fascist world and I didn’t notice fascism, just as a fish does not notice he is in the water”<sup>1518</sup>. This perspective reconnects us with the legendary commencement speech by David Foster Wallace<sup>1519</sup>, which he started with a Zen fable wherein an old fish intercepts two young fish on their swim and gleefully pitches in a question, “Gee, folks, how’s the water today?”, pointing at the immaculate meaningfulness of something that tends to be taken for granted and essentially ignored because of resting constantly right in front of our noses. After a short breeze of a light, yet emotional discourse, the poet manages to expose the hidden foundations of our perceiving the world and reveal some of the epistemological podiums on which we all stand and which imperceptibly define what we see and who we are, showing us that there are no unprejudiced observations, for beliefs of one kind or another are necessarily present behind even the most basic perceptions of ours. Likewise, there can be no such thing as atheism, he further claims, since everyone ultimately worships something, be it money, prestige, physical lures and pleasures or unsexy, selfless sacrifices that broaden the tiny bottle of our consciousness and tune us to the grand symphony of sacred being. “This is water, this is water”<sup>1520</sup>, is the mantra with which this masterful address ends, reminding us of the need to constantly blink with the eye of our mind, like the twinkling cursor of old computers or the glistening stars, and periodically expose it to darkness in order to provide a vital contrast to the colorful and cheerful life that surrounds us and be saved from falling into blind spots of arrogant ignorance. By constantly wandering off the straight lines we have drawn and committed ourselves in our prayerful dreams to follow is thus how we are being ceaselessly fed with amazement and wonder that spin the wheel of enlightened being and keep the flame of love in us ablaze, able to enkindle the starry lampions of other people’s spirits with genuine lightness.

The importance of stepping out of our current positions, irrespective of how perfect they may seem, so as to sustain the vitality of our spiritual quests, was outlined by Jean-Paul Sartre in one of the final sentences of his *Being and Nothingness*: “A freedom which wills itself freedom is in fact a being-which-is-not-what-it-is and which-is-what-it-is-not, and which chooses the

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<sup>1518</sup> See Pasolini on Pasolini: Interviews with Oswald Stack, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN (1969), pp. 17.

<sup>1519</sup> See David Foster Wallace’s *This Is Water: Some Thoughts, Delivered on a Significant Occasion about Living a Compassionate Life*, Little, Brown and Company, New York, NY (2009), pp. 107 - 108.

<sup>1520</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 132 - 133.

ideal of being, being-what-it-is-not and not-being-what-it-is. This freedom chooses not to recover itself but to flee itself, not to coincide with itself but to be always at a distance from itself<sup>1521</sup>. Therefore, whereas remaining for too long in single perspectives of perceiving the world and expressing the essence of our being gradually distorts the creative powers of ours and transforms the lush rivers of divine inspiration that stream within our being into muddy puddles, relentlessly being on the intellectual move, alternately approaching and diverging from the systems we set ourselves in relationships with, is to live with a guiding star of the Way of Love enlightening the celestial crowns of our sublime cognitive panoramas in life. Incessantly escaping from our old worldviews rather than anxiously holding on to them with all our powers is thus the way to retain the spin of the wheel of creativity of our being. Always renewing our views of the world, never ceasing to look at it from a new perspective is thus the only way to retain touch with the starry constellations engrained within the deepest foundations of our spirit and be able to deliver their eternal voice that mysteriously beautifies and heals all that there is on the surface of the world of our experience. One such drifting away from the essence of oneself in order to replenish this very essence may also be seen as underlying the divine origins of our beings; for, what Nature is incessantly doing is multiplying unique new perspectives that hide the sprouts of divinity within them and are able to see Nature itself in an always new and ever more wonderful light.

For that reason, when an actor is alone on the stage, trying to light up the lanterns of sympathy and profound insights in the audience all by himself, the complexity of his character has to be so great in its multidimensionality and versatility that an entire world has to be able to fit in it. To its capricious behavior and mercurial mood the words with which John Lennon described David Bowie, *i.e.*, “Meeting David Bowie is always interesting because you never know which one you are meeting”<sup>1522</sup>, apply well, for all the linear streams of predictability inside one such mind have given way to a sun of surprises whose rays change the directions of its shine erratically, albeit covering the entire spherical coordinate system around it over prolonged periods of time. Likewise, anytime we come across questions asking “which” Picasso, “which” Stravinsky, “which” Miles, “which” Dylan, “which” Van Morrison or any other artist who transitioned through different phases during his career, we could perceive them as signs that truly progressive characters are indeed such that one may never know which one of them one would be meeting in advance, if not all of them together. They can also be reminders of the fallacy of the contemporary psychiatrists to shun such complex and occasionally split, omnium-gatherum personalities as pathological instead of considering them as bearers of the supreme potential for creative expression. After all, the evolution of our character resembles a river rushing to the sea - the symbol of the dissolution of ego in the spirit of ultimate oneness and of becoming everything, truly everything - and accepting the waters from all the other rivers and rivulets encountered along the way, helplessly including both those that it adores and those that it abhors, becoming ever broader with every passing second and ever more multidimensional too, like a crystal whose faces multiply with each blink of an eye. This is why the older and the more experienced we get, the richer and the more aesthetic and impressive our personality can be, if we only let this versatility of frames of mind and emotions confined in us emerge like a genie from a bottle to the surface of our being and begin to dance wildly, side by side, the sinful and the saintly alike. “Do

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<sup>1521</sup> See Jean-Paul Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness*, Washington Square Press, New York, NY (1943).

<sup>1522</sup> See Wendy Leigh’s *Bowie*, Gallery Books, New York, NY (2014), pp. 8.

I contradict myself? Very well then I contradict myself, I am large, I contain multitudes”<sup>1523</sup>, Walt Whitman noticed in his *Song of Myself*, and one such boundless myriad of emotions and personality flavors appears to be blended in the minds of the most supreme and inspiring performers on the stages of theater and life alike. For, how else could one successfully play a prototypical Dostoyevsky’s character, for example, suspended between irreconcilable opposites, be they the anarchistic love of freedom and the humanitarian love of justice<sup>1524</sup> or the disgust over the lowland spirit of sheepishness that has taken over humanity and the cravings for a utopian world, filled with peace, love and harmony, if not by awakening the groundbreaking sense of mental and emotional self-crucifixion between an array of mutually divergent psychological rails? “Two extremes, gentlemen of the jury, remember that Karamazov can contemplate two extremes and both at once”<sup>1525</sup>, noticed the prosecutor on the trial of Dmitri Karamazov and there is no doubt that most, if not all, members of the pantheon of fictional characters conceived by the long lineage of human imagination have been typified by one such schizoid coexistence of antagonistic mental traits, suggestive of their psychological walk along the edge of a cliff that separates gorgeous worldviews of a genius from the psychogenic abysses of a madman. Ian Curtis, for example, an illustrious bipolar walker along this thin line that separates a genius from a madman, owed his electrifying presence on the stage to an open display of a number of internal antagonisms, including “strength and fragility”, as Annik Honoré, his platonic paramour at the time, noticed<sup>1526</sup>, as well as placidity and turmoil, indifference and exuberance, coldness and emotionality, love and hate, silence and noise, peace and perplexity, chaos and calm, and many more. “Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water” (Matthew 17:15), cried a biblical character in despair, knowing not that such an eruptively protean nature of the character is an inexhaustible well of creativity; it is to be equilibrated when it turns out to be dissonant, not linearized by any means, lest one lose the gift to illuminate the world with a slightest of one’s gestures. In fact, people who mesmerize us with their mere physical presence, born leaders and other magnetic personalities are all riddled by contradictions, allowing parallel exhibitions of diametrically opposite emotions to split their insides to twos, threes, fourths and, occasionally, an entire infinitude of multiples. When they smile, moreover, it is as if suns on their faces light up entire universes around them, while their frowns, coming on as lightly, draw the gloomy clouds, eclipse the sun and frost the windows of the viewer’s soul in an instant - so powerful are the emotions they express and when expressed in synergy, on top of this, whole minds around them become blown under the unbearable weight of the overall impression. And although there is a perennial impression that such personalities containing multitudes are always out of reach, defying any attempts for a full emotional connection and remaining helplessly as mysterious as the dark side of the moon, one oft-overlooked aspect of theirs in human relationships that is worth cherishing, alongside the capacity to always surprise another person with something new and unpredictable, is their immunity to disputes over which most relationships severe, which are always such that, as Kristen Radtke pointed out, “When a couple has an argument, they may think it’s about money or power or sex, or how to raise the kids, or whatever. What they’re really

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<sup>1523</sup> See David Eagleman’s *Incognito: The Secret Lives of the Brain*, Vintage Books, New York, NY (2011), pp. 101.

<sup>1524</sup> See Ralph Harper’s *The Seventh Solitude: Man’s Isolation in Kierkegaard, Dostoyevsky, and Nietzsche*, The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, MD (1965), pp. 57.

<sup>1525</sup> See Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*, Part IV, Book XII, Chapter 9, Prosveta, Belgrade, Serbia (1880).

<sup>1526</sup> Watch *Joy Division: a documentary* directed by Grant Gee (2007).

saying to each other, though, without realizing it, is this: ‘You are not enough people!’<sup>1527</sup>. This should refute the common misconception that inspiring actors are poor people to deal with on day to day basis, when in reality multidimensional personalities overcome by sundry mood swings can be enlightening for both the performance stage and the most intimate of human relationships. In turn, when mundaneness and behavioral linearity, dull and predictable, take over one’s being, the hypnotic effect one had on the viewers dissipates and the audiences often feel disenchanting and dismayed, like the silent devotee of Petra von Kant packing up and walking away from her, ironically to the sound of the Platters’ Great Pretender, in the last scene of Fassbinder’s classic about stardom and its heartrending trials and tribulations<sup>1528</sup>. Being familiar with the numbing effect that one-dimensional personalities have on our senses and with the captivating appearance of those in whom internal conflicts rage all the time, Eric Rohmer thus sought an atheistic actor to play the role of Jean-Louis in *My Night at Maud’s*, a devout Catholic who, like all of Rohmer’s heroes, follows his convictions and, through a long and tortuous path, eventually arrives at the desired destination<sup>1529</sup>. If we were now to reconsider the mainstream sociological view of self as a social concept, comprising a multitude of Is that equal in number the number of opinions and sentiments one identifies oneself with<sup>1530</sup>, we would gain an additional fortification for the hereby hypothesized necessity for the most magnificent acts on stage to be based on an improvised internal conflict between mutually antipodal psychological traits. To cease to believe in the internal crucifixion of characters deployed in the film or on the stage and begin to linearize their psyches is to have the dogma prevail over the doubt and robotic determinateness over humane wonder, letting the artistic, inspirational value of the works dwindle. For example, although I may state that the fall from grace of Akira Kurosawa as a filmmaker coincided with his only directorial stint in Russia and his first foreign language film, *Dersu Uzala*, the film about the Caucasians’ taking the life out of a genuine Asian man and the film in which, ironically, the director, an Asian man, took the life out of Caucasians by portraying them pathetically and disappointingly, the film theorist, Joan Mellen has come to perceive “the seeds of Kurosawa’s decline” in the movie he directed a decade earlier, *Red Beard*, exactly because of the absence of conflict in its central character, *Red Beard*, contrasting his earlier works in which the artist incarnated an incessant questioning of the self and of the reality through his protagonists and indulging instead in “the dangerous path of the artist who relies on a body of received truths that a master, as a surrogate for the director, imparts to an eager disciple”<sup>1531</sup>, resulting in “the film’s failure to realize its point of view beyond the level of

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<sup>1527</sup> See Kristen Radtke’s *Seek You: A Journey through American Loneliness*, Pantheon Books, New York, NY (2021), pp. 323.

<sup>1528</sup> The film is, of course, much more than this. First and foremost, it is a story about the obsessive personality of this and quite possibly every world-class artist. In the film, Petra was made to follow the classical Kierkegaardian route from humility in art and wholehearted devotion to it to humility in love and giving oneself completely in a relationship with a fellow human soul, achieving redemption in the awakening of commonality in the end, albeit with a question mark. Is it the same commonality that made Johannes, the middle son of Morten, a rural widower, to finally succeed in making a miracle or it is a type of commonality that is bleak and lifeless, being more of a defeat than a triumph? On top of all of this, the film is also about an emotionally archetypal relationship between a teacher and his/her disciple.

<sup>1529</sup> See Olivier Lorscheid’s interview with Jean-Louis Trintignant, French TV show *Telecinema*, Criterion Collection (1974).

<sup>1530</sup> See E. V. Sokolov’s *Culture and Personality*, Yugoslav Edition, Prosveta, Belgrade, Serbia (1976), pp. 208.

<sup>1531</sup> Quoted in Stuart Galbraith’s *The Emperor and the Wolf: The Lives and Films of Akira Kurosawa and Toshiro Mifune*, Faber and Faber, New York, NY (2001), pp. 383.

homiletic preaching”<sup>1532</sup>. Plus, since perfect being is the one that empathizes with every single opinion and sentiment that it comes across rather than with only a selected few of them, the perfect performance on the stage of theater and life alike can be envisaged to be a concoction of literally everything, of every single emotion and state of mind that encircles the globe. “There’s a lot of things that go out to make up one person’s personality and so that you can be everything”<sup>1533</sup>, said Mick Jagger in an attempt to formulate the recipe for a stage character whose performance leads to the entrancement of the audience, pointing at this embedment of every emotion under the sun within one’s frame of mind and one’s expressions as the route to it. Thinking of this demand for an infinite broadness of the character actually flies us on the wings of time straight to ancient Greece and spring dances as parts of dithyrambs, played by one actor with two roles: life and death. From such multidimensional and captivating dances wherein the dancer had the dual role of embodying both sorrowful dying of the winter and joyful rise of the summer, it is said that the first profound theatrical plays, Greek tragedies, arose, according to Aristotle<sup>1534</sup>. This ideal of embodying four emotional seasons and beyond in our physical expressions in order to astonish the world therewith continued to thrive in the heads and hearts of countless contemporary choreographers, including Merce Cunningham, whose *Crises*, for one, opens with the display of a female dancer subjected to a typical pair of opposed impulses – fluency and lightness in her legwork and churning of her upper body in uncontrolled spasms. To babies it comes natural to go through a variety of moods that are as different from each other as the four seasons, being curious at one moment, then cranky at another, now cute and seconds later irate, alternating playfulness and indolence like the sides of a coin flipped into the air, and all that in a single hour sometimes, which may make us wonder now if that is why they so lightly and effortlessly develop into an ever more potent and powerful emanation of being with every blink of their eyes soaked in glossy wonder, as opposed to stalling adults who have drowned themselves in the dull waters of phony awkwardness, all muddy with dishonesty and hypocrisies that the process of growing up brings, behaving exactly the same, like a monotonous clockwork, from one hour to the next, from one year to another. What lies ahead of the little ones as a mission to accomplish in the course of this grand fable called life is, thence, not how to get rid of one and foster other emotions from this broad spectrum thereof with which they are born, as the grownup nurturers would undoubtedly attempt to achieve, but how to combine pairs, triads and, in fact, myriads of emotions into single stances with which they will come to face the world and base their expressions on and which, as we see, holds the key to magnificent aesthetics and creativity of the latter. Heaven only knows how copious the waterfalls of inspiration befell upon me as I watched children traverse these four emotional seasons and with their winds in the sails of their spirit glide towards a more complex and creative form of life than the adulthood is. Paul Gauguin’s primitivistic goal of “going back beyond the horses of the Parthenon to the rocking-horse of the childhood”<sup>1535</sup> is thus mine too and children’s, as I claim, is the only life full of life to the fullest of it, posed at the apex of the pyramid of divinity that has taken on earthly forms, the apex around which the adults should only hold their arms up, like loving parents over the playground structure whereat their little ones toddle, in surrender and admittance that their sole purpose in life is to sustain the holy views of the world that children behold. Today I am as

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<sup>1532</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1533</sup> Watch *Crossfire Hurricane* directed by Brett Morgan (2012).

<sup>1534</sup> See Jane Harrison’s *From Ritual to Art* (1913). In: *What is Dance?* Edited by Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen, Oxford University Press, New York, NY (1983), pp. 504.

<sup>1535</sup> See E. H. Gombrich’s *The Story of Art*, Fifteenth Edition, Phaidon Press, London, UK (1989), pp. 601.

convinced as the Rock of Gibraltar that theirs is the path that leads us to the stars, given that just as the little ones develop into grownups so lightly and effortlessly on the wings of a mesmerizing versatility and volatility of moods, switching from being dewy-eyed to unfazed, far-off to forthright, intrigued to disinterested, disconnected to connected and all over again with every heartbeat of theirs, so could we, grownups, grow into gods on earth, the next logical stage in our development if we only behaved erratically, whimsically, out of this world, changing moods with each blink of an eye, dancing all over the place, shaking stardust off the gown of our body and the aura of our spirit, and truly being everything, everything, everything. Boris Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago was convinced that health deteriorates when "day after day, you say the opposite of what you feel"<sup>1536</sup>, while the British mental health counselor, Jeff Foster advocates the idea that depression is the natural response of the mind to its feeling "pressed down by the weight of the false self, the mask", thanks to which we ought "to stop pretending and express our raw truth, to give voice to our secret loneliness, our shame, our broken hearts, boredom and brilliant rage"<sup>1537</sup>, and these are merely a handful out of myriads of signs around us impelling us to crush the gates of self-constraint and act in manners as volatile as the ways of the child. There is hardly anyone who has not seen Edvard Munch's panting titled *Scream*, but also rarely anyone who would recall that the face that screams is not a face, but a mask, which was a way of saying that either our insides will scream in anguish and agony for as long as we hide our real self behind a fake appearance or that this scream is the way to liberate oneself from the deadening confinement inside a prison of the feigned gestural veil concealing the true self. A concordant advice, therefore, "bold as love", stands inscribed in the grooves of the first few spins of the Shins' record about cartwheels, crawl outs and spits in teacher's eyes, saying "Glow, glow, melt and flow, eviscerate your fragile frame, spill it out on the ragged floor, a thousand different versions of yourself, and if the old guard still offend, they've got nothing left on which you depend"<sup>1538</sup>. Now, it is no secret that enlightened creatures retain a childlike core of consciousness, the result of which is a similar concoction of a variety of emotions and states of mind findable brewing inside of the pots of their hearts and psyches as that tearing apart the insides and outsides of any given human nestling. The nearest personal example of this kind is my Mom, a servant and a saint, a soul so deeply reverberating with every earthly emotion that it streamed across the heavenly skies of feeling and thought, effortlessly, like a bird of paradise, all her life, on this plane of reality whereon the deeper we descend in cordial compassion, the higher we ascend, in bliss and blessedness. And like her, who combined practically every emotion known to man in her heart, having been infinitely joyful and infinitely sad, dreamy and practical, romantic and down-to-earth, common and otherworldly, earthy and magical and much more at the same time, so have the works of art and refined thought crafted in the hands of myself, a craver of cocooning inside of her womb and finding seventh heaven therein, strived to become blends of literally every perspective and emotion under the sun.

The charm of narrative arts, including movies, theatrical plays and novels, then, can be said to lie in diverse character traits that appear therein, complementing each other and inviting the watcher and the reader to sympathize with all of them and thereby broaden the scope of one's personality and refresh the ability to establish empathic connections with creatures from all walks of life. But even when we are all alone on the stage of life, attempting at delivering

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<sup>1536</sup> Watch Doctor Zhivago directed by David Lean (1965).

<sup>1537</sup> See Jeff Foster's Facebook post (April 21, 2019), retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/LifeWithoutACentre/posts/2073100512787546>.

<sup>1538</sup> Listen to the Shins' *Sleeping Lessons on Wincing the Night Away*, Sub Pop (2006).

powerful punches of inspiration to those who keep eyes fixed on us, we need to travel across the entire spectrum of human behavior types, moods and views of reality, to stretch our arms in one and then the other direction all until we encompass an entire world in our emotional embrace, offering thereby an exciting rollercoaster ride, which, in the end, if we were successful, leaves the spectators breathless, bedazzled by the beacons of divine spirit that radiate outwardly from the center of our heart, gasping for air in their enlightened amazement. Thus, the amount of sense Murray Burns makes in Herb Gardner's *A Thousand Clowns*, when he delivers the following line in an attempt to console his melancholic Serbian-American friend overcome by a sense of impoverishment and limitedness of her personality and the range of expressions that define her being, cannot be fit into a whole ocean, let alone a lone bottle of hay: "It's just that there are all these Sandras running around who you've never met before, and it's confusing at first, fantastic. But damn it, isn't it great to find out how many Sandras there are? It's like those little cars in the circus, you know? This tiny red car comes out, hardly big enough for a midget, and it putters around, and suddenly its doors open and out come a thousand clowns, whooping and hollering and raising hell"<sup>1539</sup>. In other words, to be everything at the same time, an explosion of joy and hope and somberness and despair and a sublime mountain peak covered with snow and an earthquake and a wildfire, a dragon and a dryad in one body at once, is to become an incarnation of life like no other. To that end, freely reflecting Nature in her infinitely versatile "moods", from sunshiny brightness to heartrending rains to saddening sunsets to gloomy moodiness to foggy vagueness to trembling winds to thundering storms to volcano eruptions of passions and heat to earthquakes that shake it all with a staggering roar to glistening starriness, some more, some less, all until a magic proportion that matches the predispositions of one's spirit is reached, is what the most supreme personalities in life are up to, as opposed to ultimate dissatisfaction arising from embracing only a few selected peaks in this broad spectrum of emotions that Mother Nature metaphorically teaches us to exhibit, while suppressing others under peer pressure. It is for this reason that the Swiss performance artist, Urs Lüthi, who collaborated with Lou Reed on the promotion of *Transformer* and emerged from a stream of conceptual artists who worked to transform themselves into an art object, thus fulfilling Yeats' "brightening glance" wherein one knows not anymore where the dancer begins and the dance ends<sup>1540</sup>, claimed that the embodiment of ambivalence is necessary for "an interchange of identification"<sup>1541</sup> to happen, which is, of course, an ultimate aim of all works of art that arise from the aspiration to magically transform and truly ennoble the souls who come in touch with them. This, of course, explains crazily versatile and complex personalities of exceptional artists, quite often bordering schizophrenia and bipolar mental disorders typified by sudden and unpredictable mood shifts. In fact, starry trains of analogies and crazy associations of thoughts that uncontrollably whizz through the space of one's mind are the common feature of both manically depressed and genially enlightened minds that inhabit this plane of reality. Being supersensitive to minor details in our surroundings, letting a flower on a meadow or a miniscule detail on one's outfit turn into a runaway train of emotions, an avalanche of thoughts that begin to roll down the hills of one's mind all until they turn into roaring and blinding flashes of either furious anger or dazzling beauty in one's mind, is the trait of both mentally disordered and intellectually and artistically

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<sup>1539</sup> Watch *A Thousand Clowns* directed by Fred Coe (1965).

<sup>1540</sup> See William Butler Yeats' *Among School Children*, In: *The Tower*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY (1928).

<sup>1541</sup> See Rose Lee Goldberg's *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, NY (1988), pp. 169.

prodigal, outlandishly creative individuals. Or, as Swami Vivekananda calmly explained one of his breakdowns that resulted in his screaming and yelling at his disciple for no reason whatsoever, “When you reach Bhakti, your heart and nerves become so fine and sensitive that you cannot stand even the touch of a flower”. This is why it is claimed that logic provides a path to safe and predictable thinking with its chaining one down to slowly crawl along single planes of thought on the planetary surface of one’s mind and disallowing one to momentarily soar into sublime spaces and fly in ecstasy all over the airy atmosphere of one’s mind and even occasionally protrude into the celestial space, approaching the sun of enlightened thinking wherein all is seen as a grand unity of being, while, on the other hand, spurring thinking through metaphors and analogies, the crucial elements of systemic and possibly any other conceivable creative reasoning, with its uncontrollable flights of thoughtful associations which open majestic views of the world but which can at the same time mentally distance one from the world below and which always carry risks of one’s unexpected fall from the great heights, can lead one’s mind into either maddening sways or reigns of a blissful mindfulness, and this particular sentence which you are reading at this given moment with its reflecting the latter mode of thinking serves as an evidence of the unending chain of the inspirational trains of thought that has arisen in its creator as he typed these words, likewise predestining it to be a hit or miss, to astonish the reader or to fall flat in the head of its interpreters. This dual nature of systemic thinking comes as no surprise once we recall that all magnificent tools and potentials which we become endowed in life always present double-edged swords and can be used either for the benefit of everyone or for a massive debasement of us all. Be that as it may, earlier in the text I mentioned how beautiful artistic pieces are never one-dimensional in the sense of representing a single feeling, a single emotion or a single perspective of grasping the world. Irrespective of how phenomenally arranged or depicted, works like these will always lack an inherent richness which holds the key to their timelessness. Instead, truly valuable pieces of art always blend perspectives, emotions or states of mind that seem hardly mixable at first sight, such as starry joy and cosmic sadness, mysteriousness of a quiet and dark universe and jumpy ecstasy of a sun, shyness and humbleness of a nun and ground-shaking cries for bells of liberty and freedom of expression of thought of a Joan of Arc. Blending emotions from the opposite sides of the spectrum of human emotional repertoire is likewise the secret for producing a magic concoction in our hearts and eyes that is then reflected in a truly captivating behavior, which is the rule that has been insinuated by the implicit character of the Way of Love. For, as the fundamental concept of the Way of Love with its blending what seems quite incompatible, namely meditative withdrawnness and empathic expressiveness, could have been telling us, the most valuable achievements in life lie in discovering ways on how to reconcile and conjoin various directions of thought or modes of being that appear diametrically opposite and akin to blacks and whites on the Tai-Chi-Tu diagram. To succeed in these endeavors, our mind, all by itself, should travel across a range of perspectives, hopping from one to another peak across the landscapes of our mind, which is as rugged and hilly as the city of San Francisco, all until we come to resemble a diamond with countless faces. As such, we would also be able to immediately connect with innumerable worldviews different from our own at the given moment instead of rejecting them as foreign to us and useless. Every time we come across a crossfire of mutual accusations of stances that stand in perfect complementariness with one another, but with no ability to recognize it, dwelling in their own unilateral perspectives, solitarily, and falsely thinking that the world would be a better place if all were to be and think just like them, we would find them as futile as a hypothetical case where the defenders of a soccer team would lay blame on the attackers

because of making too many incorrect passes in the game and the attackers would finger-point at the defenders because of never ever making a creative move that would lead to a goal, being blind all the way to the extent to which their fundamentally different roles, in fact, complement each other on the pitch. This ability to easily empathize with endlessly versatile worldviews would turn out to present a quality of priceless importance in our attempts to accomplish this elementary task in the adventure of our mind after treasures of immaculately inspiring acts, which is to confront and reconcile the most opposite perspectives we could think of. The latter sometimes results in their neutralization which resembles the encounters of matter and antimatter, during which an illuminating effect is produced followed by a sudden and miraculous expansion of our perception of reality.

Thereupon, the blind spot effect explicated herein is also tightly related to the dialectical nature of the evolution of the Universe in all of its aspects. Shifting from theses to antitheses to their syntheses to their antitheses to new syntheses and beyond, never ceasing to search for greater and lovelier while spinning this dialectical wheel of evolution is consequently the way that leads to enrichment of our knowledge. Flexible moving away from the stances we currently occupy and approaching others, while keeping in mind the general rule that the scarier and the more intimidating they seem, the more valuable they likely are, is essential in preventing us from falling into blind spots that every single perspective in life abounds with and letting us continue to be a light traveler, like the Little Prince, spontaneously sowing seeds of beauty and harmony throughout the fields of the world in its flying from one pair of flowery human eyes to another and empathically uniting with them all, while not staying in their vicinity permanently, hypnotically gazing in their starry depths flowing with nectars of gods, but never ceasing to travel back and forth, from one to another, hopping forever and ever, lightly and lovingly, like the words in this sentence. Then, we might happen to take a journey to the other side of the world just to gather immensely important insights about our own residence in it, about our own culture and our own being in a world that we have gradually become blind to as our cognition has undergone a slow descent into an abyss of specific blind spots, similar to the way a frog cooks itself alive, without noticing it, if only the temperature of the pot holding it is increased slowly enough. To realize how immaculate or faulty our being is at any given moment may thus be impossible unless we are willing to readily change perspectives, mentally, emotionally and physically alike, and be a river that constantly flows and thereby avoids turning itself into a muddy puddle. For, facing boringness, awkwardness and evilness in the world around us thus presents a powerful spur for our own avoidance of these traits and changing our being in the direction of embodying their thorough opposites, which brings us to the connection between the blind spot effect and the dialectic character of the evolution of the world. And the more we are eager to switch between cognitive perspectives in imaginatively visualizing and experiencing worldly circumstances, the more of the wondrous and adventurous spirit of the Little Prince, whose starships are propelled by the powerful empathic drives, dwells in us, the lesser the chance that Nature will send its curses and physically face us with opposites to the comfortable current states of affairs in order to make us realize their wonderfulness and fully appreciate them. For, being always immersed in goodness makes us blind to it and after a while we stop to recognize it as goodness and become prone to stray from its path and appear on the other, evil side in our thoughts and acts. Due to the blind spot effect, we tend to naturally become blind to the miraculous beauty that life is by being constantly immersed in it. Yet, if we were to constantly keep one of our eyes on the starry silence and hardships of humanity, while the other one rests on the sunshiny and colorful world around us, thus giving birth to the starry sky

and a sunny day within us, we become constantly enlightened in wonder with the beauty recognized in each and every detail of reality. After all, this may exactly be what the planet Earth teaches us to attain in our worldviews as it engages in an incessant spin and revolution around the Sun, alternately immersing us in sunny daylight and in starry darkness, inviting us to draw one such dialectical sky of mind in ourselves too and never stop spinning while plunging in one and then the other and then all over again, forever and ever more. Hence, “we must be still and still moving, into another intensity, for a further union, a deeper communion”, as T. S. Eliot advised us in his *Four Quartets* to unendingly search, to always be on a divinely devotional quest for the treasures of celestial spiritedness for us and the world alike to indulge in, never discontinuing our empathic leaping from one planet of human eyes to another, like a bee that hops from one flower to another and thus spontaneously and imperceptibly sows seeds of happiness all over the flowery fields of the world. For, that is how we sustain the shine of happiness and brilliant soulfulness within us.

Hence, to look aside, away from the road that lies straight ahead and that we ought to follow, is thus the way to avoid many blind spots that staring in a single direction brings forth, which makes the art of looking sideways, which the British visual artist, Alan Fletcher, wrote about<sup>1542</sup>, appear particularly critical for the modern times. When Colin Meloy sings with voice that reverberates with distant heroism how “there are angels in your angles”<sup>1543</sup>, he does not remind us only that angelic spirit is dormant in everything and that angels are, as pointed out by two anonymous punks in *Off the Map*<sup>1544</sup>, sowing stars back to the dust, the dust where the diamonds of beautiful insights slumber, but that we should set free the rays of our attention, all until they start to shine in all directions, turning our eyes into suns, grasping and gently pampering the angels that sleep in the angles of our eyes. Glistening eyes that appear sparkling with starry constellations ingrained in them are made to magically arise in such a way. Such a way of looking at the world reverberates in accord with the idea that the balance between being disciplined, attentive and focused, feeding on certainties, and wandering around, curiously questioning, feeding on uncertainties, should be preserved in every fruitful exploration of the world, daily and scientific alike. After all, both science and we in the world exist because there are uncertainties which drive us to explore and evolve along the way; consequently, a true explorer in the realms of science and life should balance certainties and uncertainties in every aspect of his being and interaction with the world.

If the name of the post-rock band in which I played the lead guitar in my youthful days, Silence by a Crescent Star, subtly pointed at something, it was the imperfection, like a soulful star illuminating the human spirit from the inside cut to half, as the source of highest inspiration and creativity in life. At the same time, it conveyed the message that failure to find the other half of our bodies, predestining us to remain a single boy or a girl dreaming of a perfect romantic union, hides the source of graceful worldviews which turn every moment of our lives into mystical encounters between one’s juvenile and chastely wondrous spirit and the divinely dazzling Nature. No wonder then that friends who were close to Brian Wilson at the time he worked on *Pet Sounds*, an ultimate masterpiece of the modern music, realized that it was his loss of virginity that he felt was irretrievably dissipating the magic of his views of the world, which he craved to capture once and for all in the sounds that came to comprise this record. *Pet Sounds* thence became reminiscent of a box in which magical sounds and harmonies are enclosed and

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<sup>1542</sup> See Alan Fletcher’s *The Art of Looking Sideways*, Phaidon, London, UK (2001).

<sup>1543</sup> Listen to the Decemberists’ *Of Angels and Angles* on Picaresque, Kill Rock Stars (2005).

<sup>1544</sup> *Off the Map*, CrimethInc. Ex-Workers’ Collective, Salem, OR (2003).

released in the air as gorgeous butterflies, so as to enchant the listener with the spirit of genuinely wondrous dreaminess, whenever the gramophone needle starts to scratchily travel along the record's grooves. Therein, Brian Wilson's innocent ignorance of sexual fulfillment became sublimated into sounds that revolutionized the pop rock music of his time through their shying away from the vulgarly obvious climaxes and creating instead an aural landscape composed of much subtler sonic hills and troughs. There are people, of course, who could argue that the sexual immaturity of an artist is the cause of his or her inability to develop points into climactic resonance with the absorber of the message, as exemplified by the music of Anton Bruckner, whose frustrating tendency to build tension and then wander away from the climax, cluelessly and aimlessly, without ever reaching it, is often attributed to his underdeveloped sexuality<sup>1545</sup>, leading, according to some, to a music packed with sentiments, but also having a very low empathic power to profoundly connect with and move the listener<sup>1546</sup>, as if it was being composed in third person<sup>1547</sup>. I, however, would contrast these points of view any day with an argument that the language of Nature is wholly anticlimactic, and as such is at odds with our wholly fallen-from-grace civilization at this rudimentary stage of its cultural evolution, where orgasmic climaxes in terms of superficial satisfactions and vulgar resolutions of emotional tensions, thought processes and narratives are sought at all costs, without recognizing how strayed from this magnificent language of Nature they are and how detrimental the effects of theirs on our spirits and societies are. For one, brains accustomed to satisfaction of the little cravings of theirs favor simple, catchy tunes<sup>1548</sup> compared to their more complex analogues, falling in love with which is reserved for the souls whose trajectories in life follow less of the climactic routes and more of the nebulous ones, with neither any definite apogees or perigees. Therefore, my general aversion to Luis Bunuel's filmography aside, his *Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, a movie whose plot revolves around a group of bourgeois friends who always get interrupted just as they sit down to have dinner and never ever finish one in the course of the film, I have always seen as a vivid pointer in the direction of exploration of the aesthetics of the anticlimactic. The fact that these aesthetics have been little examined and largely ignored by our shallow, climax-worshipping culture makes the subtext of this film continuously fresh and innovative, inviting us to conceive of different forms of narration than those built around the stale old development-tension-resolution triangle.

Indeed, I have always been astonished to realize how sexual insecurities stand behind the innate grace and chastity of youthful creatures, whereas this juvenile purity begins to fade away as soon as sexual securities start to pervade one's mind. This is how our patience, dreaminess and goodness gradually become substituted with nervousness, bitterness and maliciousness, so frequently associated with the process of growing up. Guilt, shame and perplexity thus more often wash over youths than the adults who have grown faithful to the path of blind decisiveness

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<sup>1545</sup> See the comment by Epistaxis on the Reddit thread titled *Change My View: Bruckner is Overwrought and Boring*, retrieved from [https://www.reddit.com/r/classicalmusic/comments/1wed58/change\\_my\\_view\\_bruckner\\_is\\_overwrought\\_and\\_boring/](https://www.reddit.com/r/classicalmusic/comments/1wed58/change_my_view_bruckner_is_overwrought_and_boring/) (2014).

<sup>1546</sup> See the comment by decibel9 on the Reddit thread titled *Brucknerians Be Aware: Rant Incoming*, retrieved from [https://www.reddit.com/r/classicalmusic/comments/9vnvda/brucknerians\\_be\\_aware\\_rant\\_incoming/](https://www.reddit.com/r/classicalmusic/comments/9vnvda/brucknerians_be_aware_rant_incoming/) (2018).

<sup>1547</sup> See the comment by Wqhooolwayrg on the Reddit thread titled *Brucknerians Be Aware: Rant Incoming*, retrieved from [https://www.reddit.com/r/classicalmusic/comments/9vnvda/brucknerians\\_be\\_aware\\_rant\\_incoming/](https://www.reddit.com/r/classicalmusic/comments/9vnvda/brucknerians_be_aware_rant_incoming/) (2018).

<sup>1548</sup> See Mark Wigglesworth's *Et Nova et Vetera: What makes some works more popular than others?*, retrieved from <https://www.markwigglesworth.com/writing/et-nova-et-vetera/> (2020).

and doubtless determination, fearing the former feelings, but ignoring that they are the natural signs that one wonders, questions and doubts, all of which are the traits of brave voyagers, explorers and, eventually, discoverers. In contrast, along with the process of growing up, the majority of people lose touch with these vital psychological traits and adopt the style of thinking and behaving described by Cain's response to God's asking him where his brother, whom Cain had just murder out of jealousy, was, "I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9), translatable in the language of the modern times as "Who cares, so long as you keep it rolling". The graceful insecurity and sweet carefulness, naturally ornamenting behavioral traits of the wee ones, thereby vanish and the grownup features of oppressive willpower, indomitableness and grit begin to reign. However, thinking that one is a mister know-it-all is placing stumbling stones on the path of one's progress, blocking the view of great horizons towards which the shameful and insecure questioners of this world are streaming. Standing forth as the driving force for our progress in life, ignorance is golden, thus I claim. Or, as the historian, Daniel J. Boorstin, who heavily criticized the modern society for its valuing Xeroxed maps of the reproduced and simulated more than territories of the authentic and original, claimed, "The greatest obstacle to discovering the shape of the earth, the continents, and the oceans was not ignorance but the illusion of knowledge"<sup>1549</sup>, inescapably calling to mind an image of statuesque Socrates standing on the seashore, in front of an open sea of the unknown and amusingly reflecting on the idea that only when we know not can we be said to know something, finding himself in the midst of an illuminating philosophical paradox, bouncing off between the poles of perfect ignorance and perfect insight, reaching ever deeper to one and the other side with every breath of one. For, every road to wisdom begins with wondering, for the sake of which an erasure of the screen of one's mind with a mop of ignorance and childlike forgiveness is required.

Man is youthful in his spirit to the extent his flexibility and capacity to change are at display. The paradox is that the latter traits arise from the capacity to hold wonderful dreams inside of one's head, for every dream has its roots in the belief in change, the belief that could exist only inasmuch as these dreams remain un-lived to some extent. On the other hand, the capacity to dream feeds itself on our thirst to reveal answers to the greatest enigmas in life and this thirst inherently depends on our ignorance with respect to these grand existential questions. Consequently, since youthful playfulness, loving respect of our tradition, moderate timidity and dreaminess are all chains in the closed circle of creativity, we may reach the same conclusion Yim Yames arrived at in the finale of a record that is a solemn hard rock hymn to the sirens of slowness, *It Still Moves*: "I could hold down a joke or a job or a dream, but then all three are one in the same"<sup>1550</sup>. In other words, life is indeed a dream of our starry soul as it dancingly revolves around the Sun of godly Nature, while all around us resembles a crescent Moon smiling at us and urges us to accomplish our mission in life flawlessly and joyfully. As it were, had we happened to find out the answers to the deepest questions in life, the magical exploratory force that propels us forward would cease to exist and we would eventually drown in the muddles of a prosaic and meaningless existence. And yet, ignorance *per se* is no key to success either. For us to turn life into food of progressive being and thought, we need to face it with an immense thirst to find out the Answer, even though we may secretly, in the deepest atria of our minds, celebrate this eternal and unavoidable presence of the room for Mystery and the unknown in the space of our knowledge.

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<sup>1549</sup> See Daniel J. Boorstin's *Discoverers*, Vintage, New York, NY (1985).

<sup>1550</sup> Listen to My Morning Jacket's *One in the Same* on *It Still Moves*, ATO (2003).

What follows is one out of a million or more possible ways to write down what could be the commandments for a creative mind of the modern times. In other words, if I were to apply Occam's razor in my rearranging the pieces of the puzzle of systems science that has arisen from the sublime heights of my spirit, the principle that tells us how essentials should not be multiplied without necessity, this is what I might come up with. As you could see, this ultimate systemic balance between balance and imbalance has been placed at the number one spot. This is how this list that tentatively sums up the main body of my philosophy may then look like:

1. Balance is the key; the ultimate balance is the one between balance and imbalance.
2. The invisible foundations of our being, epistemological and ontological, hide the secret of sustainability and successfulness of our acting in the world.
3. The co-creational thesis: the world as we perceive it is drawn by the observer as much as it is determined by the reality, implying that the cognitive, biological and psychological essence of our being is inscribed everywhere as well as that all that we are aware of is a dialogue between human mind and Nature.
4. Scientific models and all languages, being co-created by human minds and Nature, are not objective and truth-revealing, but subjective, metaphoric and pragmatic in nature. To orient each other towards the right ways and open the doors that lead to enlightening experience rather than to engage in battles to establish truthfulness of given models and assertions is their ultimate purpose.
5. We can perceive only boundaries and non-uniformities, i.e., imperfections in the substratum of the reality in terms of deviations from our expectations, implying that readiness to commit mistakes opens the door to learning as well as that all perceivable is the road that takes us to the evolutionary progress of our knowledge, beings and the planet. This progress inherently depends on our inability to find out ultimate answers to the mysteries of life as well as on our unceasing pining to reveal these answers in the spirit of great explorers. Consequently, the joy of being lies in traveling, in being on the way, rather than reaching the destination.
6. The world appears in terms of mutually balancing, dialectical opposites; spurring the evolution of one of the poles in question leads to the evolution of its opposite too. The evolving of spirit and matter, of a system and its environment, always takes place in parallel. Consequently, what is genuinely good for a part is good for the whole too, and *vice versa*.
7. Context co-defines the qualities of a system; hence, qualities of any given system are inscribed in every corner of the world. The incessantly changing contexts are reflected in incessantly changing qualities of static systems, emphasizing every static solution and posture as imperfect.
8. The Way of Love: Creative mind balances the worlds inside and outside; in doing so, it is like a shining star that draws the impressions of the world inwards, to be forged into the source of its shine through self-withdrawn and meditative attentiveness, and explodes through compassionate expressiveness, driven by the desire to give and enlighten the world. The world can be saved only insofar as our soul is saved and *vice versa*. To empathically live so as to save others is to save one's soul and to cultivate enlightening thoughts and emotions is to save the world.
9. The guiding power of pure mind that engages in oneness with the whole wide world is great. It is like the Sun of the great One that illuminates our being.

10. Yet, the Sun and the stars, the focused unity and the scattered multitude, order and chaos, are the two tracks along which the starry train of our being streams.
11. Love and Wonder is where the world begins and ends.
12. Every end is a beginning is an end. The world is formed and evolves in feedback loops in which every cause is an effect and *vice versa*. Yet, Nature is a circle whose circumference is nowhere and the center everywhere. The essence of Nature and the human mind is inscribed in all places.
13. Way as a symbol of simultaneous separateness and connectedness, union and difference, epitomizes the dialectical nature of the world. Every quality is a way, a sign on the road of simultaneous separation and unison between the human mind and God.



The Way of Love primarily teaches us that love for oneself and love for another ought to be precisely balanced, similar to the parallel rails of a railway track, so as to let the **starry train** of our being stream towards enlightening ourselves and others and becoming a new star on the sky of humanity and in the eyes of the Universe. Should we happen to love ourselves more than another, all our actions directed thereto would radiate with solipsistic selfishness, which would over time take the form of a suffocating feeling that we are caged in a mentally and emotionally impermeable, spiritually autistic bubble that prevents the free flights of our spirit. On the other hand, should we find ourselves in a state of mind wherein our appreciation of another eclipses sane dwelling within our own inner microcosm of thought and swimming in wonder amidst the starry constellations of our feelings and ideas, we would turn into an uninspiring conformist who would do anything to satisfy others, while diminishing the shine of one's own unique spirit in the world. To stand in the middle, with one, meditative and introspective pole of our mind washed with wonder and love emanating from our inner world and the other, empathic and expressive pole of our mind inspiringly shining outwards is thus what the Way of Love underlines as the road to utterly creative being in this life.

However, this is only the first critical message that the Way of Love conveys. The second one tells us that these two paths, one that meditatively leads in the direction of one's own heart and another one that empathically brings us close to the hearts of others are entwined and actually endorse each other. Namely, the only way to lean our ears to the silent beat of one's own heart and hear the music that rings with the guiding melody of the divine, angelic mission that one is predisposed to attain is to lean one's ears simultaneously to other people's hearts. As I love to say, the way of the river of our being to the ocean of unison with the divine leads through the rivers which flow through hearts of other earthlings of this world, and *vice versa*: the only way to reach a fulfilling and sincere unity with others is to ceaselessly tend to be plunged into the ocean of one's own mind. Hence, to be one with oneself is the precondition for being one with another, and *vice versa*: to dance in an intimate harmony with another, one has to, first and foremost, dance in harmony with oneself.

A frequent subject of my contemplations is how Buddhism and Christianity in the forms in which they are taught nowadays contain slightly distorted teachings from the perspective of the Middle Way that the Way of Love is, despite the fact that the original teachers of these two religions, Gautama Buddha and the Christ, who helped define the mindsets of the Eastern and the

Western man, respectively, taught in harmony with the Way of Love. Traditionally, Buddhism has been associated with a doctrine that calls for withdrawal of our senses away from the external world and towards the inner light that illuminates our spirit and a devoted immersion therein for the sake of reaching enlightenment. To accomplish the same mission, Christianity has been paradigmatically taken to insist on complete dedication to another, so that even time spent in meditation is meant to be a prayer directed to salvation of worldly souls, beloved and uncongenial alike. Naturally, therefore, the prototypical flaws of such extensive pull towards “the voice inside” in Buddhism and other people’s hearts in Christianity has been the development of cold detachment from the nearby hearts among the proponents of the former philosophy and the proneness to be transformed into passive, sheepish adherents of authorities, whoever they may be, and easily manipulated as such, among the exponents of the latter worldview. The unequivocal worship of the concept of nonattachment has thus been intrinsic to not only Buddhism, but practically all Oriental theologies; on the other hand, Christianity has prophesied the benefits of quite the opposite effect: ever tighter bonding of human spirits in empathy. As we could be by now made solidly sure that the most precious attributes in life spring forth from unifications of what may seem to be utterly incompatible, diametrically opposite features, our mission is none other but to amalgamate these two basic elements of the traditional teachings of Buddhism and Christianity into one: meditative inwardness and empathic expressiveness. The Way of Love, correspondingly, accentuates the balance between meditative immersion of our awareness into the divine core of our being and exuberantly expressive reaching out towards others for the sake of their beautification and edification, actively and spiritedly. “There are two sources of solitude and its agony: being cut off from other men and being cut off from God”<sup>1551</sup>, Ralph Harper noticed, and the Way of Love, alongside the authentic interpretations of the core teachings of the Buddha and the Christ, strengthens our bonds with both man and God, that is, with both the world whose voices come from outside and the one the signs from which arrive mainly from our insides.

When the Christ was asked about the most important commandments that his disciples ought to keep close to their hearts, he proclaimed the following: “The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these”. “And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question” (Mark 12:29–34). Clearly, these two commandments represent two poles between which the strings of our attention should be spread; one should be planted at the root of our own heart, whereas the other one ought to be placed at the bottom of another’s heart. Thence, a dance of miraculous creativity of ours can take place along the thread that connects the two. For, “it is two of us that run to the stars”<sup>1552</sup>, as the final verse of the anthem of the post-rock band in which I played the lead guitar tells me, serving as an incessant reminder that only by holding the hand of another and leading

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<sup>1551</sup> See Ralph Harper’s *The Seventh Solitude: Man’s Isolation in Kierkegaard, Dostoyevsky, and Nietzsche*, The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, MD (1965), pp. 1.

<sup>1552</sup> “Nas je dva što trče za zvezdama” in Serbian; the song is *Poluzvezda* by *Tišina kod poluzvezde* (1997).

her to the star as well can we climb onto one in life. Or, as whispered by the teary-eyed lifesaver and a helpless believer in love for all things stonehearted, vile and repulsive in this world, June Mills in Otto Preminger's *Fallen Angel*, "We were born to tread the earth as angels, to seek out heaven this side of the sky, but they who race alone shall stumble in the dark and fall from grace; then love alone can make the fallen angel rise, for only two together can enter paradise". In other words, only the ladder of Love is the one on which we could rise to stellar heights and satisfy the thirsts of God-seeking Wonder that tear our hearts apart; or, as Maximus the Confessor put it allegorically, "Sometimes when a farmer is looking for a suitable spot in which to plant a tree, he unexpectedly comes across a treasure. Something similar may happen to the seeker after God"<sup>1553</sup>. What the 7<sup>th</sup> Century Byzantine monk may have wished to tell us is not only that the embodiments of the omnipresent divinity could be found in the most unexpected of places, including the darkest holes in the ground, but also that creating and revitalizing life on the wings of genuine care for another is the way to fulfill our cravings to meet the theological essence of reality and connect our finite soul with the divine spirit that pervades all things. That is, no divinity in this life could be grazed if we fail in devoting our lives to others in manners so creative that they make gods overseeing us serenely smile like the crescent Moon, just about as much as our attempts to beatify life and do true good to another if we cease to seek the underlying divinity with every breath of ours and in every miniscule patch of reality. For, the love of God and the love of man ultimately merge into and feed one another, so that cutting connections with one implies breaking ties with another too in this world wherein we spin from Love to Wonder and back and all over again and again as we pirouette our way to higher grounds of existence.

Nevertheless, the teaching of the followers of Christianity of the modern day oftentimes neglects the meditative, prayerful aspect of Christianity which invites us to listen to our own heart and act in accord with its melodies, irrespective of how quirky and unintelligible they may seem to others, despite the fact that it was highlighted as "the first and greatest commandment" by the Christ (Matthew 22:38). Instead, the emphasis is almost wholly placed on the empathic pole; sadly, with it the attitude of obedient and masochistic followers is spurred amongst the modern Christians, which Friedrich Nietzsche heavily criticized and blamed the teaching of St. Paul the Apostle, who was the first to proclaim that the second Christ's commandment was more central than the first one (Galatians 5:14), for its propagation. On the other side, the Buddhist philosophy is oftentimes blamed for its overly pronounced emphasis on the individual attainment of Nirvana, that is, a blissful state of mind, on the account of the neglect of the need to devote one's life to empathically and passionately act for the sake of bringing salvation to others. Christianity, on the other hand, has explicitly placed emphasis on acting in addition to purifying the cosmic space of one's mind through prayer and blissful thoughts. The Christ warned its disciples of the dangers of the pharisaic preaching while resisting to act so as to reflect the very guidelines given to others and incarnate the divine dreams that swirl like dazzling constellations of stars inside of our minds and hearts, and St. Paul the Apostle accordingly observed: "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:9). Correspondingly, "Francis had no time for useless or

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<sup>1553</sup> Found in Paula Huston's *A Season Mystery: 10 Spiritual Practices for Embracing a Happier Second Half of Life*, available at Google Books:

<http://books.google.com/books?id=YJ4HiyYyjcEC&pg=PT31&lpg=PT31&dq=maximus+confessor+tree+treasure+spot+plant&source=bl&ots=CXNDRnZ55x&sig=6WiNi9bf4615Xy5JQ1sx9ud58bQ&hl=en&sa=X&ei=5ZYaUZmpAcWuigKkhIDoCA&ved=0CDAQ6AEwAA> (2012).

idle words; he recommended to his brothers that they express themselves ‘in few words’ and to live first by example what they were going to preach”<sup>1554</sup> stands written in an account of the life of St. Francis of Assisi, reminding us for one-millionth time that the only truly fulfilling knowledge for the soul is an anti-knowledge in its essence, that is, knowledge that annihilates the very knowledge for the sake of giving rise to the butterflies of beautiful living, a level of being lying far and beyond the larva of sheer verbosity and eloquent thought that used to be cocooned at its core.

If you have ever wondered why many Westerners would readily claim that most people from the Asian cultures appear distant and less prone to openheartedly approach other fellow beings, while Asians tend to see the majority of people that belong to the traditionally Christian societies as overly extrovert and embarrassingly intimate with respect to the surrounding beings, the reason partly lies in this overly pronounced emphasis on the individual, meditative approach to enlightenment on the account of neglecting the merits of creative acting in empathy in Buddhism and exaggeratingly large emphasis on empathic acting on the account of disregarding the value found in quiet, introspective and meditative enrichment of human spirit in Christianity. As a matter of fact, by posing the traditional statuesque motifs of Christianity and Buddhism side by side, that is, the standing Christ crucified on the cross in tears, blood and agony, and Buddha sitting in the lotus position with a smilingly serene expression on his face and eyes peacefully closed, symbolizing distant dreaminess, transcendence and nonattachment, the dichotomy between the outward outbursts of empathic creativeness on the Christian side and the meditative implosion of one’s consciousness and seclusion of one’s spirit within the inner landscape of one’s soul on the Buddhist side dawns on us. As D. T. Suzuki noticed, whereas the standing posture of the Christ implicitly calls for action and symbolizes the desire to conquer Nature, the cross-legged sitting of the Buddha, as tranquil and still as it gets, stands for longing to subjugate and discipline one’s own nature above all<sup>1555</sup>. One example of this subjugation of man to Nature as an ideal worth attaining, instead of the other way around, comes from the magnificence of a natural landscape hovering over hardly discernable miniscule shades in lieu of humans in the lower right of Fan Kuan’s now millennium-old painting, *Travelers among Mountains and Streams*, which can be considered nowadays as a historic milestone of the virtue of humility in Oriental cultures. In contrast, in Christian cultures, narratives where the central roles were given to human characters have traditionally eclipsed this unconditional reverence of Nature, as can be illustrated by da Vinci’s placing *Mona Lisa* in front of an unusually blurred, anxiously unstable and unfinished-looking natural scenery, suggesting its complete subjugation to the portrayed personality, alongside being used as a means for depicting the character of the art model, namely Lisa Gherardini, the spouse of the Florentine dignitary by the name of Francesco del Giocondo. Consequently, at sociopolitical levels, Christianity has traditionally emphasized active “standing” in defense of the weak and unsupported creatures of the world and against the worldly hypocrisies and wickedness, calling for the social engagement of its practitioners, while Buddhism has been more oriented at accepting the world as it is, distancing oneself from it and trying to reach enlightenment through meditation and introspective awareness only. On one hand, therefore, it may seem that those who let both the voices of Christianity and Buddhism into the rooms of their minds are destined for schizoid splits inside their psyches and inevitable mental breakdowns because of their pulls in diametrically opposite directions. One such split was

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<sup>1554</sup> See André Vauchez’s *Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CN (2009), pp. 49.

<sup>1555</sup> See Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki’s *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist*, Routledge, New York, NY, pp. 118.

described by the Serbian painter and a friend, Aleksandar Jevtić, when he mentioned that one, presumably Buddhist side of his mind has attained an unexplainable bliss, untied to any practical work or achievements, while the other, Christian side of it, deeming that “happiness underived from blood, tears and sweat is abominable, immoral and dangerous for the environment”, felt guilty about it, fearing that he might “remain unproductive, but happy” for the rest of his life and having his “plan to suffer until the end, to have the back break under the pressure of life and everything left behind be solely the product of such sublime suffering brought into question”<sup>1556</sup>. On the other hand, this initial sense of derailment and confusion entailing the intensification of these two voices inside one’s mind is just a temporary crisis, a dark night of the soul preceding the attainment of higher, more sublime mental grounds. After all, with our eyes fixed on the co-creational thesis, which assumes an equal involvement of the human mind and Nature in drawing any given detail of our perceptual realities, we naturally arrive at the awareness of the necessity of the balance between the creative activity of a Christian spirit in us and the Oriental passivity that purifies the mind and opens the space for the forces of Nature to stream through our hearts and guide us toward thought and action that enlightens their bearer, ourselves, and the world as a whole. Since every detail of our experiential reality forms through an equal creative involvement of the human mind in question and Nature, giving a fresh new meaning to the Biblical saying that man has been created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27), we could be sure that by illuminating the creative self from the inside, through meditation, the world as a whole will become brightened by the sunshiny celesta of the soul of the Universe, as well as that by learning to see nothing but goodness, godliness and divine evolutionary purpose in all that is presents a way that leads to enlightenment of the self. Thus, with Nature and self being indivisibly conjoined and the dichotomy between creator and creature being wholly erased before our eyes, we could arrive in spiritual ecstasy to the ancient Eastern credo according to which “to master oneself is to master the world”<sup>1557</sup>. And if we look deeper, we might realize that not only could divine creativity be exhibited only insofar as we have meditatively reached the harmony with the creative core of our beings, from which such enlightening action originates, but, moreover, enlightenment through meditation could be attained only inasmuch as our heart is open to the flow of love for the fellow beings. This flies us straight to a vista from which we could see Christianity and Buddhism sitting in each other’s center, like the black and white circles on the Tai-Chi-Tu emblem. While referring to such drawn dichotomy between Christianity and Buddhism, one of the first Indian gurus to bring the teachings of Hatha Yoga to the West, Selvarajan Yesudian, noticed the following: “The Christ in the Bible preaches about two ways: The Way of the Essence: ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life’ (John 14:6). It is the inner, individual way, yoga, the way of the East. And the Way of love for the neighbor: ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself’ (Matthew 5:43). It is the outer, collective way, the way of the West. Our life will be complete only if we fulfill both of the Christ’s teachings. Each one of the ways is contained in the other, but only after we reach its end. One of them attains unity with the other while going from outside in, and the other one while going from inside out”<sup>1558</sup>. What Selvarajan summed up in the quote given here nicely grazes the essence of the very Way of Love, which the balance between the traditional views of Christianity and Buddhism is intrinsic to. Namely, on

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<sup>1556</sup> Aleksandar Jevtić, Facebook post (January 27, 2018).

<sup>1557</sup> See Mary Paterson’s *The Monks and Me: How 40 Days at Thich Nhat Hanh’s French Monastery Guided Me Home*, Hampton Roads, Charlottesville, VA (2012), pp. 8.

<sup>1558</sup> See Selvarajan Yesudian’s and Elisabeth Haich’s *Raja-Yoga, Library of Love*, Sremski Karlovci, Serbia (1947), pp. 113.

one hand, the Way of Love argues in favor of the fulfillment of the immense spiritual potentials of human beings only insofar as they learn how to live in meditative bliss, focusing their attention, like concentrated sunrays, inwards and burning the starry essence of their mind and soul, and yet living so as to bless the surrounding world with this inner shine, just as the way a real star does. On the other hand, the Way of Love also teaches us that the more we sink into the depths of our inner world, the more of the treasures that we can later gleefully bring to the surface of the world and shed over its creatures we will discover. Also, the more we step forth so as to do good deeds for the benefit of people in our world, the more of the inner light will illuminate the way inside, towards meeting the essence of our own being and reaching an ultimate contentment and happiness.

Mentioning Yoga, I recall that it stands for a temporary timeout, brief stepping out of our daily routines and finding refreshing starry silence within, meditatively anchoring our attention to the divine center of our being and letting the enlightening impulses be drawn from there to the surface of our being. In this spirit, this passage comes forth as a short meditative diversion with Yoga in its center and is meant to refresh our awareness in its hopping from one lotus flower of a word to another along the course of this book. Selvarajan Yesudian reminded us in the previous passage that the Yogic way is dual; it involves parallel walking along an individual, meditational way and a communal, compassionate one. Yoga means “unity” and when its practice becomes simultaneous striving to attain unity with our body and mind, all until each action of ours starts to involve our entire body and each breath starts to send waves of starry energy to travel from our head to our toes, and striving to open our heart and soul so as to reach unity with each detail of the surrounding world, it begins to live up to the balance between the meditative and the empathic that is intrinsic to the Way of Love and the bridge between Buddhism and Christianity drawn on these very pages. In fact, right at the moment at which the light of understanding that masterfully practiced Hatha Yoga involves a dialectical stretch in the opposite directions and not a mere exercise of flexibility dawned on me, on a day of the summer solstice, a beam of light appeared on a frescoed window and landed straight into my eye. In other words, just like enchanting music engrains dialectical encounters of antipodal emotions and delicate food contains complementary savors and textures, while powerful personalities embody complex clashes of antithetic traits that bring the best of both of the worlds colliding within the space of one’s heart, so does a brilliant practice of Yoga exhibit a lively interplay between reaching out, extending our body and spirit on one side and pulling our energies inwards and integrating them within our core on the other, from which the former, outward pulls then originate and bring us home back to the balanced wholeness. For, without producing this integrity around our centers of gravity and mind, from which impulses are then free to travel in all directions, leading to a sun-like expression of enchanting movement and thought, the purpose of Yoga exercise as the one working its way towards the “unity” with our body and mind will not be fulfilled. On the other hand, merely focusing on this sense of integrity without reaching out to our surrounding in empathic creativeness would mean that the “unity” with the world, another key aim of Yoga exercise, will remain unreached. Concealed in this dialectical dance between the meditative unity with oneself and empathic unity with the whole world is the door that leads to the phenomenal flowery garden of the Way of Love and a practice of Yoga which is movable, dynamic and inherently Christian in its essence as much as static, still and meditative, that is, Buddhist in its heart. Finding the Way of Love hidden within the core of genuine yogic practice makes us realize that the perspective outlined here, emphasizing the cross-bearing duality that masterful yogis embody during exercise, goes in parallel with seeing the diamond of Yoga from a slightly

angle not as a means to equilibration of inner energies within our bodies all until a permanent state of lame and lukewarm placidness is attained, but as a recollection and focusing of deep sources of energies within the microcosm of our mind and body, which is to eventually bring forth eruptions of enlightening action. In the spirit of the aforementioned deep oceanic waters of the Pacific that enter the seabed below them and thus produce earthquakes on the other side of the globe, meditation accomplished through Yoga serves the purpose of concentrating the sunrays of spirit deep within our being and preparing us for ever greater expressive blasts of creativity. And when Yoga becomes an epitome of the Way of Love instead of a mere set of stretching postures, then it turns into a subtlest conceivable dance of our bodies wherein these pulls in the opposite directions meet, flow into each other and raise each other on the pedestal of a prayerful devotion to the divine. Thus, as we see, without the drives to open our heart in expressive and compassionate ways, the self-integrating pulls inwards could not find a fertile soil in our body, while with no meditative attentiveness that withdraws itself from the face of the world, neither could Yoga yield genuine openness of our heart to the whole world around us and enroot the great One in the center of our being. As ever in life, to lose the balance is to gain it and to gain it and stick to it for too long is to lose it for sure; it is therefore that the little seed of mustard dying in the soil (John 12:24-25) and yielding fruits for the whole world thereby is imagined as the symbol of the cosmic clockwork.

In spite of the preconceptions that the modern-day views of Buddhism and Christianity entail, the original teaching of Gautama Buddha was actually based on the inextricably entwined ability to attain Nirvana and aspirations to fully dedicate one's life to others, just as the Christ's life epitomized a balance between the aforementioned two commandments, the one fostering one to love in harmony with the divine voice that reverberates across the inner space of one's soul, and the other urging one to always act so as to beautify and bless the surrounding world, knowing that "whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:12). That Gautama Buddha too lived up to the balance of the Way of Love is veritably portrayed in Osamu Tezuka's cartooned depiction of the Buddha's life. In it, the experience that led to Buddha's seeing the Universe palpitating as a giant soul, holding the oneness of all life in its cordial embrace, was prompted by his attempt to enter the mind of the dying princess Sujata, who had been bitten by a cobra, and save her. As he sat by her deathbed, he thought, "If only mind my mind could enter her body, if only I could speak to her silenced soul..."<sup>1559</sup> He must have known that only by descending down to the deepest, rock bottoms of the wells of suffering of those whom we wish to heal could we expect to overcome their ailments and restore their vitality. For, like Wall-E following into the dark and distant outer space a mysterious robot who suddenly went into hibernation and whom he cordially felt for, all because of a piccolo seedling growing in an unwieldy vase, and saving both her and whole humanity thereby, so must we be prepared to follow a soul in need of salvation to the starkest cosmic depths if we wish to be a savior for it, the planet and beyond. Or, like the graphic girl who literally falls for the things that "make her curious about what, in actuality, they are"<sup>1560</sup>, seeing it as a drop down a long, long hole in her consciousness, from a luscious and sunlit surface to the dark bottom of a well filled with stars, so are we predestined for similar falls in the cosmos of our minds had we only decided to subdue our being to the wish to softly hold the hands of creatures in need and reinstall the healing harmony all across their bodies and spirits. Entranced shamans who would hold a patient with one hand and a tree bark with another provide an

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<sup>1559</sup> See Osamu Tezuka's *Buddha*. Volume Four: The Forest of Uruvela, Vertical, New York, NY (1987), pp. 202.

<sup>1560</sup> See Lady Beelaa's *Fall*, Laleng, Thailand (2011).

archetypal image of this descent into the roots of the tree of the patient's mind where the illness thrives and its transplantation into another object, in this case the dried, darkened and flaky tree bark. Reaching out with one hemisphere of our being into these dark abysses wherefrom the root of the illness stems and spreading the other hemisphere out towards the Sun and its heartwarming rays, thus setting oneself into a bridge that connects Hell and Heaven, along which the disoriented soul could walk from one side to another, has got to be the key to exhibiting the magical healing powers that some of the purest and saintliest souls that embellished the Earth with their stellar presence were known for, I have always thought. With no ability to empathize with others and no tolerance for pathos that takes over our entire soul, we would not be able to wipe away the ill imprints on their sandy minds, while with no ability to awaken the sunshiny joy in us, not opulent spiritual landscapes, abundant with colors and fragrances that heal the spirit, but cold and windy deserts are where others would be taken by the hand to. Hence, neither could distant joy all by itself, compassionless and afraid of the dark, so to speak, nor lamenting blue of commiseration with no sunbeams of celestial joy emanating from one's soul provide grounds of truly lifesaving attitudes. What is more, the popular law of attraction in this instance dictates that not only is the empathic equality in suffering required to mediate the healing process, but descent into the deepest rooms of the spirit of another is also conditioned by the meditative slide into those of one's own. The Buddha, accordingly, first entered a state of deep meditation, plunging into the blissful shine of his own soul, knowing that one needs to travel deeper and deeper inside of oneself in order to produce the miraculous shine of sympathy capable of making the whole world smile. Like Kiki entering the deepest orbits of her consciousness and bringing the busy marketplace around her to a silent halt as she prepared to launch herself on a broom to save Tombo off the crashed barrage balloon<sup>1561</sup> and not only save the boy's life, but restore her own magical powers too, finding herself in the midst of a witchy circle wherein the more she reaches out to save the surrounding souls from slipping off into the shadowy realms of reality and bring them back to the daylight of being, the more lit the flame of enlightenment in her will be, alongside all the spiritual powers that emanate from it, and *vice versa*, so did Buddha plunge deep into the meditative space of his own soul and the question of whether he did so to save the life of another or to awaken the bliss of the divine spirit that dwells within each one of us becomes meaningless from this perspective, for one inescapably entails the other in the great fairytale of being. For those of you who haven't noticed by now, nothing other but the Way of Love can be found on this path leading us inwards in order to emerge outwards with the full shine of our spirit, and *vice versa*, leading us outwards, driven by the empathic desire to help the unfortunate creatures of this world in order to glimpse the road that takes us to our own spiritual fulfillment and oneness with the divine shine of our soul inside.

And so, the book describes the Buddha's journey across the space of Sujata's inner world where he suddenly started to feel as if he was being drawn inside of the swelling and pulsing Sun that contained the unity of all being, making him lose his own essence. At that moment, he began to run away so as to avoid losing his individuality. Then the Brahman appeared as a savior, pointing to a giant glossy ball and saying: "From the huge life that is the Universe myriad pieces of life are born and breathe life into the entire diversity of the world"<sup>1562</sup>. As the Brahman retreats and vanishes in the distance, the Buddha exclaims the words that ring with the beautiful harmony of the Way of Love: "I-it was to bring this g-girl back to life that I came to this

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<sup>1561</sup> Watch Kiki's Delivery Service. Directed by Hayao Miyazaki, Studio Ghibli (1989).

<sup>1562</sup> See Osamu Tezuka's Buddha. Volume Four: The Forest of Uruvela, Vertical, New York, NY (1987), pp. 212.

world”<sup>1563</sup>. At this moment, already, a powerful hint is given, pointing at another guiding star that led the Buddha to enlightenment, along the already celebrated ones according to which “one should be a lantern of spirit to oneself”<sup>1564</sup> and “one should not lose oneself for the sake of saving the neighbor”<sup>1565</sup>. The meditative nature of the latter calls is thus blended with the compassionate one of the Buddha’s desire to wholly give oneself away to save the weak ones of this world, and this delightful mix is what is intrinsic to the spiritually intoxicating wine of the Way of Love. For, not only did the Buddha feel that in order to produce a spiritual energy of compassion that would be able to heal the dying princess he needed to travel deep into the space of his own soul first, but he also came to fundamental insights about one’s inner spiritual journeys and the nature of the Universe while being compassionately immersed in the essence of another being. To “become the Beloved”<sup>1566</sup>, the ideal Sufis held close to their hearts, and reach the majestic oneness with the whole Creation, finding oneself mirrored in everything and everything mirrored in oneself, not knowing anymore where the creations of one’s mind begin and the creations of Nature end, for they have become blended in a fabulous co-creational unity, one ought to start with journeying into the essence of one’s inner world, the journey which is, however, bound to be incomplete unless one also empathically reaches out and immerses oneself into the ocean of the soul that the world of another is. This shows how empathy and love open the way inside, towards meeting oneself in full light, whereby this meditative intimacy with our own self is vital for sustaining this flame of empathy and love that heals the world, which is what one of the essential points of the Way of Love has been.

In *Night on the Galactic Railroad*, a novel where a train traveling to end of the Universe comes to stop at a station with sky eternally illuminated with the flames of regret of a scorpion who ran away from a weasel into a hole and lamented for having to die in it alone, without serving as food for another creature and “helping another live another day”, the protagonist, a cat named Giovanni, ventures into supernatural, celestial realms of reality while ceaselessly looking up at the starry sky in the course of the book<sup>1567</sup>, thus demonstrating that wherever one’s awareness throws its anchors and wherever one sees oneself is where the adventures in life will take one: if amongst stars, then onto a starry train will one hop and journey on. In the *Lion King*, yet another moving story about the circle of life wherein sacrifices of one creature serve the purpose of elevating another, keeping the evolutionary merry-go-round spinning ‘round and around, the advice arrived at Simba’s ears that finally upheld him and urged him to cast off his prosaic and leisured lifestyle spent with a sticktail and a warthog and return to his land as the new king was “remember who you are”. For, once we restore touch with the essence of our spirit and enkindle awareness that delivers impulses for our words and actions straight from its core, everything we do will turn out to benefit the world in one way or the other. On the other hand, only when every action of ours starts to be conceived from the wish to wrap arms of endearing earthlings around the world, if I am allowed to use Bono Vox’s phrase<sup>1568</sup>, will our own angelic

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<sup>1563</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 213.

<sup>1564</sup> See Erich Fromm’s *Man for Himself*, Routledge, London, UK (1947).

<sup>1565</sup> This saying is attributed to Orthodox Christian mystics. See Tomislav Gavrić’s *Pravoslavna mistika*, Lento, Belgrade, Serbia (2003), pp. 65.

<sup>1566</sup> See William C. Chittick’s *Sufism: A Beginner’s Guide*, Oneworld, Oxford, UK (2000), pp. 105.

<sup>1567</sup> See Paul Roquet’s *A Blue Cat on the Galactic Railroad: Anime and Cosmic Subjectivity*, *Representations* 128, 124 – 158 (2014) for more on the “radical transformation of subjectivity” brought about by the act of lifting the head to look up at the stars. “To turn to the stars is to locate the material substrate of the self within the vast expanse of the cosmos”, as the author notes.

<sup>1568</sup> Listen to U2’s *Tryin’ to Throw Your Arms Around the World* on *Achtung Baby*, Island (1991).

wings spread and eventually embrace the entire world, provided we remain immensely persistent and imaginative in this sowing the seed of one pole of the Way of Love within the core of another. Be it meditative withdrawnness dormant in the heart of the most wondrous empathic expressiveness or the incessant push from the inside to conjoin our hearts with others and live thoroughly for them sprouting from within the kernel of the most illuminative meditation, these two irresistibly resemble the black and the white on the Tai-Chi-Tu emblem. In other words, whether we journey deep inside of us so as to act in immaculately empathic manner or explode outwardly with emanations of expressive empathy so as to find the meditative path that leads to enlightened reigns of our spirit, these ways inside and outside blend with each other and in no way can one be walked on without the other, as the essential message of the Way of Love suggests.

For this reason, the Buddha, wishing hard to heal the princess, began to sink deep inside of the ocean of his awareness in synchrony with enflaming the burning sun of empathy and unison with her spirit. Once he found his way inside of her dreamy body, he faced the vision of the Brahman. After giving the Buddha an advice on how to proceed, the Brahman leaves and the Buddha manages to catch a passing spirit and bring Sujata back to life. The Buddha then escapes through the balcony of the palace and enters the forest in which he abode, overwhelmed by a wonderful vision that he had seen while traveling to unite with the spirit of the creature he wanted to save. As he praised a wonderful day and felt the unity with the whole wide world and all of its creatures, carried on the wings of the vision he had seen, he sat beneath a Pippala tree, “closed his eyes and long mused”. That was when Gautama Buddha arrived on the brink of enlightenment, with the Sun, the symbol of the grand unity of being, similar to the one setting the African tundra ablaze every morning the lion king appeared on the Pride Rock to greet the world, rising in front of his eyes.

Alas, soon after, he was interrupted by one of the ascetics from the forest, who happened to follow the path of inner devotion and nihilistic forgetfulness, connecting enlightenment with erasure of all things from the substrate of one’s mind. It was one such motto of “well, whatever, never mind”<sup>1569</sup> that a grunge band from Seattle exclaimed and implicitly linked with their name, Nirvana, capturing the essence of this mistaken interpretation of the Buddha’s teaching that erases love and compassion from the equation of fulfilled and creative being and calls for drowning of all passions and moving desires in waters of nihilistic forgetfulness, inattentional blindness and devastating carelessness about the beautiful world that, alas, calls for absorption of our wonderful and careful attention from each and every one of its corners. “Shoulda, woulda, buddha”<sup>1570</sup>, says Kaz’s creep rat as he sits on the pavement, with cigarette in his mouth and heart deprived of much enthusiasm, creative drives and hopes in the immenseness of his role in life, finding solace for his unfulfilled expectations (“shoulda, woulda”) in the nihilistic image of Buddha, as it stands impressed in minds of the majority of the Western world inhabitants. “No true ascetic gives a damn what happens to his country, or his folks...carry on with your meditating”, thus said the Buddha’s friend on that memorable day spent by the Pippala tree, as if reverberating with the distorted message of the core teaching of Buddhism wherein one attempts to reach enlightenment without the mountain-moving desire to bring enlightenment to others, which, as you may know, does not seem to be doable from the perspective of the Way of Love. What this wicked religious instructor pointed at is sitting on a locus that is a seemingly spotless

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<sup>1569</sup> Listen to Smells like Teen Spirit by Nirvana, Geffen Records (1991).

<sup>1570</sup> See Kaz’s Underworld Strips, In: The Best American Comics 2009, edited by Charles Burns, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston, MA (2009), pp. 26.

petal of a lotus flower, though surrounded by nothing but mud, dirt and scum that the world is in one's eyes then. At that time, however, the only natural thing for one to do is to squat and cocoon into an expressionless singularity of being and selfishly keep these evanescent pearls of self-attained enlightenment close to oneself, something that is predestined to be a mission impossible in the absence of one's tireless reaching out to dissipate them in the cosmic winds of this world and selflessly hand them over to others. Note that the same strategy of looking after one's own enlightenment, coupled with accusatory preaching, judging and paying attention to the wordy and bodily surface rather than to the spiritual essence, has been traditionally connected with the Pharisees and has been subjected to fiery criticism by the Christ (Matthew 23). In contrast, when all that we pine for is to run out and live up to the Christ's ideal of scattering all the treasures of spirit we have ever been in hold of for the sake of salvation and beautification of the surrounding creatures, a stance naturally arising from his saying on one occasion that "if I honor myself, my honor is nothing" (John 8:54), we become like a night sky star that feels as if dwelling in eternal darkness, while all around her are dazzling lights emanating from the unutterably divine beauty that all inanimate and living things of this universe are. With one such difference in potentials, so to say, established between our mind and the Universe, the inner lights of our being will continue to fall onto those who are in need of it for their continual thriving on the planet Earth.

This self-absorbed standpoint of Gautama Buddha's fellow journeyer on the road to enlightenment brings us once again face to face with the distorted popular image of not only Buddha's original teaching, but that of the prime Taoist philosophers too. Namely, the massive adoption of the principles of Tao in Asia, of following an inner Way with disregard of anything else, can similarly be said to have been confused with the original teaching of Lao-tzu, who insisted on listening to and obeying the flow of Tao (Tao-Te-Xing XXXVIII), the divine nature of all things (Tao-Te-Xing XXXIV), but also living fully and sacrificially for others (Tao-Te-Xing VII, LXXXI, Ch'ing Ching Ching XV<sup>1571</sup>), yielding as a result a culture in which ignorance of nearby people's needs has been raised to much more critical levels than that traditionally existing in the Christian communities. In that sense, we should be reminded that although sages almost always embody the balance of the Way of Love within their beings, oftentimes they point to one of its poles, in particular during the times in which their opposites seem to be overly pronounced in their social milieus. Hence, when they realize that people have become so inclined to symbiotically lean their ears onto endearing hearts in their surrounding that they buried every grain of the desire to sanely act in harmony with the voice divine that reverberates within the secret starry spaces of their soul and deliver enchantingly innovative acts to the world on the wings of this voice, they would advocate closing their eyes and entering meditative daydreams from which they would arise full of stellar individualistic energies. On the other hand, in times dominated by the spirit of solipsistic lunacy and idiosyncratic anarchism, they would bring forth the remembrance of the beauty of opening our spirits to others in love and empathy, of being the same and running nowhere to satisfy the inner voice of our self, for its ultimate fulfillment always comes by submitting our aims in life to those targeting happiness of others, more than anything.

Needless to add, as human beings grow older, there is an incessant challenge to sustain and deepen this ocean of empathy and an aerial care for the world, which make our spirit soar like a bird towards endlessly expanding skies of the world, but which we are tempted to

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<sup>1571</sup> "Help all sentient beings. This is attaining the Tao. Those who understand this may transmit the teachings of the true way". In: *Cultivating Stillness: A Taoist Manual for Transforming Body and Mind*, Translated by Eva Wong, Shambhala, Boston, MA (1992), pp. 95.

suffocate in the stuffy air of selfishness and phlegmatic carelessness behind every corner in the course of our lives. For, our social reality is such, spiritually corrupt, threatening to transform the soul inside every one of us, alongside the potential instilled in it to turn into a blazing sun at any moment, into a passive automaton by convincing us that “this isn’t a world that anyone with any sense stays in or spends much time worrying about”<sup>1572</sup>, and tuning us to the rhythm of a careless trump through the world, gawky and wearisome. “The way I see it, adults are made of ‘who cares’”<sup>1573</sup>, observes the everyday Tokyo heroine, Meiko Inoue, glimpsing the omnipresent Cain’s sin, the conscious banishment of care and responsibility for the state of the world that surrounds us and each and every one of its creatures, as the essence of the fall from grace of us as divine children, from sublime clouds of wonderful hopes and limitless potentials down to muddles of mediocre traits that endow humanity in its today’s infantile stages in the evolution of angelic consciousness. As the Way of Love emphasizes, the attainment of inner happiness and a sense of perfect fulfillment is possible only insofar as we devote our being to others through compassion and care, which implies that this uprooting of caring spirit from the soil of our soul equals an irretrievable loss of a compass that would lead us towards sunshiny horizons of happiness in our inner, meditative journeys. Knowing this, even as a little boy, long time before the first dream of becoming a Buddha occurred to him, Siddhartha was not merely following the line of finding inner satisfaction in contemplation and meditation. He did, but these inner journeys of his spirit were initiated by his incessant wondering over unfair divisions in the world, over the reason for the existence of castes, over sad human fates and the extent of human suffering in the world around him. His empathy thus opened the door for enlightening meditative insights, and as the Way of Love teaches us, these two, unison with one’s inner world and unison with the worlds of others do not exclude, but potentiate each other. The more we love, the more we will know, and the more we know, the more we will be overwhelmed with realization that love is the key to it all.

And so, in his ecstatic devotion, young Siddhartha, seeking the enlightenment, decided to sit on top of a stone turret, in the middle of his royal garden and fast streaming towards the union unison with the divine. However, in his mind there were never aspirations to reach enlightenment without helping the world reach it, too. The Buddha had probably known that having one without the other, just as the Way of Love tells us, would not be possible. When his father ordered building walls and a roof to surround him and protect from weather and attacking birds, Siddhartha waited until this was built and then climbed on top of it, residing again on top of it all, under the starry sky, symbolizing the need to honestly and purely approach Nature in its essence. Stars from the Roof – that is how I entitled one of the collections of my guitar compositions, finding a great symbolism in it, that is, a Middle Way wherein by standing on the roof on a starry night and looking up, we feel the heartbeats of those who carelessly slumber inside of the house and yet we stand there astonished by the mysterious and enchanting beauty of the night sky. Pulsating dazzle and joyful twinkles of wonder from above and the deep heartbeats of love from below have thus mingled in the pot of the music of my heart, producing a majestic alchemical blend that limitlessly inspires and beautifies. To have Love below us and Wonder above has ever since presented the central driving force for my creativity in life. In it lie many vital balances that feed our creativeness, including the analytical and the inspirational, knowledge and passion, I and Thou. Passion to go up, up, up, epitomized by the stars strolling up in our eyes, such as those in the final scene of *Trois Couleurs: Bleu*, is what has driven me ever

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<sup>1572</sup> Watch Under the Silver Lake directed by David Robert Mitchell (2018).

<sup>1573</sup> See Inio Asano’s Solanin, Viz Media, San Francisco, CA (2008).

since; for, whereas glancing down after an eye contact has been made naturally invokes feelings of mild antipathy, indifference and lameness in others, setting our eyes high, even if for a brief moment of a second, following the eye contact, soars the spirits of those around us. No doubt that Siddhartha streamed high by proclaiming “I want to save people”, reminiscent of the mountain-moving words of the Christ, “I have not come to judge the world but to save the world” (John 12:47), when asked by the ascetics what he was doing up on the roof. Yet, a “Huh, that’s a new one!” was the only comment he heard from the ascetics, causing them to agree that that is merely “an empty theory” and rage over Siddhartha’s standing up against the divisions of people into classes and castes.

On top of it all, by questioning the justness of dividing people to castes and lamenting over its nature, Siddhartha was nothing but a rebel. Similar to the Christ who shattered the traditional norms blindly and superficially obeyed by the followers of the Old Testament, Siddhartha also rebelled against the traditional teaching. Could it be that this rebelliousness and determination to go against the stream was the essential part of their paths to enlightenment? Could it be that we all need to be rebels driven by empathy in order to reach similar blissfulness in our minds and hearts? If so, then the Christ’s call to leave “father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake” (Mark 10:29), in spite of an immense love for them, is to be followed, remembering all the while how loving and yet overturning the foundations of one’s tradition - in the same way as Jean Renoir continued to pursue his father’s dream of inspiring people through visual arts, but simultaneously challenged his father’s attempt to abolish the depth of field by creating films, such as *Rules of the Game*, that glorified the depth of field to proportions that are yet to be rivaled in the cinematic realm<sup>1574</sup> - has been historically responsible for creating the greatest impetuses for progress in science and art. According to Tezuka’s depiction of the Buddha’s life, the Buddha went so far as to make the utmost bandits, thieves and rebels his most faithful followers, whereas his greatest enemy, the one whose aim was to found a prosaic institution based on materialistic values out of his teaching, was one of the rare followers of his who smoothly and concordantly nodded his head to his ideas under almost all circumstances. Hence, occasional disagreement is a vital feature of true friendliness, whereas too much of agreement over everything can often be a sign of malicious tendencies. Feeding the waterfalls of empathy that fall out of our heart is made possible by our incessant looking after animating a spirit that differs from the rest of the world and complements it in all that it is, while on the other hand the success of our striving to be unique and true to our divine nature crucially depends on our ability to empathize with the entire existence. For, our spiritual growths are based on nothing other but widening the scope of our self, from being a teeny tiny dot of our ego to becoming one with everything that is. Some might say that seeing the world through the eyes of others makes us see those eyes everywhere and develop a profound sense of understanding of the diversity of life, while I may add that the extent to which empathy does not block, but foster our spiritual growths is best evidenced in the moments when creatures whom we have passionately loved depart from our lives for good and we literally feel as if a part of our being withered; for, the more we love, the greater our being, a jigsaw puzzle composed of millions of spirits that teem in the Universe, is, and with each one of these spirits that sail away to the open sea of eternity in front of us, a teardrop from the ocean of our soul sublimates to the heavens above. And as we spin these wondrous thoughts which remind us of how spiritual starriness and genuine rebelliousness, disloyalty and love, are inextricably entwined, the feeling is that a star of sheer bliss becomes placed on our forehead, while our entire being becomes permeated with the

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<sup>1574</sup> Watch *My Journey through French Cinema* directed by Bertrand Tavernier (2016).

spirit of sacred partisanship. And then, suddenly, the vision of the great rivalry that divides my hometown, Belgrade, and is epitomized in the so-called “eternal derby” between two sport clubs, Partizan and Red Star, starts to flash in front of my mind. Whereas most inhabitants of my hometown are busy aggravating the disparities between the two sides by supporting only one of them, in the peacemaking spirit of Middle Ways that I have vowed to follow in life I have always secretly dreamt of their unity, for the blend of the two symbols has inspired me to believe that our ascents to stars can be successful only insofar as we retain the spirit of genuinely benevolent rebelliousness in our heart. Should we fail to do so and become a dull conformist who always looks after following the path of least resistance in life, neglecting to live up to G. K. Chesterton’s principle according to which “all dead things go with the stream; only living things can go against it... a paper boat can ride the rising deluge with all the airy arrogance of a fairy ship; but if the fairy ship sails upstream it is really rowed by the fairies”<sup>1575</sup>, we will inescapably fail in our strivings to reach stars. Likewise, if we are an oppositional rebel dialectically confronting others under all circumstances, without holding even a grain of empathy to illuminate our insides with its celestial glow, we could never become a true partisan in the eyes of the heavens, the one who succeeds in bringing about a lasting change for better in this corrupted and hypocritical world of ours with some soulful revolutions. As already pointed out many times by the concept of the Way of Love, to be inspiringly and fruitfully different, it takes a half of the globe of our mind to spin in compassionate and respectful unity with the suns of soul glimpsed in other people’s eyes, while to reach wonderful oneness in spirit and deliver creative acts that enkindle the flames of empathy in the surrounding world, we need to always move in the direction of opposing the streams of ordinariness and cowardly conformism with revolutionary originalities. In the latter sense, wherever we find ourselves, be it the safest oases of the world, we should know that the divine ethics demands from us never to cease questioning things around us and looking for the grounds to strike a revolution for the benefit of humankind. For, only in such a way can we prevent our spirit from entering a state of careless slumber and find ourselves instead under the starry umbrella of the wide-awakening wonders of the world at all times. This makes me revive the question I posed to the UCSF community in a magazine article that, soon after the submission, became subjected to rigorous censorship, the biggest enemy of imaginative thinking and being, and heartlessly rejected, “Why do mentors rather put their mentees into chains and make them slaves of their own servitude to the funding agencies instead of spreading their wings for individual flights into the skies of science?”, apparently calling for a revolution in the way research in contemporary scientific institutions is conducted. Likewise, seeing educators and people of influence in the very same realm use their authority to either manipulate with others or wish to make them the mirrors of their own intellectual selves has literally made my heart break at times. For, whenever we subdue another to the primitive craving to impose thereon an authority of one type or the other, for whatever the reason that stems from our mental microcosm, we breach Kant’s moral maxim which states that no person should be treated as a means, but always as ends with respect to our actions. To insist that others follow a trail outlined in one’s head thus represents a grand ethical fallacy in my universe of thought. My repugnance of the art of following has also made me uncomfortable with the idea of having students repeat what I, as a professor and a teacher, have stated and of limiting the potential infinity of viable answers to questions revolving inside their starry heads down to single ones, thus locking their intellects within the cages of dogma instead of setting them free. This is

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<sup>1575</sup> See Gilbert Keith Chesterton’s *The Everlasting Man*, Part II: On the Man Called Christ, Greenwood Press, Westport, CT (1925).

why I renounced my role as a classical educator in the academic realm, having worked instead on creating conditions in the classroom where creative difference is valued, antiauthoritarian in essence, and where no role of authority is being assumed. Now, for those who are not fond of religion, poetry, science policy or education, I offer an evidence for the fact that progressive forces always go against the stream that comes straight from the reign of natural sciences. It is the second law of thermodynamics, which each one of us, including every detail of the reality as we know it, ingrains. According to it, a system desiring to reach higher levels of its structural organization needs to find the way to wipe out its inner tendency to inertly follow this law which drives it to end up in the state of inanimate disorder. Instead, the system has to confront this law and break it in its strivings to enrich its internal order. Verily, what life does at each and every moment is battling the second law of thermodynamics. Since life on this planet has been successful in this during the last four billion years or so, we have evolved into what we are now. If we wish to continue evolving, our duty will be to break the laws imposed on us and journey against the habitual, customary and clichéd streams in our behavior, feelings and thoughts alike.

Once we find ourselves rubbing shoulders with the powers of the world and realize that it may be in the interest of our comfort and wellbeing to hold down the rivers of people who try to flood us from below and keep them spiritually weakened and creatively suppressed, so that we could act as their false saviors and guides, we should know that our being thence spontaneously streams in the direction of becoming sinfully corruptive, closer to lowlands of spirit rather than to its blissful, ethereal realms, which only giving away the power for the sake of elevating others ever higher can make us enter; for, it is by becoming ever poorer, in spirit (Matthew 5:3) or not (Luke 6:20), that we arrive ever closer to the Kingdom of Heaven. Even the most benevolent and cordial of spirits are tempted to become corrupted as they make a step higher on the ladder of authority, as in the case when the realization of dishonesties and indignities that those below them are inclined to exhibit just to get what they want from the authority leads to a loss of trust in people<sup>1576</sup> and withdrawal into a mistrustful, cynical cocoon wherefrom the prosperity of the self, not the community, sadly, becomes the central guiding principle. This is exactly the point Blaise Pascal had in mind when he disparaged the strivings for authority, having seen, like myself, the route to secure, yet subtle, corruption of the spirit in them: in his world, wherein “truth is the first rule and ultimate purpose of things”<sup>1577</sup>, “each rung of fortune’s ladder which brings us up in the world takes us further from the truth, because people are more wary of offending those whose friendship is most useful and enmity most dangerous”<sup>1578</sup>. Now, a particularly interesting example I enjoy giving to illustrate the inescapably corruptive effect of conscious endowment with power pertains to the rise of feminism. Namely, although the motherly nature can be said to have sustained humanity on its breasts and household shoulders with its protective love and graceful humbleness, which mere aggressive masculinity would have probably swiftly destroyed, it has largely undergone a change of the heart following the process of emancipation and social integration of women into professional milieus. It resulted not in a wider pervasion of this genuinely chaste, gentle and graceful female nature throughout the society, but in the rise of pretty much the same masculine traits that it neatly counterbalanced

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<sup>1576</sup> See O. Schilke, M. Reimann, K. S. Cook – “Power decreases trust in social exchange”, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 112, 12950 - 12955 (2015).

<sup>1577</sup> See Blaise Pascal’s *Pensée* No. 974, Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK (1669), pp. 347.

<sup>1578</sup> See Blaise Pascal’s *Pensée* No. 978, Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK (1669), pp. 349.

over eons. When mothers and children should be creating a new social order, what happens instead is that the current generation of feminist women get sucked into the current realities predefined by men and in the process become mannish, thus reiterating the very same insensibilities as those that feminism is supposed to suppress. As such, feminism becomes yet another ideology whose application has led to the perpetuation of the problems that the given ideology intended to solve. These days, therefore, when my five-year old daughter learning how to write and spell the letter Q asked me why the queen on her kindergarten worksheet<sup>1579</sup> had a sword in her hands, I was caught off-guard and did not know what to say, except that I would wish to see a king with flowers in his hands and a gay outlook on life as opposed to queens embracing war-insinuating items, which have been strictly utilized by men throughout the history, with disastrous consequences. However, instead of counteracting the traditionally male callousness, combativeness and cutthroat careerism to the point of annihilating them and sending them down to history, feminism, unfortunately, says, “It is now our, women’s turn to engage in all of these displays of arrogance, immaturity and imprudence that we, because of our underprivileged social status, missed out on for centuries”, an attitude that has as devastating of consequences as China’s putting a veto on carbon emission regulations because of wanting to catch up on the pollution footprint created by the western countries before China became a world’s economic and technological superpower. We can then argue that it is nothing but the corruptive effect of being in power that can be blamed for the current state of affairs wherein the average new age woman could be depicted by one of the bland Sex and the City characters. Like in Joseph Mankiewicz’s *All About Eve*, only for as long as the aspiring starlets are far from the apices of their glory do they maintain chasteness and grace in their demeanor; as soon as they find themselves at the peak of their professional pyramid, with nothing above them anymore, their descent into indecency and masculine robustness begins. In the best case scenario, this ongoing trend of masculinization of the feminine has prompted a rise of feminine, limp-wristed, so-called metrosexual traits among the new generation of genuine gentle-men to balance the overall flow of Yin and Yang at the global scale. In the worst case scenario, this warped state of affairs has led to ever greater exhibitions of masculinity among males, most of whom have wished to regain the dominant role in the battle of sexes. To confirm that this catastrophic trend is indeed happening around us in spite of the fact that alchemists of the present and past have advocated the blending of Yin and Yang into a hermaphroditic middle ground wherefrom saps of creativity can flow in abundance, we could bring to mind that the number of feminine male pop icons has been in strange decline over the past couple of decades, approximately as of the dark days of grunge onwards, with pronouncedly feminine voices of Marvin Gaye, Prince, Morrissey, David Bowie, Robert Smith of the Cure or Neil Tennant of Pet Shop Boys having no true descendants in the radio realm these days. To those familiar with the cybernetic nature of reality, composed of an infinitude of feedback loops, overlapping like Olympic circles and feeding in and out of each other, it comes as no surprise that the world is thus being taken into yet another disastrous positive feedback loop where robust manliness will yield even more of it over time, when a far more favorable direction of progress has lain in fostering ever greater exhibitions of the graceful gentleness and affectionate elegance archetypical of Yin powers of this world among the females and then dragging the males towards similarly more peaceful, prayerful and gentler ways of being. It is thus that the evolution of the world, whose tragic history has mainly emanated from the fieriness of infantile boyishness and outbursts of ego-driven, testosterone-

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<sup>1579</sup> See Irvine Unified School District’s Kindergarten Language and Arts Lesson 09.01: Quincy Saves the Queen; Writing: Queen of Qs, distributed in virtual class on March 1, 2021, Stonecreek Elementary School, Irvine, CA.

enflamed aggression, would be redirected towards more peaceful and sustainable pastures. For, as the history of the world, the history of bloodshed and grief, can secretly whisper to us, the world would become a better place not via women adopting the mannish, cutthroat competitive traits, but via softening the latter with the flows of holy motherly spirit. “A man lives, well, sort of, in jerks... with a woman it’s all in one flow, like a stream”, softly utters Ma Joad, the central matriarchic column of the ethical edifice of her family, like so many mothers in this world, in the final scene of John Ford’s cinematic adaptation of John Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath*, and yet the wave of feminism has not brought forth a greater pervasion of this glorious feminine gentleness that she symbolized among cockily belligerent men, but, catastrophically, intensified the jerkily hysteric, bitchy outbursts of aggressiveness among the mannish breed of the new generation of women, prompting many apologists for genuine womanly grace, such as Marguerite Yourcenar, to justifiably consider feminism a form of “inverted fascism”<sup>1580</sup>. It may be for this reason that the Serbian performance artist, Marina Abramović started off a lecture of hers at New York’s MoMA by saying, “I am not now nor I have ever been a feminist artist”<sup>1581</sup>, as if she wished to hint at the women’s ultimate defeat by the embracement of mannishness on the wings of the feminist movement, when a true triumph would have resulted from a reverse feat: the instillation of the tender and caring femininity in the hearts of the ruthless men of this world. Feminism, in the state in which it is being exerted today, is a living proof that the ruthless mannishness has once again prevailed over the motherly grace, just as it did so many times through the history of the human race. The front façade of this history, the way it is being taught in schools today, is the one of perpetual bloodshed and suffering caused by the lowliest instincts dormant in the nature of man; yet, just as true history that has preserved the humanness of humanity and elevated it to its current vistas is the history of art, science and religion, streaming like an undercurrent across the dark depths of our social realities, so has this gentle motherliness been the true force that sustained humanity, enabled its proliferation and prevented its dissipation under the pressure of boyish senselessness, despite the fact that it has been as unacknowledged by the war-waging rulers of the world, predominantly men, as it is on my Montenegrin family tree, where women, be they daughters of men or their spouses, sadly, earn not even a mention of their names. With motherliness being the cornerstone on which the humankind stands supported, albeit inconspicuously most of the time, and with emancipated women setting the criteria of what men, as inherently immature as the sperm cell wiggling around a solemnly stable egg cell, ought to be like to be likable and taken by the hand, the path of renaissance for our society is bound to start from the renaissance in the inner life of a woman, which makes the current trend of their masculinization under the banner of “feminism” even more tragic. And yet, I, myself, whose dream has been to build a monument to the unknown mother mingled with the trees atop the so-called “trail of death” in my hometown, Belgrade<sup>1582</sup>, so as to complement the many monuments to unknown soldiers scattered throughout it, would have been the world’s greatest proponent of feminism had it been a movement towards feminization of the masculine, eponymous in essence, rather than the other way around. The advice given by Oprah Winfrey to Whoopi Goldberg who kept knife on the neck of her harassing husband in the *Color Purple*, “Don’t trade places”, can

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<sup>1580</sup> See Matthieu Galey’s preface to Marguerite Yourcenar’s *With Open Eyes: Conversations with Matthieu Galey*, Narodna knjiga, Belgrade, Serbia (1980).

<sup>1581</sup> See Mira Schor’s *A Decade of Negative Thinking: Essays on Art, Politics, and Daily Life*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC (2009), pp. 46.

<sup>1582</sup> Perhaps someday I will indeed, like Kanji Watanabe from Akira Kurosawa’s *Ikiru*, build a playground for children to swing and slide and sway in joy and next to it a monument to the unknown mother, to convey a powerful message through solemn statics and silence.

thus be seen as invaluablely precious for the emancipated women of the modern age by warning them not to become the same masculine monsters that they have triumphed over with their loving softness and tenderness. After all, what good can come out of this transformation whereby women, once the epitomes of creatures on the enlightened path of which Lao-Tzu and other Taoists had dreamt, living in the eye of the moment with humble and selfless devotion to another, have now, in the contemporary age, become egotistically aim-oriented with toxic ambitiousness and cravings to assume the position of control and authority, being the very same traits that characterized men throughout the ages and caused an enormous toll of misery on our civilization? What good will it do to the civilization wallowed in wars and bloodshed, needing motherly voices and touches of the hand to save it from further decline, if the tunes played in the back of the new women's minds are riot grrrl spins on Peggy Lee's shouting "get out of here" to the sound of Benny Goodman's opiating clarinet<sup>1583</sup> or Nancy Sinatra's referring to boots that "will one day walk all over you"<sup>1584</sup>, and not on Astrud Gilberto's singing a love song to Dindi or musing wistfully over Manhã de Carnaval, on "forgetful or pretending, tired, ill, or angry, or cold, more assured of what to do, but I do care for you (what a beautiful gift for me)"<sup>1585</sup> emerging from Elizabeth Fraser's holy voice or on Wendy Smith's filling the gaps of Prefab Sprout's mellow tunes with sweet hums and an occasional "carry no bright torches for me"<sup>1586</sup> line, if not on Bach's sacral works or Schubert's Ave Maria? Yes, some public and private rights have been won by the wars waged by raging feminists, but Pyrrhic victory it is if along the way one "gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul" (Mark 8:36), or in this case substitutes the motherly gentleness and grace of a genuine female nature in one with the insensitive manifestations of mannish bestiality and robustness. Therefore, I claim that only when the feminist movement becomes causative of the feminization of man rather than of the masculinization of women, we may know that we, as the human race, are on the right track to save this planet from the ills that have bothered it ever since. Every time I journey to the Far East, the femininity of the boys and girls impresses me and, when I put it side by side with the masculinity of the loud and rowdy American thugs and tomboys, haughty and aggressive, packed with pretense and showing off their teeth and their grit everywhere they go, I get to see a living proof that American is a culture in decline, unsustainable in the long run, whereas the Orient is going to be the one to take over the world, lightly and imperceptibly, in concert with its spirit of serenity and quietude. The world filled with gentle and gracile mamma's boys and not spiritual savages subdued to the illusion that they are dwelling in a jungle wherein it is all about the selfish battle for one's own survival on the account of degradation of another has thus appeared as the genuinely lifesaving one in my daydreams. Not, of course, that I am supporting the underprivileged status of women, the way it exists in many of the less developed societies of the world; quite contrary, a personal view on an inevitable side effect, which every progressive pattern possesses, in this case of equalizing the status of men and women on the social ladder of power, has been given here. In any case, a useful mental exercise could be to found examples of corruption and crashing into cold icebergs, like a Titanic swollen with pride, of individuals and their groups, of entire societies and states, or even of the global consciousness of humanity,

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<sup>1583</sup> Listen to Benny Goodman's and Peggy Lee's perform Why Don't You Do Right in the movie Stage Door Canteen directed by Frank Borzage (1943); retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zRwze8\\_SGk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zRwze8_SGk).

<sup>1584</sup> Listen to Nancy Sinatra's These Boots are Made for Walking, Reprise (1966).

<sup>1585</sup> Listen to Cocteau Twins' Pur on Four-Calendar Café, Fontana (1993).

<sup>1586</sup> Listen to Prefab Sprout's Talking Scarlet on Protest Songs, Kitchenware Records (1985).

whenever a sense of powerfulness, self-importance and dominance is found to have overflowed their spirits.

In the midst of Bruce Norris' *Clybourne Park*, a Pinteresque play written as a reaction to aforementioned Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* and filled with trifling and mundane conversations through which actors incessantly switch roles, likely to mirror the periodic transition of the eponymous neighborhood from the white to the black to the white that the play is fundamentally about, spinning one in wonder and leading through a haze of perplexity to the point of one's emergence from the tunnel and onto a clear, sunlit side of one's consciousness whereupon pretense crumbles, interpersonal tensions dissipate and realization that anyone could become anyone else by means of being born and placed in one living context or another and that we all are, in essence, one and the same dawns on one, a joke, which I am paraphrasing here, is told: "How many men does it take to change a real light bulb? All of them: one to hold the bulb and the rest to screw the world"<sup>1587</sup>. Concealed in this joke as its tragicomic punch line is a viewpoint that depicts the sin of followers in life as inescapable. Every time we follow the mainstream, we are engaged in a wicked act from the perspective of the divine eye nested in us, even when followed is the most luminous figure conceivable, which may be the finest point of the well-known Biblical verse: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Exodus 23:2). The joke implicitly states that wherever an enlightened creature proposed replacement of the source of light that illuminated our spirits and the roads to more progressive ways of being, thousands or millions of others would gather around one while essentially producing a trail of undesirable side effects behind the benevolent acts of this one enlightened spirit. The easiness with which most people allow themselves to be hypnotized, the unconscious decision behind which stands a powerful will to obey the authority<sup>1588</sup>, and made see things they could never imagine seeing or behave in ways they could never thought of as possible, speaks in favor of the deeply engrained tendency of people to be sheepishly manipulated by those who wish to take the advantage of their authoritative stances. It is for this reason, I believe, that Apichatpong Weerasethakul decided to end his bizarrely comical portrayal of the incompetence and dreariness of people puzzlingly entitled to present themselves as healers to the world in the movie *Sang sattawat*, a.k.a. *Syndromes and a Century*, with a flock of folks awkwardly mimicking the moves of a fitness instructor doing aerobics on an improvised stage in a park, as if wishing to tell us that the devilish drives to subdue our willpower to the spinning of the wheels of ideas or acts of whomever we designate as an authority are to be blamed for the sapless state of the world that we live in and that he unmistakably caught by the eye of his camera. In fact, the Biblical story that depicts expulsion from Paradise equally subtly insinuates that the primordial sin of followers may be deeply encoded within the core of our beings and could be the real reason behind our eviction from the Garden of Eden. For, as already mentioned, when the Lord asked why the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge was tasted, a chain of one creature's blaming another followed (Genesis 3:9-13), and we should know that the choice to follow in life is almost always caused by the timid desire to shift responsibility onto others for the decisions one has made. Yet, only when we begin delivering the impulses for our actions straight from the ocean floor of our heart, building a gulf between ourselves and the surrounding creatures to some extent, a ring of remoteness across which the sunrays of our shiny spirit will be able to gain speed, coherence and dazzlingly enter the eyes of the world, can we expect to shed sheer stardust all around us with

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<sup>1587</sup> *Clybourne Park*, Act II, written by Bruce Norris, directed by Jonathan Moscone, American Conservatory Theater, San Francisco, CA (February 2011).

<sup>1588</sup> See Ormond McGill's *Professional Stage Hypnotism*, Westwood Publishing, Glendale, CA (1977), pp. 15.

every move we make. Alternatively, if all we do is conform to the perspectives propped by whomever we consider to be an authority, we would be led in the direction of a homogeneous world devoid of any diversity or dissension, whose sustainability, like that of monocultures in agriculture, will be seriously threatened. Another popular joke reiterating these dangers of conformity may be that of the Indian chef's being asked by his tribesmen whether the upcoming winter would be harsh or mild and he, having lost the art of forecasting the weather by looking at the sky and sensing the signs of Nature, first told his tribe that the winter would be harsh, just so that they would be on the safe side and pile up on logs, then called the National Weather Forecast to get a more precise answer to this question. The national agency told him that the winter was likely going to be harsh, upon hearing of which he went on and told his tribe to gather more wood and then this repeated a couple of more times, with him calling the agency, which would be telling him that the winter would be harsher and harsher, and insisting that more wood be piled. Eventually, he called the agency and asked them how they knew that the winter would be so harsh and the answer he received was, 'Because the Indians are piling tons of wood'. In other words, both sides in this humoresque communication gave up on their own intrinsic knowledge and went on to blindly accept that of another side, with this pervasive conformism creating a positive feedback loop, which, like all loops of such kind when not kept in check, brought things out of control. This is to say that instead of conforming to views from our surrounding without question, challenging these perspectives and creating a diverse polyculture thereof is what brings about conditions for prosperity of the systems in question, regardless of what their physical nature is.

What lies concealed in this viewpoint is nothing but a seed of a doctrine familiar to some by the name of Christian Anarchism, from which innumerable wonderful emanations of human spirit can arise. For, although many people associate anarchism with disarray and chaos, the true meaning of this term pertains more to the idea that unquestioning submission to any authorities and leaderships in life, as well as power over another, coincides with extinguishment of the divine powers dormant in us. Authentic anarchism as an ideal can thus be seen sprouting from the very same seed of thought from which innumerable religions and sacred worldviews that ornamented the planetary glow with their spiritual glister have sprung to life in all their infinite benevolence. They all, as we see, would agree with the verses jotted down by the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Serbian children's poet nicknamed the Dragon, that is, Zmaj, "A pocketful of words creates future: I have no master, they spell", as well as with the following musings of Meša Selimović in *The Fortress*: "Governors are not needed, nor rulers, nor the state, it is all violence. It is sufficient to have people who agree on everything, common people who do their jobs and do not want to rule over others, while not letting anyone rule over them"<sup>1589</sup>. Iteration of the famous Lord Acton's maxim, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely", in fact, presented the central topic in the literary opus of this Yugoslav novelist, including, most notably, his most popular work to date, *Death and the Dervish*, where the protagonist, Ahmed Nurudin, makes a full circle, from an honest and unprivileged man to a man corrupted by power and back, proving along the way anarchism as the renouncement of the will to power and to control others as the only moral standpoint in our social lives. "As for politics, I'm an anarchist. I hate governments and rules and fetters... People must be free"<sup>1590</sup>, 68-year old Charlie Chaplin concordantly exclaimed on a different occasion, prompting us to realize that the stardust of the

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<sup>1589</sup> The quote is a self-translated line from Meša Selimović's *The Fortress*, Prosveta, Belgrade (1970)

<sup>1590</sup> See Ella Winter's *But It's Sad, Says Chaplin, It's Me*, In: *Charlie Chaplin: Interviews*, edited by Kevin J. Hayes, The University Press of Mississippi, Jackson, MS (1947), pp. 121.

most enchanting expressions can be let erupt from the volcanic core of our being only insofar as the latter occupies a state free from subjugation to any authoritatively imposed standards of thinking or acting. As a matter of fact, anarchism as a complete rejection of any desire to adopt an authoritative position with respect to another and steer clear of impulses that make us gravitate towards “the use of man”, if we were to quote the title of a classic novel by the Serbian writer Aleksandar Tišma<sup>1591</sup>, naturally stems from Immanuel Kant’s ultimate ethical principle, according to which man is to treat another man never as a means to an end and always as an end in itself. This is why the preservation of the Little Prince’s purity of the heart in us is conditioned by our remaining to be petite and prince-like in stature and never ever allowing ourselves to be crowned into a king and promoted into an authority, a sovereign, a leader, a magnate that manipulates another, a Dr. Caligari of a kind, lest our spirit corrode and transform into something inherently toxic. But we should also hear the call of the French anarchist, Gébé, “No! Today I stop selling, at a three-hour round trip from here, eight hours of my life on a daily basis”<sup>1592</sup>, and equally resist the prostitution of our sovereign, independent selves through submission to authorities, whichever the form they take, abstract or palpable, keeping in mind that the deadening of our spirits, infinitely alive, livelier than the suns, by letting them turn into puppets, lifeless mechanisms, robots of a kind, would present an equally depressing defeat on the divine mission bestowed on us by this wondrous reality. Thus, when asked whether anarchy is when “the riots, violence, looting, and destruction spring up in place of a crumbling government”, Alan Moore’s V, whose beloved muse and the dearest disciple observed beneath colorful fireworks how V had been all of us, You and I, and who, one with everything, epitomized the Biblical destiny of a seed that ought to die before endowing the world with its spirit, responds with saying, “No. Anarchy means ‘Without Leaders’; not ‘Without Order’”<sup>1593</sup>, that is, “the absence of a master, of a sovereign”, the way Pierre-Joseph Proudhon put it in 1840<sup>1594</sup>. Or, as the message which Aesop placed as the exit line in one of his fables<sup>1595</sup> and which Paracelsus later adopted as his medical motto tells us, *alterius non sit qui suus esse potest*, that is, “let no man be another’s who can be his own”. Anarchism, defined as such, translates to an ideology based on the belief that any institution, whether it numbers two people, like, say, marriage, or two million people, like a state, is inherently malicious if it involves a control of one human being over another. To rule a fellow human being - as it was realized by my good friend John Kajtazi, who wanted to start his own business but then gave up on it when he got himself convinced that running it would make him lose his soul and continued being a janitor at the MetLife building in downtown Manhattan<sup>1596</sup> - is to inconspicuously corrupt the divine essence of our being, just

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<sup>1591</sup> See Aleksandar Tišma’s *The Use of Man/Upotreba čoveka*, Nolit, Belgrade, Serbia (1977).

<sup>1592</sup> See Edward Gauvin’s Introduction to Gébé’s Letter to Survivors, *New York Review Comics*, New York, NY (1981), pp. viii. Gauvin here also quotes Pacôme Thiellement’s posthumous description of Gébé’s attitude: “The true anarchist does not make: comics, literature, paintings, music, or cinema. The true anarchist makes anarchy in comics, literature, paintings, music, or cinema”.

<sup>1593</sup> See the anonymously written and published fanzine entitled *Girding for War: A Journal of Christian Anarchism* #0 (2011); found in CELLspace, 2050 Bryant Street, San Francisco, CA (2011).

<sup>1594</sup> See Pierre-Joseph Proudhon’s *What is Property?*, Create Space, Scotts Valley, CA (1840).

<sup>1595</sup> See Aesop’s *The Frogs Who Desired a King* (560 BC).

<sup>1596</sup> Coincidentally, I am writing this sentence on the day I taught a class on Medical Devices in the room 406 of the Love Library at San Diego State University. The lecture room was locked when I arrived to it and no one at the library desk had the key because, as it turned out, the department that I was affiliated with at the time took the access privileges from the library. And so my 15 students and I were left hopeless in front of a, symbolically, locked door. Then one of the library staff members came up with an idea, which is that the only people in the building who might have the key are custodians. And so I went to search for one and as soon as I found him, the door got unlocked and

about as much as we taint our spirit with the stipples of sin when we start to shadow other people's wishes and worldviews and render ourselves their slaves. For, whenever we subdue our freedoms to behavioral precepts proposed by one before whose mountainous authoritativeness our humble self has begun to seem as small as a speckle of dust, we should know that, whether we want it or not, most, if not all, of our steps from that moment on would not throw flower bouquet grenades that bomb the worldly walls raised by ego, greed and selfishness into peace, as it was the intention of the renegade stenciled by Banksy on the notorious West Bank barrier. Instead, they would march heartlessly over the latter ideals, just like the soldiers envisioned in the following thought by the graffiti artist from Bristol, increasing, not bridging the divides between human souls ever more with every new day: "The greatest crimes in the world are not committed by people breaking the rules but by people following the rules; it is people who follow orders that drop bombs and massacre villages"<sup>1597</sup>, both factually, of course, in real life, and metaphorically, on the subtle spiritual planes across which our gentle worldly beings float. To break the laws is, thus, more often than not less destructive than following them, in spite of what the worldly authorities would tell us, the reason for which D. W. Griffith spoke no nonsense when he correlated law-abiding puritanism with every form of imperialism imaginable<sup>1598</sup>, the two things that genuine anarchism crushes like talc with its tender touch. On the other hand, if you have ever wondered why authorities cannot be loved, it is, as pointed out by bell hooks<sup>1599</sup>, because power struggle is incompatible with love, which means that striving to be perceived as a power in other people's eyes and striving to stumble the persons perceived as authorities takes the heart and soul from us, making us spiritually crippled, incapable of radiating that most valuable of all cosmic qualities, love, onto the world around us, to just about the same extent. Correspondingly, one of the preconditions for a romantic relationship between two people is that it is never a power struggle and always a case of mutually exposed vulnerabilities<sup>1600</sup>, which are grounds for the displays of care and love for one another. The power of love or the love of power – the choice is, thus, ours to be made and, having found oneself somewhere in-between, not knowing where to go, the first step can always lie in the renouncement of control over another - an act advised by seers and scholars spanning from the likes of Lao-Tzu to Socrates to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century cyberneticists who boldly explored the ocean of ethics that their science, like every other, flew into in abundance, and present possibly the last great generation of scientists to have done so<sup>1601</sup> - before substituting this toxic and addictive habit to manipulate with pure awe in view of the infinite and ineffable beauty that each human creature embodies and emits into the world<sup>1602</sup>. With these riots of wonder awakened in us in place of the ill desire

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the class commenced. The message, anarchist as it were, goes like this: the lowest on the hierarchy of importance in life should be befriended more than those on the tops, for they are often the only ones holding keys to the gates we ought to open in life.

<sup>1597</sup> See Banksy's *Wall and Peace*, Random House, New York, NY (2005).

<sup>1598</sup> As pointed out by William M Drew in his book, *D. W. Griffith's Intolerance: Its Vision and Genesis* (McFarland & Co., Jefferson, NC (1986), pp. 161), "in Griffith's interpretation, imperialism is closely allied with puritanism. He views a kind of moral imperialism emanating from puritanical ideologies as the motivating force behind military, economic and cultural imperialism".

<sup>1599</sup> See bell hooks' *All about Love: New Visions*, Harper, New York, NY (2000).

<sup>1600</sup> Watch the interview with Seth Meyers, MedCircle (June 12, 2021), retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRMhS6oeehY>.

<sup>1601</sup> Scientists of this generation include Gordon Pask, Gregory Bateson, Heinz von Foerster, Warren McCulloch, Stafford Beer and others.

<sup>1602</sup> This point was elaborated more in my book *Principles of a Holistic Science of the Future*, Istraživački centar ICNT, Belgrade, Serbia (2006).

to exert authority and control, it will take no effort to avoid living up to the destructive epithets ascribed to anarchism by the popular media, given that we will have become utterly indifferent to the position of the authority rather than unconditionally confrontational with respect to it. Thus, should fate put us in the shoes of an authority, along the line of Albert Einstein's belief that "Nature punished him for his contempt for authority by making him an authority", we should respond by refusing to take control over anyone, albeit caring for everyone, via descending from the higher grounds of power to the level of the sea, which sits below everyone and, as such, allows all the rivers of the neighboring hearts to flow into the sea of its soul. For, if Lucifer was guided by the premise that "it is better to rule in Hell than serve in Heaven", then we, in search of heavenly ways of being, must place this precept up on its head and strive to serve, not govern, another in any context and situation. And should our fate, in contrast to Einstein's, subdue us to fierce authorities that strive to sew us into submission before stealing our soul and selling it to the devil, leaving us stranded and confined in a vacant shell, a soulless coffin of a body, we should refuse the prostitution of our celestial and infinitely potent and beautiful self with the lightness of the Christ before the Grand Inquisitor<sup>1603</sup>, remembering all the while that famous line uttered by the Little Tramp as he and his muse were watching the houses of the ghetto set on fire by the Nazis from one of the rooftops at night, "Look at that star, isn't it beautiful? Hynkel with all his power can never touch that"<sup>1604</sup>, and knowing that the dictators of this world can never touch its uttermost beauties. Or, as Đorđe Otašević, the Serbian linguist and composer of thousands of riddles, said it in the lyrics for Električni orgazam's song *Nebo*, *i.e.* Sky, "My sky they tied with a wire, on my brain they draw schemes, wanting another copy of their own, to restore time that was lost; but I won't give up the ideals and will eat dreams instead of bread, my happiness I hold with me – it is the piece of an open sky"<sup>1605</sup>. In such a way, indifferent to the power of authority, we will have gained the liberty to alternately agree and disagree with it, as the result of our independently formed opinions. Conversely, fighting against the authority under all circumstances would add up to a tragically dogmatic attitude, practically as devastating as that assuming that any position held by the authority must be true and is always worth unquestionable respect and following. After all, if assuming the position of an authority, in any of its forms, be it convictions, behavioral codes or egos, corrupts one's spirit, pushes one down the cliffs of grace and attracts bad karma upon one, then violent anarchists on the run to crush external authorities using force have thoroughly confused who is the oppressed and who is the free in this whole game. This is not to even mention that they have ignored that violence is a demonstration of power and is, as such, incompatible with anarchism *bona fide*. Therefore, those who fight mighty authorities oppressing the masses may feel the sense of moral superiority for the anarchistic stances that they allegedly adopt, but how wrong they would prove to be as soon as it gets realized that they are the slaves to the authority of their own antiauthoritarian views, at which point a logical question to ask is who is the oppressor and who the oppressed at the most fundamental level. For, all this time their spirits could have been more liberated than those of the powers that they have fought against and wished to demolish had it not been for the fact that they, themselves, have not lived under the terror of authority of rigidly embraced ideologies. In

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<sup>1603</sup> See Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, Prosveta, Belgrade, Serbia (1880).

<sup>1604</sup> Watch *The Great Dictator* directed by Charlie Chaplin (1940).

<sup>1605</sup> Personal translation of the lyrics of the song *Nebo* by Električni orgazam from the band's eponymous debut record released by Jugoton in 1981: "Moje su nebo vezali žicom, po mome mozgu crtaju šeme, žele jos jednu kopiju svoju, da njome vrata nestalo vreme. Al' ne dam svoje ja ideale, i ješču snove umesto hleba, ja svoju sreću nosim sa sobom, ona je parče slobodnog neba".

other words, to work towards the renouncement of authoritative stances and becoming a servant, a slave in the eyes of the world may be the only way to liberate one's spirit in this reality wherein taking an authoritative stance may satisfy the iniquitous thirsts of ego, but it inexorably terrorizes the soul and presents a punishment *per se*. Just as an inhabitant of the Third World may laugh out loud upon the realization that the material wealth in the First World has come at the cost of a vast spiritual suffering of souls succumbed to the curse of comfort and soullessly asocial, individualistic living in a bubble, and that his is, most probably, a world of a greater spiritual wealth, always proportional to the degree of communality present in the system, so may an anarchist enlightened by this insight come to conclusion that one ought to start from oneself and erase every last trace of authority that one imposes onto others in one's relationships therewith as well as that there is no need to get out to the street and chant antiauthoritarian lines to the rattle of swords and spears, given that penance in the realm that matters most, that of spirit, not matter or senses, comes silently and imperceptibly to all those who deliberately adopt the position of authority in this upside-down reality that we call life, a reality wherein, as a rule, "the last shall be first, and the first last" (Matthew 20:16).

"Jesus wants his witness to be nothing... He is alone"<sup>1606</sup>, Pascal wrote at the very beginning of his collection of *pensées*, as if to tell us that the sense of authority watching over one as one moves through the world is abolished and does not exist inside the head of an enlightened actor on the stage of life. One such actor is aware how destructive for the creativeness of his actions is the advice to perform all acts with the assumption that an authority is monitoring him at all times<sup>1607</sup>, being a viewpoint that disseminates conformity, breeds imitative automatism and stifles the originality of expression, making sure that one's unique voice, one and only in the history of the Universe, never becomes heard, thus taking heart and soul from the human being in the long run. As such, this anarchistic stance puts away the validity of the idea that religiousness must imply the perception of an old man with a gray beard and a stick in his hands watching one from high up above and determining whether one would go to heaven or hell, the doctrine that the older I get, the more I perceive as an educational paradigm, that is, as a method for conditioning children and bringing them up in line with the norms of convention. This stance equally shuns any similarly visual theological concepts and promotes a deeper and profounder religious experience, such that it is independent of any transcendental judgment, cunning complaisance and sheepish surrender to the power of authority. In a nutshell, the ultimate message of the philosophy of anarchism is that a sense of authority hanging over our heads is equivalent to our subjugation to carrot-and-stick conditioning and, as the teaching of Bhagavad-Gita points out on innumerable occasions<sup>1608</sup>, whenever we conceive and conduct our actions with the purpose of reaping rewards for the benefit of our ego, we corrupt the spiritual content of their fruits. Moreover, by leaning onto ideologies or accomplishments that

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<sup>1606</sup> See Blaise Pascal's *Pensée* No. 1, Series XXII, Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK (1669).

<sup>1607</sup> Sean Nordt, Personal correspondence, Chapman University (2018).

<sup>1608</sup> The following are only some of the verses that indicate the need to extinguish any attachment to external rewards of our actions if we are to attain enlightened, cosmic consciousness: "O Arjuna, established in the science of yoga in actions, perform your activities giving up attachment and become equipoised in both success and failure. This equanimity is known as the science of uniting the individual consciousness with the Ultimate consciousness... since without renouncing the desire for fruitive results one cannot become perfected in the science of uniting the individual consciousness with the Ultimate Consciousness... The sages define renunciation as abstaining from all work for personal gain. The wise define sacrifice as the sacrifice of, and the freedom from, the selfish attachment to the fruits of all work" (Gita 2:48... 6:2... 18:2).

endow us with a sense of moral or intellectual supremacy over others, we engage in one of the most potent and difficult-to-notice exhibitions of power, which would sooner or later come back to haunt us and turn the holy waters of our spiritual essence into a muddy bog for gollums, goblins and gnomes to roam through. If you have ever wondered how come human professions tend to develop traits among their practitioners that stand in diametrical opposition to those that are meant to epitomize the given profession, know that the stem of the right explanation could be seen sprouting from the thought enwrapped in words comprising the preceding statements. For, whenever we begin to guide our actions by an impulse to sustain and reinforce our power-bearing stances that overlook others from presumptuous epistemic heights, we should know that whatever the expressions we produce, they will helplessly send forth radiance of spiritually suffocating maliciousness, as in accordance with the tragic fate of Shakespeare's Macbeth, the fate that tends to strike all those who have strived to reach stars not propelled by the power of love, but by the love of power, if we are to invoke the dichotomy first proposed by the Great Britain's prime minister in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, William Gladstone, drawing, of course, back to Richard Wagner's saga about the Ring of the Nibelung, which granted its holders the power to rule the world by ruling itself the soft, feminine nature in one through a magic act called *Liebesverzicht*, that is, "the denial of love". Speaking of Shakespeare, in her eloquent impromptu musings before cameras, the Serbian punk actress, Sonja Savić summed up the ultimate message of Shakespeare's philosophy with the motto, "Where there is blood, there is dominion too"<sup>1609</sup>, reiterating the unavoidably corruptive effects of authority, be it embraced or subdued to, the reason for which the first thing that the Christ did in his sacred sallies was to abolish authoritative stances, both his or other people's, having become convinced in their incompatibility with the ability to produce a divine act. One example comes from his denouncement of Zebedee's sons for wanting to "sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom" (Matthew 20:21), and telling them that he wishes not to govern over anything or anyone, but serve everyone and everything: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:24-28). Furthermore, to insinuate that the enlightenment of one's spirit can be measured by the degree to which one rejects power, that most toxic of all drugs for the soul on this plane of reality, he also refused the devil's third and final temptation to grasp dominion over all of the earthly kingdoms from the top of world (Matthew 4:8-10), a decision that would be as rare on Earth as there are true Christ-like souls, capable of making miracles, on it, that is, none. Richard Wagner was quite aware of this toxicity of authoritative outlooks and in his libretto for the Ring of the Nibelung he made it clear that a God who acquires the gift of absolute power and dominion becomes a corrupt god. In contrast, the God ruling by the power of love, not the love of power, must be an anarchist God too, a God that, lest he get tuned for twilight per the Ring's storyline, must bestow freedom of decision upon people and rule in a Lao-Tzu's manner, not by control, but by liberty and love. Contrary to those who perceive godliness as equivalent to standing far above the world, those who set themselves like seas in relationships with others, below, not above them, appearing frail and in need of help so as to empower others, have the

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<sup>1609</sup> "Gde je krv, tu je i vlast" in Serbian, with "vlast" meaning dominion, rule, power, government, authority. Watch Ranko Munitić's interview with Sonja Savić (1996), available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUsMKEpGszQ>.

privilege to enlighten the world and disseminate the seeds of love, beauty and everything else that counts in the eyes of mermaids and fairies watching over us throughout it. Translated to the theological domain, thus, anarchism justifies the concealment of God from our senses and its revelation only through more secretive avenues of emotion and thought. For, if there is God, then there is no God – such might be the koan coinable at this instant, as if to whisper in our ears that God must always remain that mysterious force that “keeps interstices in our knowledge, the darkness between stars”<sup>1610</sup>, lest it become a demonic god should it ever begin to guide us in more conspicuous ways. If we grasp these points and hear an atheist tell us that God is but a dream, we could smile and merely think of how beautiful and real this dream is. How godly this godless void is can be the subject of our ruminations and our faith will flourish through them like never before, not awaiting any palpable signs, but rather becoming truly spiritual and receptive to the imperceptible essence. And when the temptation to take on the position of a power knocks on our door, think of how the Christ responded to those (Luke 4:1-13) before he “returned in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14), not the spirit of Power, think of the Ring of the Nibelung and, finally, think of all the evils that we will attract onto ourselves should we accept the call of power. In his seminal work, *Treason of the Intellectuals*, the French philosopher, Julien Benda correspondingly argued that the human mind incessantly stands at a crossroads, deciding on whether it will proceed in the direction of satisfying the ideals of privilege and power or taking the road along which the ideals of justice and truth will be reinforced, for these two pairs of principles one hundred percent exclude each other<sup>1611</sup>. And if we remember the choice of the “dispossessed” from Ursula K. Le Guin’s *Omelas*<sup>1612</sup>, the utopian city whose infinite joys and welfare were conditioned by keeping one and only one child mistreated and humiliated in a dark cellar, which was to leave the city and all its bliss, we know which way we ought to go, too, to save the soul, that is, away from the power and into the darkest and the slimiest gutters of existence if needed. For, to perceive a humiliated child as the cost of welfare and to conclude that the only moral choice, the choice that must be made for one’s soul not to corrode and be sold to the devil, is either to challenge its keepers, shiny on the surface but cruel deep inside, or to walk away from this false utopia is to be a moral primitivistic and anarchist at heart, who says no to a worldview willing to impose suffering on anything or anyone for the sake of preserving the hierarchies within a social system that bring welfare to it. Or else, had we made this morally corrupt compromise, the seed of the sense of power, in this case over the hypothetical child humiliated in the corner of a dusky basement, would be sown in the backs of our minds and it would grow slowly and silently, all until it takes over our entire being, which may continue to live under the illusion of its presumed moral supremacy. But then, even when we come up with the intention to garnish the world with the acts of kindness and charity, the spiritual vibe emerging from our being would bring about dissonance and disharmony, if not stale sterilities, and we may not know it. It is for this reason that living in social milieus pervaded by the sense of supremacy and power, as in some of the world’s most economically and militarily influential

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<sup>1610</sup> Reference is made to R. S. Thomas’s poem *Via Negativa* quoted in Keith Ward’s *God: A Guide for the Perplexed*, Oneworld, Oxford, UK (2003).

<sup>1611</sup> See Paul Jay’s interview with Chris Hedges, *The Real News* (July 19, 2013), available at [http://therealnews.com/t2/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=74&jumival=10461&update\\_rx=2013-07-19+13%3A56%3A15](http://therealnews.com/t2/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=74&jumival=10461&update_rx=2013-07-19+13%3A56%3A15).

<sup>1612</sup> See Ursula K. Le Guin’s *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*, In: *New Dimensions 3*, edited by Robert Silverberg, Doubleday, New York, NY (1973). Prior to Le Guin’s short story, this ethical dilemma appeared in Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) and William James’ *The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life* (1891).

countries, may quietly debase the deepest spheres of their dwellers' psyches. In fact, while hypocrisy and guile have likely existed in one form or the other since the dawn of the human race, their pervasiveness first reached epidemic proportions, particularly among the ruling class, in western Europe, not because these traits are genetically embedded in Anglo-Saxon people, of course, but rather because the elaborate social hierarchies that sprang on this continent, being more sophisticated and better structured than anywhere else in the world, notwithstanding their providing conditions for a rapid progress in science, art and technologies, spontaneously instill such spiritually distorted values in people. In other words, to govern is to become addictively prone to slyness, sanctimoniousness and maliciousness; conversely, to reject all this hierarchical social structuring and embrace an anarchic standpoint is to start restoring honesty, purity of the heart and archetypic goodness within one. Concordantly, a recent study has indicated that the largest amount of inconsiderateness is encountered by tourists in the most politically powerful countries, restoring our awareness of the fact that triumphant stances yield grace only in the short run, after which this temporary period of nobility becomes followed by the one dominated by greedy arrogance and tyrannical cruelty. Yet, to retain humbleness and incessant longings to lift those who have lain below us not only to the same platform occupied by us, but even further above, all until they touch the starry domes of reality, has been an approach pursued by leaders as rare as this fertile planet of ours is in the myriad of interstellar meteors and dust. As ever, of course, children are the best mirrors for assessing how far apart from or near to the holy grounds of the philosophy of anarchism our sentience stands. For, so long as we maintain this humble stance and resist rising to the role of authority, the eyes of children around us, especially those whom we wish to enlighten with our instruction, will glisten with happiness, whereas as soon as we start communicating with them from authoritative heights, they, the living proofs that genuine anarchism is woven within our innate natures, will begin to pose the barriers of resistance<sup>1613</sup> and the excitement in their eyes, along with the torch of trust, that rail along which learning proceeds best, will get momentarily extinguished. Finally, in agreement with a train of thought of one of the founders of the ideology, or, I should better say, anti-ideology<sup>1614</sup> of anarcho-pacifism, Bartholomeus de Ligt, who, having walked in the footsteps of his intellectual predecessors and contemporaries, from Lao-Tzu to Leo Tolstoy to Mahatma Gandhi, first noticed that violence and the thirst to establish or defend an authority always go hand-in-hand and then concluded that "the consistent pacifist must be an anarchist just as the consistent anarchist must be a pacifist"<sup>1615</sup>, we should be aware that the dewy eyes and palpitating hearts of angels and seraphs who watch over this plane of reality through which we roam twinkle lightly with joy every time we, as a holder of an authoritative stance, reach downwardly, so as to share our authoritative powers with those who have been deprived of them, as well as when we,

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<sup>1613</sup> See the interview with the Serbian filmmaker Raša Andrić: Raša Andrić za B92.net o prvom ostvarenju posle 16 godina: "Jedino o borcima vredi snimati filmove", *B92 News* (September 1, 2020), retrieved from [https://www.b92.net/kultura/vesti.php?nav\\_category=268&yyyy=2020&mm=09&dd=01&nav\\_id=1727100](https://www.b92.net/kultura/vesti.php?nav_category=268&yyyy=2020&mm=09&dd=01&nav_id=1727100).

<sup>1614</sup> The aforementioned failure of all ideologies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be a sign in favor of the anti-ideology of authentic anarchism as the only ideology worth following, the ideology that not only insists on ruining the relevance of any ideologies out there, but also calls for the deconstruction of itself, as selflessly as it could be, wherefrom the freedom to follow any other ideologies under its umbrella naturally emanates. A fantastic summersault in the course of this philosophical gymnastics class is thus being made, from confinement within ideological shackles to perfect freedom and back, confirming the well-known systemic fact that no freedom could exist except within the boundaries of precisely defined laws and constrictions, and *vice versa*: freedoms are to be exercised to sustain the stability of the existing rules and prescripts.

<sup>1615</sup> See Bart de Ligt's *The Conquest of Violence: An Essay on War and Revolution*, George Routledge, London, UK (1937).

standing in subdued positions, in cul-de-sacs of hierarchical pyramids, show no interest to climb up and claim the voice of an authority, but rather find infinite satisfaction in enjoying its view from below, under the enchanting starry sky, with arms gently grazing not the peaks, but the foundations, the elements of earthly edifices that determine their true strength and stability (Matthew 7:24-27).

Authority, then, need not come strictly in form of powerful people or ideologies; it can, in fact, be anything to whose value we subjugate our will, as pointed out by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon who equalized the corruptive effects of capital, government and church by claiming the following: “The economic idea of capitalism, the politics of government or of authority, and the theological idea of the Church are three identical ideas, linked in various ways. To attack one of them is equivalent to attacking all of them... What capital does to labor, and the State to liberty, the Church does to the spirit”<sup>1616</sup>. In theory, anything that we could become enslaved to, forfeiting our divine powers along the way, falls under the same umbrella of authorities that the anarchist in us heartily fights against, from our aspirations to beliefs to affirmed opinions to desires, habits and trends. An authentic anarchist is thus obliged to be not only an enemy of the state - whose shifty moral grounds, we know, are supported on its prosecuting as criminals even greater evildoers than its leaders are<sup>1617</sup> - but also an enemy of the enemy of the state as well as an enemy of the enemy of the enemy of the state and so forth, whereby the state won’t signify only a governing political entity, but any stable mode of being too. At the epistemological level, this is analogous to constant appraisal of the propositional grounds on which one stands and their revision and restoration into something more appropriate for a given moment, an act that constitutes a necessary step in our avoidance of the blind spots that otherwise tend to multiply on a dead tautological soil and expand in our cognitive view whenever we stay for too long on single epistemic footholds and refuse to step off and revisit them every once in a while. What results from these intellectual summersaults via which branches reach down to modify the roots that feed the very branches is humble abolishment of the attachment to one’s opinions, to one’s ego and, in fact, to anything that binds us to anything else, which allows us to levitate freely and lightly, like a bird, with infinite wonder and openness, all over the worldly skies. The act of ruination intrinsic to the anarchistic worldviews is thus of a much broader and more constructive meaning than that erroneously assumed by those who tend to see anarchists as plain destroyers of any social order, holding sticks and stones in their hands and no empathy whatsoever in their hearts. Any desires to control things in life, from other people’s actions to arrangements of the objects and their movement in our physical milieus to our very thoughts, emotions and bodies in their spontaneous dancing through space and time, are also carefully uprooted by the sacred anarchist in us. And then, as we remove this umbrella of authorities that has protected us from the rains of the world, but has also blocked our views of starry heavens towards which our beings should ascend in the course of their spiritual development, we can simply “let the smile be our umbrella”, as pointed out by David Lynch as Gordon Cole in an episode of the haunting series he had conceived and codirected, *Twin Peaks*, as we set off to Captain Nemo’s open seas that lie “beyond the reach of despots... where there is no master’s voice”<sup>1618</sup>, leave the corruptive shackles self-imposed by the conformist in us behind and release ourselves freely and solemnly to float with the streams of celestial impulses sparkling like stars of enchanting night sky within the depths of our timeless soul. More than a century ago, Henry David Thoreau proclaimed that

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<sup>1616</sup> See Pierre-Joseph Proudhon’s *What is Property?*, Create Space, Scotts Valley, CA (1840).

<sup>1617</sup> Watch *The Image Book* directed by Jean-Luc Godard (2018).

<sup>1618</sup> See Durs Grünbein’s *The Bars of Atlantis*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, NY (2010), pp. 136 - 137.

“in wildness is the preservation of the world”<sup>1619</sup>, and as of this very day I thunderously declare that in genuine anarchism that topples down the authorities that subdue freedoms, that crumbles the hierarchical ladders that hover over us and that never ceases to do the epistemic somersaults and cartwheels that bring up what was down and down what was up, in the spirit of the guidelines for fulfilling “the operation of the Sun” inscribed by Hermes Trismegistus on an emerald tablet, lies the sustainability of our planet. At the end of the day, it is the only political philosophy reconcilable with the cry of the one stepping into the ocean of an everlasting divinity that closes the Bible, “Let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17), having found the way to shatter the walls over which an intrinsically authoritative ego sends the verbal arrows that elevate one and put others down, explode like a supernova in the luminous moment of unison with the whole Universe and finally “marry forgiveness and Love with a whistling sun standing as his best man”, as Hafiz put it in one of his poems<sup>1620</sup>. Note also that the world whose ethics is not based on the principles of anarchism, of an incessant selfless struggle to banish one’s own authority first and foremost and empower others spontaneously transforms into a segregated system wherein 1 % of the population will come to hold 99 % of its material wealth<sup>1621</sup> and *vice versa*, and in which the potential merits of globalization will turn into horrors when we realize that countless local cultures that could have evolved into something beautiful have disappeared from the face of the planet on which 99 % of people will have ended up behaving according to the same cultural template, the one imposed by those who had mistakenly believed in the supremacy of their own mores. All the influential disseminators of historically powerful cultures that have engaged in these cultural wars driven by the desire to conquer the planet with their own, from Genghis Khan’s Mongolians to Macedonia of Alexander the Great to Hitler’s Third Reich to the modern armada of sleek American politicians and businessman with “hearts trained in greed” (Peter II 2:14), have thus shared one inherently destructive belief: that their culture holds supremacy over all else known to humankind. Authentic anarchism as the ideal embraced by practically all the sages that have passed through the cosmic station that our teeny tiny planet is thus goes hand-in-hand with the principles behind engaging in economic actions that truly benefit and sustain the world exposed by Fritz Schumacher in his political manifesto entitled *Small is Beautiful*, encouraging us to always look after establishing the roots of independent

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<sup>1619</sup> See Henry David Thoreau’s *Walking*, retrieved from <http://thoreau.eserver.org/walking.html> (1862).

<sup>1620</sup> See Hafiz’s *Dividing God*, In: *The Gift*, Translated by Daniel Ladinsky, Penguin Compass, New York, NY (14<sup>th</sup> Century), pp. 137.

<sup>1621</sup> The most recent study of segregation in terms of financial compensation of people’s work has come to conclusion that the richest 400 Americans hold a combined material wealth of one half of all the US citizens (the bottom half) as well as that the recovery following the market crash in 2008 resulted in the average increase of the family incomes by 4.6 %, whereby, however, 31.6 % ended up being the salary increase for the richest 1 % of the American people and only 0.4 % was for the poorest 99 %. See Mark Karlin’s *400 Richest Americans Worth More than GDP of Canada or Mexico*, *Portside* (September 17, 2013), available at <http://portside.org/2013-09-17/400-richest-americans-worth-more-gdp-canada-or-mexico>. Another recent study has come to conclusion that the Great Recession of 2007/08, which should have served as a critical impetus to reexamine the premises of the spontaneously segregating capitalist economy of the US, in fact continued to promote the very same type of segregation that had caused it; namely, from its onset and until September 2013, the top 1 % of earners captured 95 % of all income gains, while the remaining 99 % saw a net 12 % drop to their income. See Tom McKay’s *Princeton Concludes What Kind of Government America Really Has, and It’s Not a Democracy*, *PolicyMic* (April 16, 2014), retrieved from [http://www.policymic.com/articles/87719/princeton-concludes-what-kind-of-government-america-really-has-and-it-s-not-a-democracy?utm\\_source=policymicFB&utm\\_medium=main&utm\\_campaign=social](http://www.policymic.com/articles/87719/princeton-concludes-what-kind-of-government-america-really-has-and-it-s-not-a-democracy?utm_source=policymicFB&utm_medium=main&utm_campaign=social) and based on the study by Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page, *Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens*, forthcoming Fall 2014 in *Perspectives on Politics*.

prosperity of the impoverished ones rather than making them slavishly dependent on our own governance, as, unfortunately, the philosophy of the major world's economic and cultural powers has just about ever been. Anarchism could thus be indeed called the noblest of all philosophies, if were to revert to the opinion of Leopold Kohr, one of Fritz's teachers and the fundamental conceiver of the adage "small is beautiful"<sup>1622</sup>, as no other political philosophy shares as many similar features with the systemic science elaborated here as it does, particularly in view of its disbelief of any final principles that promise utopias in the sphere of human being and knowledge, permitting instead its own questioning and deconstruction, as philosophically selfless as it could be, as well as providing immunity against the horrors of totalitarianism by accepting the impossibility of attaining such utopias<sup>1623</sup>.

Hence, the benefits of extinguishing one's dependence on the power of authority and the eye of Big Brother that watches over all and rewards or punishes accordingly, depending on the quality of one's performance, instilling fear, not love in the hearts of its servile subordinates, span from here to a stellar eternity. After all, God's government is based on incessantly yielding signs and offering helping hands, although humbly, secretively and mysteriously, so as to always remain in the shadow and never self-importantly reveal His grandiose presence, while endowing human creatures, angels and animals alike, with the gift of freedom of choice. In the same spirit, Lao-Tzu claimed the following: "Intelligent control appears as uncontrol or freedom. And for that reason it is genuinely intelligent control. Unintelligent control appears as external domination. And for that reason it is really unintelligent control. Intelligent control exerts influence without appearing to do so. Unintelligent control tries to influence by making a show of force" (Tao-Te-Xing XXXVIII)<sup>1624</sup>. The Christ likewise managed to heal the world and leave a lasting trace of divine ethics and aesthetics in it not by manipulating others, but by rejecting any desire to dominate anyone, the reason for which he, himself, was rejected as a blasphemer and an outlaw by the community which, like any other in those times, valued violence, domination and greed more than anything else. This approach of his is neatly epitomized in the answer he gave when he was reproached for his healing a paralyzed man: "For whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?" (Matthew 9:5). The Christ, of course, intended to say that rather than commanding the sick man to get up and walk, the goal was to initiate a self-healing approach by encouraging his faith in miraculous ways. His response also, accidentally or not, ended up being yet another question, offering secret passages in the landscapes of human thought that lead to real treasures rather than controlling the mental realm of others and dictating what they will think or believe by yielding perfectly certain answers. Christ's images today adorn millions of households and churches, but in none of them is the Christ portrayed as a king, riding a chariot victoriously, sitting on a throne or holding an office and handing over orders to another human being; rather, he is always depicted as a loser, a sufferer, a creature at the bottom of the hierarchy, the position he had taken willfully because deep inside his heart he was what can be now called a faithful anarchist. Oh, how ignorant the ancient crafters of the religious thought were and how allured to the sinful aspiration to rule running through the blood of man they were when they depicted God as a ruler, neglecting that, as the Christ insinuated, the earthliness of our beings could be shun and the divinity elicited only insofar as we renounce any desire to rule over anything or anyone in this life. Every authority, in

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<sup>1622</sup> See Leopold Kohr's *The Breakdown of Nations*, Chelsea Green Publishing, White River Jct., VT (1957).

<sup>1623</sup> See Frank Jacobs' *Kohr Principles*, *The New York Times* (June 5, 2012), available at <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/05/kohr-principles/>.

<sup>1624</sup> See Bahm's translation of *Tao-Te-Xing*, available at <http://www.mobilewords.ca/Tao/bahm.htm>.

other words, must be toppled and every voice yearning for power, be it the godliest of them all, silenced *en route* to the attainment of spiritual starriness. Even “the powers of the heavens shall be shaken”<sup>1625</sup>, as a modern version of the Christ had it, holding the anarchist heart glowing inside him at all times. For, *summa sumarum*, in life one either rules by, well, a rule, secularly, or one rules by love, holily, in which case one does not really rule over anything or anyone. Therefore, inasmuch as we wish to avoid the spiritual abysses to which the desire to autocratically govern leads us, as in accordance with Lord Acton’s aforementioned adage, “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely”, or the Serbian version of it, telling us that “the higher one climbs, the more one shows one’s rears to those below”, whenever we find ourselves in the position of a sole creator and a principal, we should open our arms and hand over equally creative roles as those that we currently have to others. It is one such sacred act of sharing from which miracles emerge that is inherent to the Christian symbolism of the Father descending down to Earth, giving hand to the Son, opening the space for both to partly autonomously and partly in coalescence determine the evolution of reality, as in the spirit of co-creation of the world, and yield the Holy Spirit everywhere around us thereby. In the spirit of the divine creator of the Universe who gives away any autocratic ambitions in favor of conducting the evolution of reality co-creatively, that is, by endowing humans and other animate creatures with creative abilities equal to His own, masterful teachers of the world know that zero power and absolute power are similar in a sense that they both ultimately lead to burial of the sense of responsibility for the state of the systems to which we belong or over which we preside within our heart. In parallel with the eradication of this genuine care for the state of the world, any interest to creatively engage oneself vanishes too from the space of our mind. In that sense, only balanced redistribution of powers can be a key to successful management of any natural systems and can save us from extinguishment of the will to create and adorn the face of the world with the luster of celestial beauty that, as we may know, arises in us only when our desire to succeed in this adornment mission is indescribably immense. While such genuinely anarchistic renouncements of authority are pivotal preconditions for the elevation of ourselves in spirit and ascension of our disciples far above the stances that we have occupied in space and time, all for the benefit of all, autocratic grasping of the power of authority is typically connected with our sense of insecurity and an egotistic need to be loved rather than to love, as well as with our attempts to use our subordinates as slaves for the fulfillment of the aims of our own ego which thence becomes ever more shrunken and petty with every new heartbeat of the world.

Following this thread of thought, we have arrived face-to-face with the dazzling ideal of divine education as the one permeated with unconditional love and infinite beautification of the image of another, fostering independent thought instead of the sightless and inherently sinful art of following. Now, as I explicitly outlined at the start of the previous sentence, it was *following* of this train of thought that brought us on the brink of yet another valuable insight. In that sense, what I claim is that without our hearts wisely balancing the incentives to autonomously differ and communally follow, as in harmony with the music of the Way of Love, no fruitful being in this world would have been possible. Therefore, by grasping one such anarchistic freedom of choice, one is free to choose between the paths of dissent and those whereupon one would voluntarily subdue this freedom to “the fetter of a greater freedom”, as Kahlil Gibran poetized<sup>1626</sup>, that is to say, ideally to actions arising from the feelings of care, love and devotion, which prevent our angelic beings from being helplessly raised to the transcendental spaces and

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<sup>1625</sup> Watch Jesus of Montreal directed by Denys Arcand (1989).

<sup>1626</sup> See Kahlil Gibran’s The Prophet, Paideia, Belgrade, Serbia (1923).

make us instead gloriously land onto the palpable realm, the only one where these astral seeds of thought can find fertile ground. Yet, that following *per se* is devastating by default could be easily induced by recollecting innumerable historical occurrences of teachings unprecedentedly brilliant in their original forms, from Buddhism to Christianity to Communism, but subsequently distorted by their followers. Or, as put into words by Prince Pyotr Kropotkin in his pamphlet on anarchism, the ideology that uproots all ideologies in the world, including itself, “Take Christian reality: what other teaching could have had more hold on minds than that spoken in the name of a crucified God, and could have acted with all its mystical force, all its poetry of martyrdom, its grandeur in forgiving executioners? And yet the institution was more powerful than the religion. Soon Christianity - a revolt against imperial Rome - was conquered by that same Rome; it accepted its maxims, customs, and language. The Christian church accepted the Roman law as its own, and as such - allied to the State - it became in history the most furious enemy of all semi-communist institutions, to which Christianity appealed at its origin”<sup>1627</sup>. In my head, the fact that Russians, who are Slavs, generally a breed of people who love freedom and who are empathic toward fellow human souls, could transform communism, an absolutely benevolent philosophy, into such an oppressive political system that Stalinism has spoken of nothing more but of how powerful this most powerful drug on Earth called authority or will to power is, the weaning from it, as I myself, who got addicted to it as an academician in the early stages of my career, can attest to, is oftentimes harder and more damaging for the soul than weaning oneself off of heroin. For this reason, it can be said that “the best of men is made essentially bad by the exercise of authority”<sup>1628</sup>, as Kropotkin might have further argued, and that conforming to any powers of the world would make us akin to the fake priests who yelled “away with him, we have no king but Caesar” (John 15:19), letting the seed of stellar being in us be scattered in the wind rather than dying in our heart while watered with much compassionate sadness and joyous love, and predisposing us to become a mere unhappy robot, one who tried to live and give a rise to a star within oneself and the eyes of the world, but failed flat in this task. Secretly, this makes me happy for being born into an Orthodox Christian tradition, which I see distanced from its authoritative Catholic divorcee by merit of being more anarchistic and, thus, benevolent in its essence. The Orthodox tradition, overall, has found the position of power more repulsive than its Catholic counterpart, in which sense it can be said to have rested closer to the heart of the original teaching of the Christ, who, remember, disobeyed the institutionalized powers, but also refused to use any personal powers to manipulate the world and/or control a fellow human being, insisting that everybody conceals the potential to display the signs of divinity to an equal measure (John 10:34). For one, in Orthodox Christianity priests do not take the liberty of sitting on the uppity side of the confessional talk, arrogantly assuming the sublime seat of God on Earth and either forgiving another man’s sins or engaging in absurd finger-pointing and condemnations, which, we know, have been a part of the everyday catholic lifestyle for centuries. Secondly, history unequivocally teaches of countless cultures that adopted Catholicism and became insatiably obsessed with the thirst to conquer and change another, driven even in the most benevolent of their forms by the toxic and inherently unchristian sense that one knows for certain what is best for another. Unlike them, no Orthodox Christian culture with the exception

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<sup>1627</sup> See Pyotr Kropotkin’s *Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal* (1896), available at <http://www.panarchy.org/kropotkin/1896.eng.html>. According to the translator, “The word 'communism,' as used by Kropotkin, refers to cooperative undertaking and to sharing and caring for each other. It has nothing to do with the term 'communism' as employed in the former Soviet Union or with the so-called dictatorship of proletariat”.

<sup>1628</sup> *Ibid.*

of the Byzantine Empire, which itself marked a continuation of the imperialistic foreign policies that characterized Rome, have had the desire to conquer<sup>1629</sup> and spread its influence to the rest of the globe, as exemplifiable by my home country, Serbia, which engaged in wars perhaps more often than any other nation on Earth, though every time in order to defend its people and territories from various conquerors, ranging from the Ottomans to the Habsburgs to the Austro-Hungarians to the Germans to, most recently, separatist ultranationalists. Most importantly, this turndown of the power of authority via substitution of the stance of a lofty preacher with the one of a brother-in-love makes the religious experience more mystical and personal, less reliant on preaching in honeyed words and more on the ineffable language of the heart, as well as less authoritative and institutional, the way, I must say, it should be. And whenever we make this step from the personal to the institutional via extinguishing the sense of personal responsibility and granting it to an external power of authority, we are prone to undergo a tremendous fall from grace. People who tend to accept certain teachings for granted, just because the authorities tell them so, believing, for example, that their originators had indeed “died for them to be saved, however they behave”<sup>1630</sup>, are bound to eventually stray from the given path and end up on the diametrically opposite sides, without realizing one such change of the heart that has occurred in them because, as a rule, it was too slow and gradual to be noticed. The same fate as that of the aforementioned frog that cooks itself alive in a slowly boiling pan undoubtedly struck such blind followers of all these fabulous teachings that swooshed through history, bedazzling the humble intellects but producing tragic effects in their wake. For, whenever we get stuck in single intellectual stances, unwilling to step away and refresh our views every now and again, blind spots swallow us in their dark abysses, posing traps in which we imperceptibly fall.

And so, sitting in silence after the play was over, watching the emptied stage and a torn curtain on it, an epitome of the line that divides the real from the dreamy, the stem from the roots and physical from metaphysical, a glistening moon was placed over my head, streaming by the misty clouds of an SF night as the impression of connectedness of all things in life swam through my head. Indeed, the need to ceaselessly switch perspectives of observing experiential events, thus avoiding to fall prey to robotic, predetermined and repetitive modes of being, always acting in fresh and novel ways, never giving up on being on the road with our whole being is what lies in the heart of the Philosophy of the Way which I have explicated across the leaflets of this book. By acting in a way similar to the Little Prince’s hopping from one planet of human worldviews to another, by constantly running away from the blind spots hidden in our views, cognitive abysses in which we tend to fall whenever we spend too much time looking at the world from single perspectives, we enkindle a glow of genuine empathy and understanding that all life on the planet is one immense spirit, which makes us naturally engrain the Christ’s love for thy neighbor

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<sup>1629</sup> In an interview for the Serbian tabloid *Nedeljnik*, the former Serbian basketball player, Žare Paspalj, whom I watched play live against Barcelona in Belgrade in 1988 as a member of the Partizan basketball team, along with other future Serbian basketball superstars, also hinted at the drive to conquer wholly missing in the mentality of Orthodox Slavs. See *Kako da poštuješ državu koja ne poštuje tebe? Nedeljnik* (July 3, 2014), retrieved from <http://www.nedeljnik.co.rs/sr/tema-broja/arko-paspalj-kako-da-potuje-dravu-koja-ne-potuje-tebe>. This, interestingly, did not stop him from being a captain for the basketball generation of Serbian and Yugoslav players that conquered the world and went on to become perhaps the most venerated one in the history of the sport, having won three world championships in a row.

<sup>1630</sup> The saying that Jesus died for our sins is a paraphrase of the following the line from St. Peter’s first epistle:” For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (Peter I 3:18). It means that the Christ’s love for humans was so immense that he took their sins upon himself and sacrificed himself in order to save them. This saying is, however, often erroneously interpreted as if it were saying that we are free to indulge in sins as much as we want to because our liberation in spirit won’t be threatened thereby, given the Christ’s sacrifice.

in all our acts in the world. In that sense, by inviting one to rebelliously go against the settled streams of seeing the world, thinking and acting, by inviting one to switch standpoints and sometimes even look at the world in an upside down fashion, great artistic works and philosophical webs of thought manage to produce powerful flooding of the gates of mental and emotional obstacles raised and protected by our selfish fears with a grandiose sense of empathy. What emerges from this stream of thought is an awareness that to enflame and sustain our love is to never stop being a rebel in the essence of our spirit. In other words, to love is to wonder is to love is to wonder, as these two grand poles of life upon which it is sustained and let to evolve rest in each other's center. At the same time, with such journeying from one viewpoint to another, one could realize that countless crucial philosophical points in the system of knowledge I have written about, from the key concepts of the Philosophy of the Way to the blind spot effect to the idea that cognitive roots of our actions in the world determine the extent of the shine of their beauty to wonder and love as the two keystones of the buildings of creative knowledge and being hold hands with each other as they march forward so as to merge with the Sun of oneness at the end of the road. Hence, from this grand stream of thought, from glancing at the tiniest details of the world and listening to the pettiest talks in the Universe, we are brought to great syntheses of knowledge, to flows of the great One through our body and mind. "Seen from the right distance, from the corner of the eye of an extraterrestrial visitor, (the Earth) must surely seem a single creature, clinging to the round warm stone, turning in the sun"<sup>1631</sup>, Lewis Thomas noticed once in the spirit of this insight, drawing an imagined vision of a celestial intelligence in the starry eyes of which we find ourselves only a step away from becoming a Sun, from reaching an enlightened consciousness in which all will pulsate with the divine sense of oneness of it all, *the* step the magnitude and identity of which, as outlined in the quote with which the journey of this book has begun, is left as a beautiful mystery for the reader to untangle.

Principles of systems science dawn on us exactly as we hop from one cognitive vista to another, while constantly looking behind our shoulder at points of view left behind from refreshing new angles. On one hand, one thus becomes aware that such incessant hopping from one viewpoint to another so as to escape the blind spots in our views is comparable to running away from our own shadow, a mission predestined for failure, for every cognitive perspective possesses pedestals composed of presumptions which guide the direction of our thought but remain invisible to us. On the other hand, however, invaluable insights are gained as we self-reflectively jump between perspectives, enabling the birth of universal, systemic knowledge in the sphere of our consciousness. Stepping away every now and then from the rails of thought along which our mind journeys, thus conceiving principles that ensure our sane and successful journey, but then hopping away from this train of thought about a train of thought so as to form principles that ensure our sane and successful journey of our mind on this meta-logical train of a kind, though only so as to jump away from it as well onto an even higher and more sublime contemplative railway is how we derive these ubiquitous principles of systems science. One of them, quite certainly, tells us that stepping away from a direction of thought and a mode of being found seemingly unassailable comfort in is the way to sustain the superb lush of the trees of knowledge that stem from our mental gardens and continue to behave in an enchantingly inspiring manner. A reason why I attach the attribute of ultimate craziness to the systemic knowledge becomes clear when we realize that it is prompting us to cast away whatever we pursue in a unilateral fashion and dance with its antipode with all one's heart and intellect. For, if

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<sup>1631</sup> See Lewis Thomas' Late Night Thoughts on Listening to Mahler's Ninth Symphony, Bantam Books, New York, NY (1983), pp. 17.

the symbolism of the Way indicates something, it is certainly the simultaneous balancing of the senses of connectedness and distantness. And by learning to trustfully embrace the total opposites from the beliefs and principles pursued, a greatest treasure of them all in the ultimate adventure of the human mind, which we call science, is gained: a sense of uncertainty. From there on, we could remind ourselves of yet another fabulous play pervaded with insecure characters struggling to break free, which I have seen in the SF Playhouse on a summer night of the full moon: *Tigers Be Still*. According to the synopsis, “*Tigers Be Still* uses theatre to explore another human quandary: what happens when we get stuck?” The answer the play subtly gives is that facing one’s dialectical opposite instead of banging one’s head against the wall while trying to rigidly and hardheadedly follow a predetermined stream of thoughts and wishes hides the key. Thus, the optimistic, positive and cheerful art therapist, Sherry, rises up above her own depression episode by facing her antipode in terms of the spiritless, destructive and insensible patient, Zack, whose dark mood, on the other hand, begins to bloom as he spends time with Sherry. The irritatingly overconfident principal, Joseph, restores his vitality and naturalness as he comes to meet his prom date who was so insecure and deprived of self-confidence that she locked herself in her room after gaining weight and has not appeared for one single time on the stage, leading Sherry, her dewy-eyed daughter, to proclaim the final line of the play: “This is how my Mom got out of her room”. The healing relationship between (a) the final, fifth character of the play, lazy, drowsy, scornful and judgmental Grace, who let faith in love wither in her heart and finds no reason whatsoever to leave the house, lying on the couch and spooning a bottle of scotch, and (b) the mysterious tiger whom the characters frighteningly refer to as aimlessly roaming through the night is left to the discretion of the viewers’ imagination. However, based on the other dialectical pairs depicted, we could conclude that, if a diametrical opposite of Grace’s attitude, the tiger ought to be energetic, wide-awake, sanguine, never judgmental about anyone, firmly believing in love and always being on the run, outside, in the nomadic wilderness. If one finds a metaphor of the Christ, a mysterious otherworldly creature that managed to unlock the gates that suppress a dazzling glow of the divine spirit dormant in each one of us from naturally emerging on the surface of our beings and the world, hidden in it, one would not wander off far from the truth in my cosmic eyes.

Speaking of this wild tiger that a typical human personality spoiled by various corruptive social influences that aim at extinguishing rather than enkindling the flame of divine creativity within our hearts should face, I recall how the Buddha’s inner journey brought him to the edge of enlightenment when he faced a giant, the scariest and vilest creature the world has ever known according to Tezuka’s comic book and, we may say, a complete dialectical opposite to what he was streaming to become. After the giant asked him to explain why there is so much misery in the world, including the sense of unhappiness that had driven him to constantly commit wicked acts against those that did or tended to inflict pain on him by any means, the Buddha’s answer succeeded in demonstrating how those that acted evil in the very giant’s eyes, those against which he rose his destructive powers, suffered in their minds much more than those upon which their evil acts were inflicted. In other words, the mental and emotional suffering of the torturer is more piercing and devastating for one’s spiritual wellbeing than that imposed on the tortured ones. The Buddha thus brought the sobbing giant to his knees, saying that “humans exist, as part of Nature, so there is some purpose for which we live...tude to all that is. You, too, play a crucial part in that web. If you did not exist, something in the world would go awry”. Phenomenally, as the giant leaves in the distance, the view lands on the Buddha, whom one may expect to see proud for his achievement. Yet, the Buddha, just like all the greatest teachers of the world,

incessantly wonders, seeks the right way, questions, and exactly because he incessantly questions, he manages to travel along the right path. And so the Buddha proclaims the following words: “I don’t believe it... I just taught someone something. That man praised me. He...was perhaps a god, testing me. Maybe that was it. Why? Why did I...Why did I say those things just now? The words just poured out of me. Words I had never thought before”. And so, the Buddha beautifully concluded, with the Sun rising in the distance, that “the words I spoke to him, I spoke to teach myself!! Oh...the window of my soul is opening!! Light, oh light, o light! Show me the way! As long as I live, I will do my part in this Universe!”<sup>1632</sup> It was then that the Buddha attained enlightenment, right below a fig tree, having come face-to-face with an epitome of the darkest antipode of the spiritual road he has been journeying on.

Once again, thus, we get a hint on how only when we are set to travel down the heart of surrounding souls’ worldviews, compassionately unite therewith and do all that is in our powers to illuminate their insides with the light of our spirit - all in the light of the Little Prince’s leaping from one planet of human views of reality to another, fueled by a colossal empathy and outbursts of cosmic joy - do we get a chance to ignite the lantern of an enlightening happiness inside of us, too, the lantern that can burn brightly only for as long as it is kept lit not for the sake of bringing joy and comfort to ourselves, but with the only wish to brighten the lives of fellow humans on this plane of reality whereon wretchedness is the destiny for all and whereon offering oneself as a sacrifice to save another may be the only path to salvation of our souls and their transmutation into stars hanging on forever and ever more on the backdrop of eternity, which brings us back to the very beginning of Tezuka’s story and the white rabbit who had saved a dying sage by helping him wake up, light a fire, then jumping into it and sacrificing itself to yield food for the sage who then told the story to his disciple who told it to the hundreds of disciples: “He was so shaken by the unbelievable event that... he achieved enlightenment... he grasped the great chain of events that is our world”<sup>1633</sup>.

One such sacrificial nature of true friendship was warmheartedly depicted in another comic book, *Robot Dreams*<sup>1634</sup>. In it, as the story goes, a dog orders a robot in parts, assembles it and that is how their friendship begins. One day, however, they decide to go to the beach. As the dog entered the water, the robot followed. They joyfully played with the ball in the water for a while, but after they swam out and lay on the beach, the robot began to rust and could not move anymore. The dog left the robot on the beach, and they both dreamed later of how the robot’s entering the water could have been prevented. The dog dreamt of realizing the dangers by having more understanding of the robot’s nature and pointing at the sandy beach instead when the robot was about to jump into the water, wiping some suntan oil onto it, and letting it enjoy in the Sun. The robot, on the other hand, wished if he could have listened more to his own predispositions and the voice from the inside instead of blindly following the dog wherever he went.

Although this wordless narrative could be interpreted from many different angles, I have found a neat reflection of the Way of Love in it. Had the dog and the robot lived in accordance with the Way of Love, they would have been prevented from making this mistake that eventually aggravated their relationship. Namely, the robot in the story has become overly submissive in its relationship with the dog and blinded by the shine of the dog’s authority that the robot himself built in its dreams of the dog. In such a way, he strayed onto the overly empathic extreme of the Way of Love, wherein the beat of the missionary music of one’s own heart is neglected. On the

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<sup>1632</sup> See Osamu Tezuka’s *Buddha*. Volume Four: *The Forest of Uruvela*, Vertical, New York, NY (1987), pp. 366.

<sup>1633</sup> See Osamu Tezuka’s *Buddha*. Volume One: *Kapilavastu*, Vertical, New York, NY (1987), pp. 27.

<sup>1634</sup> See Sara Varon’s *Robot Dreams*, :01 First Second, New York, NY (2007).

other hand, the dog strayed onto the solipsistic side of the Way of Love, wherein one becomes fooled by an impression that what is good for one has to be best for others too. The dog forgot that in order to enrich the way in which beings around us see the world and instill some eternal beauty to it, we need to speak their own language, which is sometimes significantly simpler than the one that makes our mind feels fulfilled and which always requires us to spend time gazing at the world from their own perspectives and their own pedestal of fundamental presumptions, ideals, history and values. Indulging in verbosity that tickles our intellect and seems meaningful to us may make us appear smart and awesome in other people's eyes and may even make them become enchanted by our supposed greatness and thus inclined to blindly follow us in whatever we do or say. However, sooner or later, such blind following of the corporeal shadow of our spirit would make them rusty and dysfunctional in the long run; at the same time we would turn into an arrogant and profoundly unhappy creature, intrinsically demanding egocentric obedience and locking of the sacred gate of mystery over its opening in bliss and beauty. For, tying others onto ourselves and making them dependent on us rather than supplying them with knowledge and making them soar into their own, independent and unique skies of the world, is how only imperfect educators, dishonest service givers and beings out of touch with the Way of Love guide relations with other creatures in life.

The dog thus became overly obsessed with selfishly satisfying one's own dreams, while neglecting to incessantly look at the world from the eyes of another and stay along the line of the Way of Love. If we analyze this stance deeper, we might recognize it in many modern dwellers on this planet that are fooled by the popular advices that tend to point out the importance of being selfish and absorbed in one's own aims and visions, thereby neglecting others, in order to have them attracted to us. For those seeing the world from an SF state of mind, the So-Cal, so-called "frat boy" acting style, manipulative and insensitive, lies dormant in it, whereas passive behavior of masochistic followers in life, which are too many around us, may be recognized as its "robotized" opposite. To follow the bliss that arises from the seats of our own heart and mind along one track of the railway of our being in the world in parallel with ceaselessly looking at the world from other people's eyes along another track is how the trains of our action and thought will be send to stream across the starry spaces of the world, inspiring and enchanting it from its greatest depths. In other words, to sacrifice our devoted following of the inner bliss of ours with empathically understanding the worldviews of other beings around us is how we, paradoxically but true, truly come to live in concert with this bliss and up to the divine mission of our being in this world.

Besides, the very title of this comic book implicitly tells us that sacrifices we make on the road to spiritual ascent of our beings are those that sow seeds of beautiful visions and masterful creativity within our heart and mind. Namely, the dreams of the dog, who had left his immovable robot to rust on the beach, were mainly nightmarish visions of repentance and regret, eventually instilling grief and bittersweet moods in the dog. On the other hand, the robot, who was lying immobile on the beach, covered by sand and snow and slowly broken to pieces by scavengers, spun dreams filled with wonderful imagery, pure and heavenly. In the end, one may argue that it is those beautiful visions that saved him from destruction and built a source of wonderful music for the world within his heart. It all followed an event in which a strange constructor bird assembled the robot from dumped broken pieces and made a radio out of him. At the very finale, the robot spots his beloved dog from the window, switches on the radio of his heart and sends a wonderful melody to travel through the air. The sound reaches the dog's ears, but he merely recognizes the sound, failing to realize where the sound comes from, giving the touchy end to the

whole book. After all, the most beautiful dreams are built in our heads only insofar as we have known the dark side of the existence, which makes many believe that the most gorgeous dreams that drive the wheels of our creativity are woven not in the brightest and sunniest places of them all, but in the cloudiest and the greyest ones. Or, as put into verses of one of the most beautiful songs ever sung, Nightswimming by R.E.M., “The bright type could never know, could not describe night swimming”. For, not those whose minds are always sunny and optimistic, but those who are torn apart by the battle between cosmic joy and melancholic and compassionate sadness, those who crucify their beings on the crosses of life, doubting and wondering with all their hearts, those who literally turn themselves into graceful question marks and are in ceaseless awe over the most profound puzzles in life are those that will write the most beautiful messages for humanity. To make the soil of our heart and mind fertile, alternating periods of blissful sunshine and heartrending rain are required, lest the ground become either too dry or eroded by floods. Thence, the words that are opening my Mom’s anthology of poems, drawing on the sea of emotions within the 16-year old mind and heart of hers, are brought to mind: “Via sullen roads of sorrow I arrived at the hug of happiness and swayed the sky with a whoop of joy”. For, to make our spirit an ocean of love upon which the ships of compassionate, *weltschmerz* melancholy gently swing, all underneath a starry mantle of cosmic joy is how one may depict the seascapes of the core of human creativeness. Concordantly, my Mom’s uncle, a passionate sailor who has served as a living proof that the Dalmatian love of the sea flows in my own blood too, all along the coasts of the love of stones and crystals that the other, Montenegrin parental half instilled in me, indeed in his book *The Rough Years* defined seafaring as “a profession that is never all-knowing, that appreciates criticisms from all sides” and sea itself as “an entrance to the world through roughness”, a coarse way that leads to beautiful insights<sup>1635</sup>. In one passage of the book he says, “When I spotted the blue surface of the sea for the first time from a cliff, stunningly, with eyes wide open, my juvenile heart leaped in indescribable joy. It was my way to a new life”<sup>1636</sup>. In another passage, he utters the words that bring us closer to the final message concealed within the story about the robot and the dog, and reminding us how the spirit lively and divine dwells not only in animate creatures, but in every piece of the material world too: “I fell in love with the ship, just as it happens to sailors sometimes. She was gliding across the wavy sea like a seagull who, solemnly, with no flap of its wings, levitates above the foamy waves”<sup>1637</sup>.

In such a spirit, the last analogy I discovered in *Robot Dreams* was the one of the co-creational thesis. It dawned on me by simply taking the dog, the one who assembles the robot from pieces and builds a friend thereby, to represent a creative human mind, and the robot to present the material world, the physical reality in its everyday appearance. The modern human mind is, therefore, neatly depicted in its tendency to get rid of the material “tools” at the first sign of their malfunction, seeing the material world that surrounds it and that comprises it as essentially dead and inert. What the metaphysical perspective drawn by the co-creational thesis aims at is to restore the genuine and ancient sense of appreciating divinity that resides in every piece of that very same material world. Alas, it is as if the modern atheistic worldviews have pulled heart and soul out of the material world, the world which the golden eyes shimmering on the propositions of the co-creational thesis helplessly see as sacred in each and every one of its segments and aspects. They have done so by systematically depriving human perceptions of

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<sup>1635</sup> See Hrvoje Novaković’s *Surove godine/The Rough Years*, Vlastita Naklada, Rijeka (1975), pp.1.

<sup>1636</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 17.

<sup>1637</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 21.

reality of this phenomenal sense of meaning that stems from the belief that emanations of the voice divine can be found in each and every detail of our worlds. And the fact that materialism, not spiritualism, is on the run to wipe out the mystical beauty and divine meaningfulness from the material world that has been its alpha and omega, whereas spiritualism, which has seen it neither as a beginning nor as an end, treats it with a far greater veneration and respect, has always signified that there is something fishy and spoiled in the propositions of this prosaic philosophy, standing in diametrical opposition to those of the co-creational thesis. What is more, as it usually happens in this co-creational reality of ours, pulling the heart out of the material things and erasing the divine voice that reverberates all through them simultaneously pulls the heart out of man and annihilates a sense for the waves of divinity on which all the magically inspiring creatures have surfed in delivering every movement of their bodies and spirits like a message from the transcendental clouds of Tao to the corporeal world around them. Like Prometheus, one out of innumerable heroes from the ancient Greek tragedies who had to pay in hardship because of usurping the powers that were the sole privilege of gods, having his liver pecked by eagles from here to eternity, so does the man that epitomizes the contemporary culture of godless liberalism and substitution of ethereality with ego sit lamely with tied spirit, extinguished torch of cosmic happiness and “spleen filled with bile”<sup>1638</sup>, as the fairy named Cerys described once the state of those who hold the hypothesis of the selfish gene close to their hearts. The modern man, having replaced the co-creational ontology which sees the world as a creative output of both man and divine Nature with an anthropocentric worldview, has thus wholly forgotten the art of travelling in the realistic and the metaphorical senses alike, being pissed if he does not arrive at the destination rather than happy if he does and whining over a cup half empty rather than rejoicing gratefully over the one half full, spreading mental and emotional blight all around him, like a mistuned radio failing to transmit the sounds of the healing harmony coming from the spheres far and beyond itself. Although the words from Virgil’s Aeneid, “On Neptune’s faith the floating fleet relies; but what the man forsook, the god supplies”, stand inscribed on a glassy wall at the airport of the High Mile City whereat I found myself stranded on my way from one SF, Sioux Falls to another SF, San Francisco, they are disconnected enough from the godless man of the modern day to immerse but a soul or two in their semantic sea out of tens of thousands of hectic passengers that pass by them every day. Yet, this inner sense of the dialogue between Nature and man from which all things perceptible arise is able to transcend all the hardships that our evanescent lives inevitably bring forth with a subtle and unassailable sense of beauty dwelling everywhere around us and in us. Hence, it may be because it is left essentially unnoticed and neglected by humans that the divine voice implicit in every piece of the reality that surrounds us sings the silent melodies which only the deepest foundations of our hearts can shake to, whereas the visible parts of the icebergs of our minds could remain ignorant thereto. Who could now doubt that Nature feels left uncared for and neglected as human minds are busy pursuing their own dreams of perfect anthropomorphic control thereof? Fooled by the objectivist assumptions ingrained by the schooling system in our thinking, humans use Nature as a tool, while being blind to the divinely glowing roots of every piece of matter that they hold in their hands and forgetting that Nature and human spirit are involved in an endless co-creative dialogue from which all things perceptible arise, as the co-creational thesis suggests. For, it is this imperceptible communication between the invisible and hidden cores of human minds and Nature that gives rise to all that comprises the world of our experience. Yet, sacrificed and forgotten, the divine essence of Nature incessantly sings and guides us on our ways, for it is like

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<sup>1638</sup> Listen to Catatonia’s My Selfish Gene on International Velvet, Blanco y Negro (1998).

a star, never losing its shine, whether the creatures that it feeds therewith recognize and appreciate that or not.

It is as if the Biblical words, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24), spoken in religious ecstasy by Alyosha Karamazov as he kissed the earth after his great teacher had departed from this planet, are to be recollected at this moment. For, it is them that bring us close to the heartbeats of the Way of Love and their guiding lights that unleash godliness in us by sending us to, first of all, sacrifice ourselves for the sake of blessing and beautifying others as the way to enrich our heart and soul, but then to sacrifice as well these precious moments spent in ornamenting others to coming face to face with the beauty arising from the core of our being by meditatively plunging inside of this core and forging an ever greater shine within. For, our residing stably on the thin line of the Way of Love immediately calls for making these sacrifices every time we approach one or the other side too closely: withdrawing within our inner landscapes when empathy starts to eclipse our listening sanely to the voice of our heart and exploding in ecstatic expressiveness whenever we realize that our dwelling inside, within the inner space of our mind, has begun to take toll on our ability to empathically act in warmhearted and inspiring communion with creatures around us. Yet, there is a hope that one day we may find a way to be both of these sides at the same time, to dwell in perfect oneness with the divine core of our being, to never-endingly dig wonderful moves and melodies from deep inside, while at the same remaining like an angel, in perfect unison with worldviews of all the souls that surround us. If that day ever comes, we would prove Kierkegaard wrong when he wrote down that “the love of God is hatred of the world and love of the world hatred of God”<sup>1639</sup>, having realized that there is indeed a way for our whole being to be one with the inner voice of God at all times and yet grow not distant from the surrounding spirits that twinkle with starriness all around us, just as well as there is a way for us to keep hearts constantly merged with fellow humans in love and sympathy and not become deaf to the guiding voices that echo all through our insides and direct us toward the divine path whereon God is to be found.

This sideway path branching off the main road of our thought brings us to the words that stood as the opening sign at the entrance to the first book in another series of manga comics, this time about a fantasy alchemist: “Teaching that does not speak of pain has no meaning because humankind cannot gain anything without first giving something in return”<sup>1640</sup>. This message could be invoked as a response to the modern jazzy culture of hipness and happiness, which neglects the importance of keeping the other eye of ours on human suffering that undoubtedly pervades this world. Oftentimes, as a result, echoing the country girl, Silver’s lamenting from the bubbly bathtub to her beau in Donna Deitch’s *Desert Hearts* over good times as those when she falls from grace and loses it, today’s people surrounded by the chimes of cheerfulness do not cheer enough with them, knowing not how to appreciate these treasures solely because of having lost touch with the visions that speak misery and wretchedness inside them. Therefore, only with holding glistening stars of cosmic joy in one eye of ours and images of the Christ-like bearing of the cross of agony in another, melancholic and tear-shedding eye of ours can we build the great towers of the Way of Love, in which creative joy and humane empathy are blended, within our soul. And that human suffering and hardships serve the purpose of inspiring spiritually juvenile creatures of the world and orienting them towards roads sprinkled with stardust glittering with

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<sup>1639</sup> See Søren Kierkegaard’s *Provocations*, edited by Charles Moore, Plough Publishing House, Farmington, PA (2007), pp. 11.

<sup>1640</sup> See Hiromu Arakawa’s *Fullmetal Alchemist*, VIZ, LLC, San Francisco, CA (2002).

celestial values, of empathy, care, compassion, gravity and grace, has been akin to a sacred secret transmitted through the arcane channels and the darkest tunnels of the contemporary pop culture, whose surface, of course, gives the appearance of fun, friskiness and pleasure only. Countless are, thus, masterful pop songs, ranging from Brian Hyland's Sealed With a Kiss to the Beach Boys' God Only Knows to Bob Dylan's Like a Rolling Stone to the Band's Whispering Pines to the Smiths' I Know It's Over to Cindy Lauper's Time After Time to R.E.M.'s Falls to Climb to Belle & Sebastian's Seymour Stein to Blur's Battery in Your Leg to Radiohead's Motion Picture Soundtrack to Joanna Newsom's Sadie, wherein light is found in the tender remembrance of a loss. Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe, better known as Pet Shop Boys, for example, mentioned in their epic tune, Being Boring, that "when you're young, you find inspiration in anyone who's ever gone and opened up the closing door"<sup>1641</sup>, as if reminding us of how bearing in mind those who have sailed away from this world serves as an incessant inspiration for our spiritually maturing selves, an imaginary star burning bright on top of our heads, strengthening our character, stabilizing the flows of mental energy in us and preparing us for compassionate sacrifices later in life. These sacrifices, depicted as lifesaving by the Biblical image of the Christ on the Cross as well as in the aforementioned story about a white rabbit who cooked itself alive to save the sage dying of cold and starvation<sup>1642</sup>, are here to let us know that leaving the stage of life at the right moment is oftentimes the crown on our mission to enlighten the world and a key that allows our message to truly live on forever. In contrast, our craving to prolong the duration of our stay on this planet indefinitely would have led to dilution of our message and its eventual disappearance from the face of the Earth, which is why innumerable sages, including the Christ and my beloved Mom, left us at the peak of their powers, all so as to incarnate one of the key paradoxes in this dialectical story of life: namely, to die at the right time is to ensure that one continues to live forever and unendingly inspire the worldly souls. Therefore, the phrase uttered by the film director, Jean-Pierre Melville acting as the actor, Jean Parvulesco in Jean-Luc Godard's Breathless when asked what his ultimate goal is, "To become immortal, and then die", could be reshuffled because very often, as we see, departing from this planet at the right time is the sole route to ensuring one's timeless presence on it, the point which is neatly demonstrated by the plot of Godard's Breathless itself, where the protagonist obliterates himself in revolt against the worldly lukewarmth, selfishness and hypocrisies so as to gain immortality in the history of cinema and through his physical absence continue to inspire generations of human beings musing on his magnificent acts. Thus, as we see, these sacrifices may present inescapable moments in the endless cycle of humans mutually enlightening each other in the same way trees sow seeds from which new sprigs will sprout. It is these magnificent cycles whereon egos die and stars are born somewhere on Earth with every blink of our eye that the spiritual evolution of humanity proceeds through.

The sacrificial nature of our search for happiness and fulfillment in life is such that it can find a metaphor in almost every little thing comprising it, from the game of Monopoly in which only constructive expenditure of the paper money given to us leads one to triumph, whereas saving it leads to a guaranteed loss, to transpiration of large forest trees which suck the water from the roots to their branches to the leaves and let it evaporate from there, building clouds and rains for some other thirsty trees, lest they lose the ability to make the water stream through their trunks properly, to the genuine artistic creation whereby we let the seeds of inspiration die within ourselves and become born to the world, thereby gaining innumerable spiritual treasures in return

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<sup>1641</sup> Listen to Pet Shop Boys' Being Boring on Behaviour, Parlophone (1990).

<sup>1642</sup> See Osamu Tezuka's Buddha. Volume One: Kapilavastu, Vertical, New York, NY (1987), pp. 27.

that sustain our creativity for good. For, “Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35), as St. Paul the Apostle recollected the Christ’s guiding star of thought. At another place in the Bible, St. John the Apostle writes how “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son... God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (John 3:16-17). Quite concordantly, Wayne Coyne has poetized how “giving more than they had, the process had begun, a million came from one, the limits now were none”<sup>1643</sup> in a pop anthem that dazzles the listener with some of the most beautiful lyrics ever incorporated into a radio song. Years ago, these verses inspired me too to compose a piece for one guitar, *A Million Came From One*, which begins with 32 flat A tones branching through an E-F#-E-A sequence into a rapture of emotions, accordantly demonstrating how invisible and yet infinitely beautiful first steps paved in pure love are enough to spark a countless plethora of inspiring signs that would fall onto the face of the world like fireworks of an utmost beauty or raindrops of heavenly happiness, yielding paragons of the final scene described in Wayne Coyne’s thrilling song: “Yelling as hard as they can, the doubters all were stunned; heard louder than a gun, the sound they made was love”<sup>1644</sup>. Thence, even as irritatingly infantile expressions as the banging sounds intercepting Wayne’s heartrending singing would manage to mysteriously install the cornerstone of divine love in the eyes and hearts that surround us. Hence, whatever the nature of our endeavors, we should not hesitate to send the most precious emanations of spirit that arise in us into the air like white doves of peace for others to catch and be enlightened by it. Rather than keeping them inside for the illumination of our inner landscapes solely, we should freely give them to the world, all the way knowing that “blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3).

Hence, we must be ready to sacrifice something before our spirit is made capable of bearing things that would truly beautify the world. Since this is a systemic assertion, it is applicable in numerous different contexts. When it comes to inspiring acting, purely aesthetic words, gestures and moves that do not bring immediate satisfaction nor yield a pragmatic result but seem wasted and tossed in the air stand for these little sacrifices. If that is so, people today could hardly be seen as living according to the principle that stands at the opening of this paragraph. It rather seems as if we live in a world in which earthlings do not really look after reflecting the inexhaustible beauty of the world around them by expressing these absorbed impressions that inebriate their spirits with the visions of enchanting words and moves. Instead, it is as if they are endlessly collecting the treasures of these immensely precious impressions, all until they become saturated with them and the time comes for the ships of their tiny and finite lives to, sadly, sail away onto another shore. Yet, I have always believed that each creature on this planet has the potential to absorb wonderful impressions all until they begin to fuse into each other, somewhat similar to what takes place in the interior of the Sun, followed by the release of an immense energy that brings precious light as the source of life to the surrounding planets. The Christ has stood forth for the past two millennia as an example of this transformation of one’s sense of enchantment with the nature of the world and with the divine signs that are present everywhere in it into a true star of spirit with sublime levels of creativity, which were thought to be reserved for divine and surreal creatures only, never found on the Earth before. Yet, not appreciating the immense beauty of the surrounding world and failing to incite the sense of a great missionary responsibility to start shining from the sunny depths of one’s spirit and back to

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<sup>1643</sup> Listen to Flaming Lips’ *A Spoonful Weighs a Ton* on *The Soft Bulletin*, Warner Bros (1999).

<sup>1644</sup> *Ibid.*

the goddess of Nature who has tirelessly fed one with wonderful impressions, as if shedding stardust into the wondrous cups of our minds, restores the final visions of an apocalyptic world drawn by the wild imagination of El-P in his Stepfather Factory, which, sadly, neatly describes the compassionless, lame and self-centered society that we live in: “Remember, no cash returns, only credits towards future purchases”. Inhabitants of one such world, obsessed to the core about the cosmic bubbles in which they swim alone, limbless in essence, with no courage or drive to reach out to another and make *it* the start of a spiritual journey, which, remember, begins and ends with an encounter, as Martin Buber would have reminded us, would have the empyreal title of Broken Social Scene’s debut record, *You Forgot it in People*, constantly posed before their minds like banners carried in the hands of the smiley seraphs that levitate around them<sup>1645</sup>. For, when we leave a party and feel as if something has been forgotten during our short stay there, we should know that the treasures residing in people’s hearts are almost always those precious things regretfully left behind. And, in the end, it matters little if this journey starts with our breaking the wall of isolation with a flower in our hands craved to be given to another or with curious eyes, all dewy and filled with rainbows that arise wherever the rains of compassion and the sunshine of love exist side by side, out on the mission to recognize and absorb the glimmers of divinity that emanate from the spirit of each and every creature of this universe. For, to give and to receive in return or *vice versa*, the aforementioned alchemical law which equates the two has to remain conserved, lest decadent states of being are being stepped into. Note that the reigning economic crisis has been, for example, typified by exactly one such disparity between the potentials to give and take, whereby “the capacity to produce and sell goods has outstripped that of consumers to borrow and spend”<sup>1646</sup>, as George Magnus pointed out. In a way, this point is the reiteration of the remark made by Aldous Huxley after George Orwell, his former student, mailed him a copy of *1984* and bugged for opinion throughout months of unresponsiveness from Huxley, who eventually said that he did not agree with the vision of the totalitarian government that would control, select and process the information with the finest precision and foresaw a future in which a democratic, mediocritized humanity will produce so much junk that it will literally bury itself in it, as there will be no mechanism to discern preciousness from platitude in a sea of ideas and objects poured out and served on the consumers’ plates each day<sup>1647</sup>. As a matter of fact, a careful analysis of work and life - or no life, as some may wittily notice at this point - in the western world would bring us straight to the conclusion that the obsessive drive to increase the production capacities even when there is no room or need for them has come at the expense of the ideas on how to use these magnificent technologies to magnify the scopes of human happiness, spiritedness and sociality and, as proponents of the Situationist movement would have reminded us, it may have merely created conditions for the expansion of alienation that stood at the kernel of the capitalist thought. Thus, remember, the greed to (pro)create can often be equally destructive and mischievous as the greed to acquire and possess, as exemplified by the native Easter Island inhabitants’ becoming obsessed with the fabrication of their *moai* statues to such an extent that they deforested most of the island, steering their little Polynesian

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<sup>1645</sup> For, remember, ideas and guidelines that flash most intensely before our minds are those that complement our one-sided and unilaterally limited stances.

<sup>1646</sup> See George Magnus’ *Financial Bust Has Bequeathed a Crisis of Capitalism*, *Financial Times* 24 (September 13, 2011).

<sup>1647</sup> See the Interview with Sergej Trifunović: *Strani glumac u Holivudu može da igra samo stranca*, *B92 News* (July 14, 2017), retrieved from [http://www.b92.net/kultura/vesti.php?nav\\_category=268&yyyy=2017&mm=07&dd=14&nav\\_id=1282594](http://www.b92.net/kultura/vesti.php?nav_category=268&yyyy=2017&mm=07&dd=14&nav_id=1282594).

community to famine, war and a 100-fold population decline<sup>1648</sup> as well as by the Great Plains farmers of the late 1920s, who having been deluded by James Mills' notoriously erroneous interpretation of Jean-Baptiste Say's law of markets according to which "the production of goods would automatically stimulate enough demand to buy those goods"<sup>1649</sup>, year after year eager to produce more wheat than ever before, indulged in the fanatical plowing of the land, displaced the grasses that accumulated moisture during periodic droughts and kept the soil in place thereby and created conditions for the devastating Dust Bowl, let alone that it is practically always merely the latter in disguise<sup>1650</sup>, the point of view with which a character from Lars von Trier's *Dogville*, who pronounced the following words, would have surely agreed: "Respect for cultivation, harvest and fruit could be directly measured in provision of carnality". Economic adversities resulting from such excess industrial capacity are, sadly, often trying to be solved by the country's compulsive engagement in wars outside of its territory and pathological economic and cultural expansion, as historically exemplified by the US finding solution to the series of bankruptcies, stock market crashes and foreclosures that crippled its economy in the 1930s in switching to the war economic engine in the 1940s<sup>1651</sup>, the strategy it continues to employ with moderate success to this very day. Also, economic booms have always corresponded to tidily directed expenditures, which stands forth as a solid reflection of a systemic relationship that emphasizes sacrifices as pivotal traits of every progressive run of a physical entity. Or, as Njegoš's Abbot Stefan observed in the context of the race for the trophies of wisdom, "No one ever drained the cup of honey without bitter taste of gall enduring; cup of gall requires a cup of honey, by the mingling one makes light the drinking"<sup>1652</sup>. In the legendary video clip for the Radiohead song *Paranoid Android*, our little hero takes a bath and exactly at the moment in which shampoo gets into his eyes he sees a white angel. Rubbing his watery eyes, he does not know whether it was merely an illusion or it was a real angel, the savior of his, waving at him.

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<sup>1648</sup> Watch the documentary movie *180 Degrees South: Conquerors of the Useless*, directed by Chris Malloy (2010), and read Jared Diamond's *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, Viking, New York, NY (2005).

<sup>1649</sup> See James Howard Kunstler's *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape*, Touchstone, New York, NY (1994), pp. 101.

<sup>1650</sup> A little worn-out story about a rich magnate who paid a visit to a luscious tropical island inhabited by a handful of fishermen illustrates this point well. Namely, curious about the lifestyle of the natives that has not changed for ages, still consisting in catching a few fish in the morning, just enough to keep all from not being hungry for the rest of the day, then playing guitar and sitting in the shade of palm trees, and then signing and celebrating life with his friends and family in the evening, the magnate asks one of the fishermen how come it has never occurred to him to hire more people from abroad to come and catch the fish so that he could have more to sell and eventually, when the business grows to astronomic proportions, become rich. "What would I do then", asks back the fisherman with a smile on his face. "Then you could sit all day long in the shade of the palm trees and rejoice with your friends and family", says the magnate. "Isn't that what I do now", the fisherman then asks, prompting the magnate to scratch his head and in the blink of an eye realize the existence of strange twists and turns of the pathways of destiny that take us to more through less and less through more. It is thus that I often wonder if my home country has in spite of the pervasive poverty given rise to incredibly vital and pretty people because the inclinations to enjoy life are far more pronounced in it than the insatiable drives to create ever bigger businesses and make ever more money, whereas the American society, wherein "people work for living and then kill themselves at work", as an aphorism I saw painted once on a wall next to the last flight of Vallejo Street stairs leading from the edge of Ina Coolbrith Park in San Francisco to the top of the Russian Hill said, has gradually destroyed its natural resources, turning it all, from the food we eat to the dwelling places we dream in to the spiritual plane on which we all float, into an arid desert and showing us once more that small may be more sustainable in the long run, while big need not be.

<sup>1651</sup> See James Howard Kunstler's *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape*, Touchstone, New York, NY (1994), pp. 103-104.

<sup>1652</sup> See Petar Petrović Njegoš's *The Mountain Wreath*; translation of the given verse and review available at [http://www.archive.org/stream/northamreview217miscrich/northamreview217miscrich\\_djvu.txt](http://www.archive.org/stream/northamreview217miscrich/northamreview217miscrich_djvu.txt) (1923).

We are left to wonder whether it could have been a sign arisen on the co-creational path between his spirit and Nature. What this lovely metaphor has suggested is that only through events that cause irritation and tears to be shed by our spirit can we see the true beauty of being. Or, as pointed out by Sirach, “He that pricketh the eye will make tears to fall: and he that pricketh the heart maketh it to shew her knowledge” (Sirach 22:19). Still, another great insight is concealed in this metaphor. It is the one wherein mystery dwells, mystery through which only we could be led to revelations in our knowledge of the world. As placed into words that opened the path to the great Tao-Te-Xing, “Mystery within mystery: a gateway to all understanding” (Tao-Te-Xing I). As a side note, reading Calvin & Hobbes, I ceaselessly become amused over the famous “noodle incident”, over and over again referred to in the book and yet never described. It is as every time I read about it, I come across a subtle wink which reminds me that the things untold, unexplainable and indescribable, those that lie concealed as the sources of the greatest mystery, are where the essence of the world resides. After all, reading the works of greatest philosophers, one could realize that the starting points of their philosophical systems were also left undefined, reminding one of the dizzying feel a child can invoke by merely watching the starry sky and imagining what lies beyond, beyond, beyond. Will, absolute, absolute spirit, being, I, *a priori* categories of understanding, monads, *res cogitans* and the highest good in the philosophies of Schopenhauer, Schelling, Hegel, Heidegger, Fichte, Kant, Leibnitz, Descartes and Aristotle, respectively, can be given as the examples, aside from the standard ones of God and Holy Spirit of practically any religion of the world. Consequently, I know too that whatever my acts in the world are, a part of my being has to be reminiscent of the dark side of the moon, never fully made itself known to the world, while the other side will be honestly, lightly and gracefully revealing itself. Beautiful and enchanting earthlings, those with the mystical emeralds blinking in their eyes, know that to inspire the world with one’s moves, smiles and a very being in this world one has to “keep the secret”, to always maintain one part of the treasures of spirit that one’s heart and mind holds concealed, while the other part is wholly blazing to the world, knowing all the way that “he whose face gives no light shall never become a star”<sup>1653</sup>. In acting so, one imitates Nature, which never reveals its divinity in full light, but subtly and imperceptibly sends us the signs, which sensitive minds around which stars of Wonder and Love swirl know how to read. For, these two, Wonder and Love, sustain human minds in the state of enlightened childlikeness and brilliant receptiveness, spinning the carousel of fanciful attentiveness and keeping us wide awake and incessantly astonished with the world that we inhabit. To sum up, no brilliant insights can be arrived at without determination to travel along many a dusty road and no treasures sunken deep at the bottom of the sea of human knowledge, at the very foundations of Atlantis, can be found without plunging deep into its dark depths where mysteries and perplexities of this world prevail. And on that sacred voyage of ours, the roads to which our heart opens like petals of a celestial flower, we should be sure that only passionate self-sacrifices and compassionate panoramas which dazzle in our starry eyes blessed with divine Wonder and Love can lead us along blossoming ways.

After all, if there is anything more beautiful than watching the starry sky, than plunging inside of a great book, than dreamingly filling one’s mind and heart with the feelings of celestial wonder, it is watching the stars glisten inside the eyes of the loved ones watching the starry sky, gazing into eyes of another swiftly scanning the lines and frames of an exciting manuscript, and filling the minds and hearts of others with the sense of wonder and the entrancing feeling that we

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<sup>1653</sup> See William Blake’s Proverbs of Hell, In: Portable Blake, Selected and Arranged by Alfred Kazin, Viking Press, New York, NY (1946).

are all immersed in an everlasting cosmic fairytale, in which threads of divine meanings draw magical links between it all.

And when a little butterfly, the photograph of which I placed on the front page of my third and final book in Serbian, unexplainably flew into a hairdryer I held in my hands, I initially did not understand the meaning of it, all until this event happened to be referred to more and more in lovely and bubbly conversations between me and the Little Bear. When she asked me what the meaning of this genuine sacrifice could be, all I could think of were mild and magical connections, which may through a starry train of causes and effects give rise to some wonderful fallouts in the world around us. As the English poet, Richard Burns, queued in the line to enter the memorial museum built in honor of thousands of civilians, the citizens of the Serbian city of Kragujevac, massacred by Nazis during World War II, including a whole generation of high school students that was marched straight out of their classrooms and gunned down on the nearby meadows, a blue butterfly landed on his fingertip<sup>1654</sup>, flapped its wings, flew away and prompted the poet to spend the next two decades crafting a book of poetry that he would later name *The Blue Butterfly* and dedicate to the victims of these atrocities, inspiring innumerable sensitive souls thereby. Sometimes the fact that tiny little things can “flap their wings” and cause effects of extraordinarily immense consequences becomes revealed, as in the case when the booster rocket carrying Mariner 1 spacecraft to Venus exploded in the stratosphere 5 minutes after the launching because a single line above a single symbol in an endless array of their strings was omitted, prompting Arthur C. Clarke to name it “the most expensive hyphen in history”<sup>1655</sup>, or when a 46¢ computer chip in a US army base malfunctioned and signaled a nuclear missile attack from a Soviet submarine on June 3, 1980, causing hundreds of US warplanes to take off and prepare to launch a counterattack, almost starting a World War III<sup>1656</sup>. However, in most other cases these connections are impossible to trace owing to the complexity and subtlety of chain causal reactions comprising them. Yet, if we only knew how pervasive they are, how much more sensitive, and sensible too, the world would momentarily become. When historic floods of the spring of 2014, bearing the power of a mini tsunami, hit the town of Obrenovac, lying not far from the pastoral paradise of my childhood, the village of Mala Moštanica where I learned how to hug trees and fondle their leaves while watering them with the geysers of love flowing out of my heart, everyone wanted to rush to the apocalyptic town veiled in pitch darkness to save lives hanging on threads from roofs and treetops, but when the river receded and help that would have been unnoticed owing to its being all about fixing little things, a displaced pillar of a pedestrian bridge here, a caved wall of someone’s home there and a broken barn with dead horses in it even farther out there, the volunteering hands were nowhere to be found and the town was left to struggle and be restored to a regular state at a snail’s pace on its own. For, our planet these days is such that colossal achievements on it are valued far more than the little ones, even though it is the latter that sustain us on it, making it no wonder at all that bitterness and a sense of dissatisfaction so easily creep into contemporary spirits quietly obsessed with the dreams of

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<sup>1654</sup> “... on my writing hand, now of a sudden willingly stretched before me in Serbian spring sunlight, on my unique living hand, trembling and troubled by this May visitation, like a virginal leaf new sprung on the oldest oak in Europe, on my proud firm hand, miraculously blessed by the two thousand eight hundred martyred men, women and children fallen at Kragujevac, a blue butterfly simply fell out of the sky and settled on the forefinger of my international bloody human hand”, the poet, alias Richard Berengarten, described this 1985 visitation in *The Blue Butterfly*, Salt, Cambridge, UK (2006).

<sup>1655</sup> See Greške u kucanju koje su promenile istoriju, B92 News (October 2, 2013), available at [http://www.b92.net/zivot/vesti.php?yyyy=2013&mm=10&dd=02&nav\\_id=760692](http://www.b92.net/zivot/vesti.php?yyyy=2013&mm=10&dd=02&nav_id=760692).

<sup>1656</sup> See Leland Gregory’s *Stupid History*, Andrews McMeel Publishing, LLC, Kansas City, MO (2007), pp. 262.

stardom and fame in the eyes of the world and heavens alike. After all, even the rowdiest ruffian will most of the time jump to help another creature in a sudden life-threatening situation, but it is their sordid performance of little acts in life that makes them pernicious for the social wellbeing. However, countless heroes at heart but corrupt crooks or idle schmucks in real life could be converted to embodiments of their true and deepest potentials if we only managed to inseminate them with the knowledge of an infinite value that little acts of love in life bear. A single gaze shedding a single sunray of genuine love and care and exciting but a single electron thereby can create a domino effect and send shivers throughout the whole Universe, proving itself more powerful in reality than even the most grandiose acts heard all across the Earth at once, seemingly affecting everyone, but actually ending up swiftly drowned in the river of time. From this stanza onwards, we may be sure that even we, ourselves, are with every subtle thought of ours flapping with millions of little butterfly wings, sending ultrafine vibrations of emotion and thought to fly through the air, wherefrom they can affect the states of the world in delicate and inconspicuous ways. After all, ever since Edward Lorentz named his seminal paper “Does the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil set off a tornado in Texas?”, while fleshing out the foundations of what was to become the chaos theory, the mathematical and physical framework for the analysis of systems whose evolution is critically dependent on minor modifications of initial conditions, and ever since Ervin Laszlo subsequently expanded these physical insights into the psychological territory by noting how “not dictators, armies, and police forces, but the changing values and ideals of people are the butterflies that, flapping their wings, determine which way society will grow and develop; it is up to each of us to flap our wings and to launch our bifurcating societies along a humanistic evolutionary path”<sup>1657</sup>, we have been aware that a silent clap of our fingers, right here, right now, away from all the big hustle and bustle of the world can in strange and subtle ways enlighten it, for as long as our mind holds illuminative ideals within itself in the course of carrying out its tasks.

Hence, from the little white rabbit to the Buddha born beneath a sal tree to the Christ to the little silky butterfly to every miniscule detail of the wonderful world we inhabit, everything is filled with divine meanings, with Confucian threads spread as magical links between it all. Each one of us, truly, is riding on the starry train of being, as if training to become a celestial source of light on the sky of humanity, point in its humble minuteness, always hiding in the shadowed backstage, like the statue of Abe Lincoln lurking from the shadow beneath the columns and the dome of the grand memorial or like myself writing these words under a summersweet shrub planted beside the bust of that poet “too rebellious to be respectful”<sup>1658</sup>, tucked into a corner, yet cosmically large in the scope of its shine - a sun in its gloriousness, though but a twinkle of infinity in the watery eyes of the Universe.



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<sup>1657</sup> See Barbara Vögl's *Macroshift: Evolving with Technology – An Interview with Ervin Laszlo*, Patterns 6, retrieved from <http://www.haven.net/patterns/interviews/laszlo.html> (January 2001).

<sup>1658</sup> Reference is made to Alexander Pushkin's monument on the campus of George Washington University in downtown Washington, DC. The quote is from Hugh Barnes' *The Death of a Romantic Dualist*, Independent (December 11, 1994), retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/the-death-of-a-romantic-dualist-1387156.html>.

**Yesterday**, by exploring the strange Universe inside of my heart and mind I came to conclusion that each one of us has a room, dark and deep, where sundry objects associated with one's lifetime could be found, be it cedar boxes, moonlit pinecones, sawdust dolls, plush bears, birdhouse clocks, baseball bats, old gramophones playing personal Pet Sounds or any of our dearest memories or ephemeral thoughts that have many times traversed the firmament of our mental screen, resting therein incarnated as tangible items. Some of them are fresh and new and some of them are covered by dust and have not been brought to the surface of the sea of our memory in a long, long time. Yet, what we all must do is live by offering a subtle, implicit invitation to this magic cellar of our hearts with every move, act and gracious smile of ours. For, opening the petals of our hearts instead of closing them and enwrapping ourselves in hateful feelings and blind and arrogant ignorance is the way to live blissfully, with eyes in full bloom of an eternal, childish curiosity that sends rays of sunlight of spirit onto anything that comes to the view of our attention, sprinkling stardust of divine grace and inconspicuously blessing it thereby. Every judgment that we make ought to be an even more beautiful question than the one that preceded the observation that led to the given judgment. If this sounds recursive, then how about my friend Ralf Herber's inversion of Juvenal's *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes* and a comment, "Mission has always been my mission", spinning our thoughts in a circle and impelling us to understand that being on the road, remaining an eternal explorer for life, a questioner rather than a lofty mister know-it-all that locks the doors of curiosity and shuts the gate of human wonder on all possible occasions is the way to attain complete missionary happiness, though never losing out of sight that questioning the questions and questioning the questioning of the questions and so forth may eventually smear the entire night sky under which we spin and settle our views on a single star of thought, perhaps the most beautiful of them all? Hence, "always a more beautiful question to those who ask a beautiful question"<sup>1659</sup>, as Gregory Bateson said once, showing us the true guiding lights for an inspiring education of the worldly souls. Thus, instead of offering fixed answers and conclusions and locking up the doors that lead to the secret sources of the genuine curiosity that illuminates the magical, starry constellations within our being with its delightful sparkles and which only hearts of divine explorers can glimpse, we should open, open and open human eyes, the gates to divine wonder, and spin them from the focus on answers to the earliest beginnings and the foundations of questions that keep them open, all until they make a full circle and catch sight of the wonderful rainbow that ceaselessly rests on the skies of cosmic minds and utter a resplendent Ah that instantly lifts our heart to the heavens above. To enlighteningly conclude is to prelude, as I have loved to say, while pointing at the beauty of longing, dreaming, searching and wondering rather than to that of owning, knowing-it-all and ignorantly closing the doors in life, when needed is opening them to let the sunshiny spirit of eternal godliness in full bloom and luster in. Which is the context in which I am free to repeat the words that end St. Augustine's Confessions, in their form somewhat reminiscent of this array of my SF Passages of Passion: "And what man can teach man to understand this? or what Angel, an Angel? or what Angel, a man? Let it be asked of Thee, sought in Thee, knocked for at Thee; so, so shall it be received, so shall it be found, so shall it be opened. Amen"<sup>1660</sup>.

Just as these words of St. Augustine take us back to the wonderment he expressed at the very beginning of his principal work, claiming that the mysteries of God that permeate every detail of the world are unknowable by the feeble mind of man<sup>1661</sup>, we, too, are flown back in our

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<sup>1659</sup> See Gregory Bateson's *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity*, Hampton Press, Cresskill, NJ (1979).

<sup>1660</sup> See Saint Augustine's *Confessions*, Simon & Brown, Hollywood, FL (AD 398), pp. 282.

<sup>1661</sup> *Ibid.*, Book I, pp. 4 - 21.

fancy, all the way to the beginning of our eloquent descanting on divine themes impressed on the pages of this book, to realize that it was the dialogue between the human mind and heavenly Nature seen by those very human eyes of St. Augustine that comprised the centerpiece of his worldviews, the same dialogue that the Way of Love aims at reviving at each and every moment of our conscious existence.

Hence, it is through incessantly opening ourselves and letting our thoughts, ideas and prayers fly freely, like birds across the worldly skies, instead of selfishly keeping them confined within the cages of our mind that we unbolt its steely gates and release the inner shine of our spirit to the world. If we close our eyes and try to visualize our aura following such an erasure of the clouds of thoughts that blocked the view of the sun of the soul, we may see its becoming saintly light, scintillating and shiny. Giving away the alms of beautiful insights and energy that we have kept within, so as to make us “poor in spirit” thereby, knowing that somewhere behind the horizon the doors to the kingdom of Heaven open with each little pearl of thought that we scatter in the wind, holds the key to attaining ultimate happiness in life. To send all our thoughts like white doves into the air, while we remain blissfully light and juvenily movable is a blessing in a world which the Little Prince’s eyes of the modern day may see as a sad procession of travelers through a desert. Tired and spiritually thirsty, they have a seat by the road every now and then to take a rest from the heavy burden they carry with themselves, silently hoping for other people’s help, while others ignorantly, just as they, themselves, would have done, walk by, being overly preoccupied with their own burdens of ego, thoughts, memories and material possessions. Unlike them, the enlightened spacey travelers, such as our Little Prince, ready to incessantly hop from one planet of human eyes onto another, driven by Wonder and Love, curiosity and empathy, shove away all the things that these ordinary passengers are being attached to and thus gain the ability to transform their stony humaneness into angelic flights of vitality, fanciness and, more than anything, outbursts of Wonder and Love, whose seeds then become scattered all throughout the arrays of cosmic hearts that surround them. Then we can remind ourselves of Lao-Tzu’s words with which he closed the monumental ethical teaching of Tao-Te-Xing: “The sage does not accumulate (for himself). The more that he expends for others, the more does he possess of his own; the more that he gives to others, the more does he have himself” (Tao-Te-Xing LXXXI). Not far from these words fall those of Juliet Capulet, reverberating in rapture from an ornate Verona balcony and inspiring many a Romeo of this world: “My bounty is as boundless as the sea, my love as deep; the more I give to thee, the more I have, for both are infinite” (Act II, Scene II). Such may also oftentimes be the nature of our spirits – the less clouds of thoughts gather over the sun of our soul, the brighter it will shine. After all, if you ask me why I write, I may offer you a simple answer along the line of the merits of erasing our thoughts: “It may be because I love to keep the space of my mind as clear as the wild blue yonder, yanking one cloud of thought here and another one there and making them land altogether in raindrops of words onto papers and screens of some faraway lands. In such a way, I remain free and light as a bird on a translucent sky, but also ready to recognize any little cloud that shyly peeks in the distant sky, a cirrus or a mother-of-pearl, and make a precious thought out of it”.

Someone pointed my attention once to the fact that humans have a tendency to keep only pleasant and blissful memories with them and forget those associated with painful and stressful events. The same can be said for my books. I made them a storage space for thoughts that have brought bliss to my mind. In spite of many artists who believe that their arts are meant to capture the despairing feelings and insights of theirs and in such a way liberate them from their terror,

my approach is different. I incessantly move the trains of my thoughts in the direction of purifying the space of my mind and making it childishly simple and fanciful and yet profoundly elegant, delicate and beautiful. But then, as I know that even this enlightening train of thoughts has to go and be impressed onto something permanent for others to find and take pleasure in, I let it fly out of the space of my mind and turn into a starry train of words on this screen. In that sense, the writing experience of mine is in many respects equal to a creative prayer of a kind, during which wretched daily thoughts that taint the mirror of my soul are relinquished for the sake of giving rise to light and angelic visions in the space of my mind that then turns into nothing but a blissful summery seascape at sunset.

I have always thought of human memory as of a carousel of a kind, wherein recollection of one thing implies the need to spin the merry-go-around of our memory and arrive at multiple other flashes of memorized impressions along the way, as they all appear to be connected to each other, forming a vivid and colorful circle in the end. Jorge Luis Borges once told a story about his father's view of the memories – they resemble coins, and each time one recollects a memory it is like placing another, newly formed coin on top of the old one, gradually making the recollection process partly faithfully repetitive, but partly creative and inventive every time it occurs. Modern research has indeed shown that our memorized impressions become modified over time, during their active recollection and over and over again drawing anew upon the canvas of our mind, thus remotely confirming the inherent illusionism of the act of reminiscing as well as of any reproduction of historic events stored in the hallways of our memory; that is, as Juliana told Frank in David Cronenberg's *Brood*, "Thirty seconds after you're born you have a past and sixty seconds after that you begin to lie about it", willingly or unwillingly. This inescapable reconstruction of memories during each retrieval of theirs accounts for the fact that about a half of each one of our memories does not anymore faithfully represent the real-life impressions that they correspond to<sup>1662</sup>. It may have happened to some of us that we were transformed from greatest friends into worst enemies or *vice versa* in certain people's heads even though we did not interact with them at all during the given periods of time. We, however, still lived in constantly refreshing and reviving memories of theirs where our qualities were incessantly crafted anew. Being aware of this evanescent nature of human impressions, there is an incessant need in me to capture these ideas and insights that like butterflies fly across the meadows of my mind into nets and show their beautifulness to the world before they fade away or turn into something different, maybe even not as impressive and chaste as they were, influenced by some newly formed and constantly changing and evolving me. For, oftentimes it is the purity of our spirits, imperceptible to us because it lies at the very foundations of who we are, that defines the invisible waves of beauty that crash in-between the lines of words that we write. This is one more reason why I call for beautifying the space of our mind through cultivating meditative and prayerful devotion of our beings before the writing process begins. This meditative emptiness that opens the space for the intuitive connection with the divine has to fill one hemisphere of our mind whereas the other one is busy shuffling words and finding best combinations thereof that reflect the ideas that we try to represent therewith. Finally, there will be a time when we realize that these meditative foundations, the hidden roots in the divine soil in the fields of our mind, are those that define the true beauty of our words and deeds besides merely the meanings that they display on the surface of things, the beauty that makes the angels and gods smile as they watch us from the Heavens above.

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<sup>1662</sup> This is according to Loren Frank, a UCSF neuroscientist, and his presentation at a symposium honoring J. Michael Bishop and entitled *Critical Unsolved Problems in Medicine*, June 7, 2010.

In fact, in parallel with the paradigm shift shaking at this very moment the foundations of cognitive science, which has finally come to acknowledge that the eye and other sensory organs, including mind as a whole, are not analogous to cameras that passively detect the features of the outer world, but are more similar to the way ancient Greeks envisaged human eyes, as beacons that illuminate reality with whatever the shades and nuances emerge from the insides of ourselves, an impetus has become ever stronger to accept the fallacies of objectivism and agree to the validity of the constructivist models of perception<sup>1663</sup>. What this momentous phase transition will undoubtedly reinstate is awareness that our thoughts are the weavers of our destiny to a far greater extent than it has been allowed in the deterministic and objectivistic worldviews that have been dominant in our sciences and our understanding of reality from the age of Enlightenment onwards and that have become so firmly impressed in our cognitive schemes that expelling and substituting them with the co-creational model, a middle ground between the extremes of solipsistic constructivism and objective realism, would present a daunting task that will preoccupy many generations of humanity to come. In the course of its fulfillment, the words ascribed to the bestselling writer, Louise Hay, would be seen as increasingly naturally evident: “Most of us have learned to view our thoughts as a reflection of the outside world, a reflection of what is happening to us. But what if that’s not how the Universe works? What if you are creating the story of your life with the very thought you are thinking now? Then, perhaps, if we are willing to change the way we think, wondrous new possibilities would begin to reveal themselves to us”<sup>1664</sup>. And so, I stick carefully to the message of Swami Sivananda who urged us to firstly erase all of our thoughts and then cultivate only those that enlighten our being from its very core. We may all be aware of how blissful and light thoughts that resemble birds of paradise flying across the bright meditative sky of our mind make our entire body light and juvenile in the long run, whereas gloomy and gruesome thoughts permeated by hatred, greed, jealousy and destruction tend to make us feel weary and noxious. This is why the very Bible has suggested that “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Philippians 4:8). Hence, if we find ourselves with spirit shrunken down by the force of the emotions of hate, greed and jealousy into a dark, spiky bubble, we should know that that is how Nature designed the world, making sure that such emotions are not released to the world in a far-stretching manner. Instead, only when we feel in harmony with the world around us, with every single object that we could touch or lean to and every distant star or cloud in the sky, with tops of the buildings and people, people, people, when sweet calmness washes over our heart, sending shivers of starry grace through us, we may feel how our spirit expands, as if engaging in strange and mysterious communication with the whole wide world and even the distant ET universes. If we were to watch the world through the binoculars of one such blissful mindset, while shedding stardust of divine grace on creatures around us, all that we do will open enlightening roads in front of other people’s feet. According to my beliefs, each and every illness that strikes humanity has its roots in the minds and hearts of the suffering creatures. If we lived with mind pervaded with a blissful solar energy directed towards enlightening the world with the beauty divine, the world as a whole would spontaneously heal itself. Brilliant thoughts and the meditative mind clear of all the clouds that darken the bliss of the Sun of one’s spirit thus

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<sup>1663</sup> See, for example, David Eagleman’s *Incognito: The Secret Lives of the Brain*, Vintage Books, New York, NY (2011).

<sup>1664</sup> *Watch You Can Heal Your Life, The Movie, Expanded Version* directed by Michael Goorjian (2007).

sometimes seem to me as if helping the tree of human knowledge thrive with the precious sunlight that it delivers thereto. After all, our mind is our strongest weapon and, like all other weapons, it can be used for dual purposes: to improve the state of the world or to degrade and debase it. Powerful flights of imagination could thus be applied to elevate our beings to more sublime reigns, but, if uncontrolled, they could also be used to dump us into the soggy marshlands of desperation all filled with the alligators of hatred and jealousy. “If the mind dwells continually upon one train of thought, a groove is formed into which the thought-force runs automatically”; thus says Swami Sivananda in his book *Thought-Power*, as well as that “fewer the thoughts, greater the peace. Remember this always... Every thought that is reduced adds strength and peace to the mind. Reduction of even one thought will give mental strength and peace of mind”<sup>1665</sup>. So, by eradicating all of the thoughts that frequently swoosh through the air of one’s mind like scary phantoms, one attains a peace of mind, settling down the wild and uncontrolled streams of the sea of one’s spirit, after which the second step may begin. It is the one where I personally remind myself of the message of Hermes Trismegistus, telling us that what is above must be below and what is below must be above for the operation of the Sun, of genuine One to be accomplished. Then, the petals of one’s mind and heart may freely open, all until a sense of oneness with the whole wide world and each one of its details takes over our whole spirit. Then, we may feel as if our mind has turned into an open cup, an inverse pyramid of light with its apex right where the third eye of ours is positioned, incessantly exchanging energy that resembles a sunlight of love in which starry twinkles of graceful wonder shimmer and little mermaids float between our self and the vast, omnipresent and infinitely extending divine substratum of reality. With such an empty-minded sense of oneness with the entire world, even the silent tapping of a drum will bring enlightening sounds to a song, which is the art that I have mastered well while playing in the band, *Silence by a Crescent Star*, long time ago. Hence, I let my spirit be guided by the mantra of ONE, of acting in oneness with my whole body and the entire Universe that beats with wonderful music in each and every one of its details. For, the more egotistic and selfishly oriented our thoughts are, the narrower the aura of our mindfulness will be, whereas, on the other hand, spreading the rays of our attentiveness further and further away, beyond the corners of the room and the ends of the streets and the borders of the city and the most distant horizons and into the bluish starry sky, grasping each twinkling star on the way, goes in parallel with filling ourselves with the spirit of genuine oneness that secretly breathes waves of ultimate wisdom into each move of ours. Also, each worldly detail is like the base of a mystical pyramid, offering us the way to climb to the top of Nature and glimpse the divine creation in its full bliss, irrespective of how seamy or muddy these bases from which our climbs begin may seem. By following such a route of liberating all the thoughts of ours into the worldly airs, regardless of whether they are as beautiful as white doves of peace or as malicious as the flying phantoms of death, and unhooking ourselves from all the attachments to the physical features of ours and of the world as we know it, we live up to R.E.M.’s ideal of *Fall to Climb*, of knowing that the ascents to the truest stars, the stars of spirit are reserved only to those who say to themselves that tender “someone has to take the fall, why not me”<sup>1666</sup>, of walking through life like Theo playing tag on a playground structure by saving everyone from his tags and wishing to

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<sup>1665</sup> See Swami Sivananda’s *Thought-Power*, The Divine Life Society, Uttar Pradesh, Himalayas, India, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition (1996).

<sup>1666</sup> Listen to R.E.M.’s *Falls to Climb on Up*, Warner Bros (1998).

remain the inferior tagger for as long as the Earth orbits the Sun<sup>1667</sup>, of sacrificially erasing ourselves until we realize that we have become it all – one with the whole creation. For, “except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24). And after all, not only should we scatter our thoughts that buzz around the atria of our mind in the air, all until the state of pure meditative oneness is reached, but we should equally give all that we have in terms of our energies and material possessions to the world, knowing that “blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). Likewise, at one point in our life we realize that only after we start losing precious things in life, our acts, be it delivering lectures on a big stage or handing a flower to a saddened soul sitting despondently on a side of the road, begin to shine with winsome beauty, celestial and utterly magical. All moves and words of ours then become magically liberated of jerky and jittery anxiousness and filled with sparkles of a starry grace. Lest we become a shelled essence of shyness, creatively cocooned under the inward pull of self-centered fears, we ought to open the petals of our heart to all the rains of sadness present in this world, knowing that only the one who accepts the sins of the world upon oneself can become the king of the world (Tao-Te-Xing LXXVIII). Hence the message that Banksy wished to convey when he stenciled a girl on the southern corner of North Rampart and Kerlerec in New Orleans, underneath a Drop-In Center sign and a broken roof that was the home to two pigeons when I stood under it, holding an umbrella under which it rained. As this dreamy girl, with gazes resting on the nearby clouds, levitating a foot above the ground, opens the palm of her right hand and reaches out to check if it rains, she realizes that it rains under the umbrella, not out of it, and her open palm becomes a sign in favor of the Christian tenet that only an open heart, a heart that gives more than it has, can protect one from the ills of this world. Only in such a way can we flourish into a flower of heavenly Love in this world; only by letting love fly away from our heart, like the girl depicted in another one of Banksy’s graffiti, in the South Bank of London, releasing the thin strand tied to a balloon in the shape of the heart, becoming ever poorer in spirit with every passing moment of life and ever closer to the kingdom of heaven thereby, can we develop into a godly emanation of love and ethereal beauties that heal the earthly hearts with every flap of the angelic wings of our body and mind, freely surfing on the divine waves that permeate it all. “Little light, begin to bleed, begin to breath, begin to speak”<sup>1668</sup>, Kate Bush sang in the course of the soul-soaring finale of her landmark 1980s collage of songs, Hounds of Love, as if recollecting the Biblical message that tells us how “he that pricketh the eye will make tears to fall: and he that pricketh the heart maketh it to shew her knowledge” (Sirach 22:19), and bringing to mind the images of rainbows appearing on the sky only when light travels through the droplets of saddening rain and of pearls formed only after a bothersome particle of dust falls into an oyster’s interior. From Moses and Israelis exiled from Egypt to the Christ deciding to lose the world but gain the mountainous spiritual powers to America, the land of the immigrant, who has sacrificed his own homeland to sail into a great treasure-bearing adventure, to myself roaming as a refugee through

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<sup>1667</sup> If I could gaze at one scene for even longer than it takes the Sun to swallow the Earth in its flames, may it be this of Theo and Evangelina and little Johnny playing tag in Arrowhead Park, with Theo pretending not to be able to reach Johnny, who is hanging on the top of a pole, and then calling Evangelina over and over again to jump back on the structure, where she is saved from the verbal tags achieved by the tagger’s howling a secret code. Oh, the happiness on Theo’s face when she finally understood the point and stepped on the structure and had Theo note, “My sister is on the structure now and I cannot tag her anymore”, and continue to run around in sweet circles of putting oneself at the last place so as to be the first, the firstest of them all under this canopy of falling leaves and interfering storm signals coming from the stars.

<sup>1668</sup> Listen to Kate Bush’s The Morning Fog on Hounds of Love, EMI (1985).

the translucent streets of the Netherlands and dreaming of breaking out of the closed egg of fear, insecurity and self-centeredness and emerging to the world as a paradisiacal bird of spirit, to all the heartbroken creatures who repent over losing beloved beings and things of this world and yet at the same time giving a vow deep in their heart, with tears in their eyes, that they will forever and ever live so as to deliver celestial beauties to the world, we have had the message of the Little Prince, whispered while wondrously gazing up into the night sky, confirmed: “The stars are beautiful because of a flower one cannot see”<sup>1669</sup>. In the end, with the metaphor of the Way seen as deeply ingrained in every aspect of the living world, we could conclude that the simultaneous connectedness and separateness that its symbolism stands for, as paradoxical in its nature as it can be, brings us over to the insight that the origins of the entire existence are inextricably tied to a sense of being on the road, resting in the midst of a crucifying paradox and adventurously wandering after ways of being that will soar back us to the heavenly heights and divine grace which we had fallen from, fulfilling our mission on Earth thereby. In essence, whenever we engage ourselves in a creative act, we become an epitome of a Biblical refugee on a quest for the Promised Land, a creature bravely set off to journey in ways that resemble the Little Prince’s hopping from one planet of human worldviews to another and trying to empathize with them all; or, as pointed out by the Irish writer, John Holten, “When we pick up a book, we imagine a world we’re all foreigners, even just for a day. I think that’s my dream: a day when everyone is a foreigner, or feels like one, because conversely the word would then lose its signification”<sup>1670</sup>. In essence, when impeccably fancy landscapes and sci-fi cities dwelling in our soul undergo shaking, turning and irretrievable losses, developing over time into crumbly pillars of Pompeii, with a sad sun setting in the distance, an epitome of Love among the Ruins, the road towards utmost exhibitions of creativity open in front of us, especially if the skies above them remain gloriously optimistic and radiant, producing a clash of diametrical opposites in us that is always the key to stellar ways of being.

Ever since the Christ shed mystical guidelines for living in the most fulfilling fashion imaginable by teaching his disciples that “he that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 10:39), we have had a guiding star shining constantly in front of our minds to keep us aware of the necessity to sacrifice something precious whenever we are about to embark on a treasure-seeking journey in life. “Sinks whoever raises the great stones”, noted the Greek poet, George Seferis<sup>1671</sup>, necessitating the rise of awareness that walls, citadels and whole worlds must be crushed inside and around one if space for the emergence of the shine of one’s soul is to be opened up. In the times when the Beatles were introduced to the Oriental philosophies and came up with the apathetic call to “let it be”<sup>1672</sup>, at the same time approaching the end of their existence as an ensemble, the Stones replied with a “let it bleed”<sup>1673</sup>, subtly dropping a hint that only when we let our spirit melt into the world with compassionate sadness and melancholy do we open channels for its celestial shine to arrive at the surface of our being. An impression is that the enchantingly wheel-moving Leona Lewis’ 2008 megahit<sup>1674</sup>, slowly building to its bursting climax and bringing to mind an image of a Brian Wilson sitting in

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<sup>1669</sup> See Antoine de Saint-Exupery's *The Little Prince*, Mladost, Zagreb, Croatia (1943).

<sup>1670</sup> See *Writing a New Realism*: John Holten interviewed by Karl Whitney, 3:AM Magazine; available at [www.3ammagazine.com/3am/writing-a-new-realism/](http://www.3ammagazine.com/3am/writing-a-new-realism/) (2011).

<sup>1671</sup> See George Seferis’ *Santorini*, In: *Collected Poems, 1924 – 1955, Bilingual Edition*, Translated by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, NJ (1967), pp. 65.

<sup>1672</sup> Listen to the Beatles’ *Let It Be* on *Let It Be*, Apple, (1969).

<sup>1673</sup> Listen to the Rolling Stones’ *Let It Bleed* on *Let It Bleed*, Decca (1969).

<sup>1674</sup> Listen to Leona Lewis’ *Bleeding Love*, Syco (2007).

a car and smashing all things around him and burning up a studio after hearing the ascending melodic paths of Be My Baby by the Ronettes<sup>1675</sup>, all enwrapped in Phil Spector's magical wall of sound, and She's Leaving Home by the Beatles<sup>1676</sup>, respectively, has been around to simply reiterate the relevancy of the message of "bleeding with love" for the spiritually lame and indifferent mindsets of the modern times. Emerging from the dark topiary alleys of our mind is then the image of the petite Icelandic goddess holding a ball of light in her arms and singing aloud from the top of her chests how she is "a fountain of blood in the shape of a girl"<sup>1677</sup>, bleeding all over the place with her emotions, visions and memories and strikingly coloring the world with the concoction of gloomy depression and exhilarating joy, bitter melancholy and effervescent cheerfulness, darkness and light that brews within herself like the interior of an erupting volcano. For, as I have always claimed, eternal sadness and cosmic joy are blended in hearts of the most elevated spirits in this world. Moreover, since Lao-Tzu pointed out in his monumental book that "infelicity is the path to felicity, and felicity is concealment of infelicity" (Tao-Te-Xing LVIII), we can be sure that these two essential traits of a saintly mind, the sparkling starry joy and a sad oceanic melancholy, feed each other similarly to the way in which black and white flow in and out of the core of each other on the famous Tai-Chi-Tu diagram. "In order to be funny, you need to think sad first"<sup>1678</sup>, the French playwright, Georges Feydeau is noted to have said, whereas I claim that in order to experience the godliest of compassions, the one that cheers the wilted hearts of the world with its elated shine, the roads stretched before one's spirit must be paved with cosmic joy. Likewise, while "let it be" motto could be in its best light seen as devotional acceptance of the way of Nature as permeating all details of the reality and guiding their development, "let it bleed" could be taken as a message symbolizing the creative drive that explodes from the other side of co-creation of our experiences, that is, from the core of human spirit. In that sense, the tenets of the co-creational thesis could be said to lie dormant in this complementariness between the two cult messages proclaimed by the Beatles and the Stones – one touching the beliefs in the heart of Nature as pervading it all, and the other pointing at the heart of man in which sources of divine creativity, tightly linked with our bleeding to the world in emanations of entwined sadness and joy, are found.

The prehistoric man has been mostly in contact with things of natural origins, whose change was beyond his control and which he could therefore only pray to and direct the bright rays of hope onto; hence, unassailable beliefs in gods as sole guides of the evolution of his experience thrived in his head. In contrast, as Ivan Illich noticed in his anarchistic treatise on deschooling society<sup>1679</sup>, the modern urban kids rarely get to touch anything in their surrounding that is not manmade. Indeed, kids and grownups who had a chance to get lost in an endless corn field on an Indian summer day, caressing them and being moved by the clattery hum of corn stalks and ears under the translucent blue sky more than or at least as much as by the flashy neon beams and dire beats of The Edge of Glory by Lady Gaga or any other spacey Top 40 hit played in a colorful strobe-lighted discotheque, or who have found fulfillment for their soulful seeking of the answer to the great secrets of life in hugging trees, sprinkling them with the geysers of love implanted in their hearts and letting the waves of the ocean of love in their eyes move by

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<sup>1675</sup> Listen to the Ronettes' Be My Baby, Philles Records (1963).

<sup>1676</sup> Listen to the Beatles' She's Leaving Home on Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, Parlophone (1967).

<sup>1677</sup> Listen to Björk's Bachelorette on Homogenic, One Little Indian (1997).

<sup>1678</sup> Watch The Story of Film: An Odyssey, Season 1, Episode 9, directed by Mark Cousins (2011).

<sup>1679</sup> See Ivan Illich's Deschooling Society, available at [http://ournature.org/~novembre/illich/1970\\_deschooling.html](http://ournature.org/~novembre/illich/1970_deschooling.html) (1970).

amiably gazing at them, are an indisputable rarity on the pavements of the modern city. Rather, like Flanagan and Jordan sitting in an outdoor bar in Jamaica, a jewel of natural beauties, in the movie *Cocktail*, wondering over straws, ashtrays and cocktail umbrellas on their table and concluding that they are surrounded by millionaires, when the sea, the trees, the eyes of each other and the infinite depths of the human souls surrounding them from all sides craved to be discovered and shed shines of some similarly insightful wonder thereon, so is the majority of the inhabitants of our planet tuned to find value only in the manmade, while ignoring its indivisibility from the natural. Still, we can argue that the more we get into habit of talking to trees and other plants, the more we strive to make friends with all life around us by means of spiritual vibration emitted from the kernel of our soul, the more we engage in genial communication with inanimate objects and atoms and molecules that dance inside of them using the language of the heart, the greater and more impermeable to malicious arrows flying from all sides will the invisible spiritual shield that Nature builds around us to protect us with on our ways be. Naturally, the human mind has thus found itself on the opposite, anthropomorphic extreme of the balance between creativeness of human and natural origins depicted by means of the co-creational thesis. According to the latter concept, the human mind and the environment around it are involved in a feedback loop with one another at all times and when the world appears to be more of a product of environmental factors than of human creativeness, as it was in the eyes of the prehistoric man, the evolution of worldly events tends to be seen as in control of either some transcendent gods or an atheistic chaos. In contrast, in the modern times when most objects that we are in touch with on daily basis have been crafted by human hands, we find ourselves on the opposite extreme: namely, the path of our evolution becomes inconspicuously steered on by means of the collective mind of humanity itself. Although this pervasive anthropomorphism justifies the Buberian religious stance, which tentatively equalizes God with Thou<sup>1680</sup>, more than ever in the history of Earth and humanity, it carries its own hidden dangers as well. For one, the modern man estranged himself from his instincts and the voices of gods that echo all across his insides, having become the man of men, so to speak, not being the man of gods anymore. Led astray from the Way of Love, he became enslaved by the ties of submission to the society, letting his divine creative potentials wither at the price of acceptance by the social standards, standards that will have always appear scandalously backward from any future perspective. Another example concerns the poisonously individualistic mindsets that emerged from the competitively capitalistic culture of authentic Americanism: they have modified their environments all until they began to resemble giant suburban sprawls where attention was paid mainly to private property and almost none to the projection of public spaces, such as those that adorn archetypical European cities, finding themselves in a vicious vortex wherein cocooning of the spirit has led to ever greater levels of its enfoldment and ever more pronounced senses of alienation that eat the American culture from its core. Examples such as these, wherein the deepest cravings and aspirations of minds constituting a given cultural era can be shown to draw the evolutionary road in front of the human minds *per se* are endlessly abundant, of course, despite the fact that at the end of the day it is always Nature, herself, who holds the mirror of values before our blinded minds and guides us thereby on a learning path, crooked and sinusoidal because of our inevitable learning on mistakes. Of course, from the point of view of the fulfillment of the cup of divine light held by our spirit, it matters little whether we occupy extreme anthropocentric stances by elevating humans to stars and considering Nature to be wholly dead and deprived of gods, or stand firmly on the pantheistic side by passionately

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<sup>1680</sup> See Martin Buber's *I and Thou*, Touchstone, New York, NY (1923).

worshipping Nature and being coldly repelled by human spirits, for in both cases this cup will not be filled to its full capacity. This viewpoint was neatly illustrated by the fact that, as noticed by David Sosa in the movie *Waking Life*, many insolvable philosophical problems that existed in the ancient times colored by godly presence in each corner of the world and the human role in shaping it reduced to a minimum are found to exist in the modern, human-centered world where religious senses have been systematically suffocated in the cultural haze through which we roam. One of these problems is that of free will, which St. Augustine spent a lifetime trying to untangle and which gradually reemerged in the philosophical realm with the establishment of the deterministic machinery, be it Laplace's demon or the more sophisticated atomistic imagery of modern physics, as the dominant metaphor of physical reality. Yet, until the basis for our understanding of life is found in the concept of co-creation that acknowledges a balance between the creativity of man and Nature in outlining the form in which the world of our experience manifests itself, such inconsistencies and insolvable paradoxes will incessantly reign.

What this perspective is to ideally present at this very moment in space and time is essentially an impetus for people who have gotten used to see natural objects as inert and inanimate to undergo a colossal change of the heart and begin to see them as pervaded with divine intelligence, as things that flourish in direct proportion with the ampleness of care, patience and imaginativeness with which we graze them with the rays of our attention. When children, these little guiding stars coexisting with the dead astral bodies that adults resemble, wave not only at people, buses and birds, but also at manholes, leaves on the trees, cardboard numbers, signposts and cracks in the pavement, as two-year-old Theo had done, it is a sign that the primordial being, the point of origin and the ultimate destination in our quest for the Paradise Lost, sees the divine spirit in things animate and inanimate alike. Yet, how we have come to create a culture in which the inability to relate to inanimate things as if they were alive is seen as the sign of complete development, not the sign of underdevelopment, as insisted on by the protagonist of Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's *Memories of Underdevelopment*, is a perpetual enigma in the microcosm of my thoughts. By abandoning the precious channels of communication with natural objects and living things, by never talking to trees, flowers, bees and stars, people have, in fact, forgotten what natural things, which all of us are, ought to appear and act like. Grab a piece of tree bark or a flower and you will notice that they all crumble under our touch, as if bleeding with their essence and giving their hearts to us. Likewise, angelic fragileness and honest softness of our spirits is what makes us live up to the immense natural potentials ingrained in us, as opposed to the stable and rigid, suntanned and perfectly sculptured appearance inspired by the world of "perfect" manmade materials that we are surrounded with that most modern people tend to attain. Knowing this, I hope that the day will come when I, now standing at the bottom of a Corcovado mountain of my spirit and looking up, towards the top where the Christ with his arms spread to the world awaits, will shake the ground with the beauty of my deeds and make this mountain crumble to the sea. Like the Christ on its top, I will thence plunge into the sea of spirit, losing my individual essence and becoming One with the entire world, living each and every moment for the sake of bringing enlightening rays of happiness and gleams of neon-like wonder into other people's eyes.

Losing things of material value thus equals streaming on the road towards gaining great treasures of spirit. When graceful Noriko, "one of those actresses simply blessed with IT - call it presence or style, but she has it in spades"<sup>1681</sup>, as Dan Schneider put it, opens the cedar box of

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<sup>1681</sup> See Dan Schneider's DVD Review of *Tokyo Story*, available at <http://www.cosmoetica.com/B492-DES422.htm> (2006).

her heart in front of her chaste sister-in-law in Yasujiro Ozu's Tokyo Story, lets treasures of precious insight joyously jump out and smilingly says, "Yes, life is all about disappointment", she secretly points out that such senses of loss need not provoke spiteful resignations in us, but can, in fact, foster our flights to ever greater skies of freedom and happiness. Her denoting each and every life story as ultimately a sad and a pitiful one is meant to overcome the carnal belligerence of our nature and instill in us a sense of hush peacefulness, prayerful and deeply reverential. With one such release of the mental weights of condemnatory thoughts and the adoption of a light and haloed mindset, free from any malicious judgments, quite like the one idealized by the Lord Krishna in the epic of Bhagavad-Gita, one's spirit becomes bound to soar high into the skies of the most blissful and heavenly feelings and insights imaginable. And truly, as we grow old, the aim is to overcome the burdens of an old age that drag us down with ever lighter and sublime flights of spirit. When I composed Dreaming of 80s, one of the monumental songs of my musical oeuvre, before I renamed it to Eternal Flame I had had a dual metaphor that 80s symbolize in mind: on one hand, the song palpitates with the melancholy of looking at life from clement 80-year old eyes, while on the other hand it beats with the nostalgic and sunshiny harmonies that dominated the 1980s, the times of my childhood and the times of gently grazing the gates of Eden, so deeply memorable because of the optimism, of the dawn of computers and new technologies in every home, of scientific and economic prosperity, and of the maturity of the hippy and disco/sexual revolutions that they carried on their wings and that fueled their zeitgeist. The 1980s, themselves, was a decade flourishing with ambiguities; it was, for example, the decade wherein the obsession with healthy lifestyles was born, including Jane Fonda's aerobic TV shows and the Hollywoodization of yoga and other oriental philosophies, bringing forth the purity of the mind and the inner sunshine, but also setting grounds for today's collective worship of the temple of the body as if it was more sacred than the temple of the spirit, of the way, of the connection between I and Thou, let alone the idea of Thou in all its archetypal greatness, such as that immortalized in Smashing Pumpkins' Thirty-Three or Midlake's Balloon Maker<sup>1682</sup>. It was also the decade wherein the hippy quirkiness and the queerness of characters ala David Bowie or Grace Jones finally went mainstream, but also the one when the strivings to engage in bold experimentations with the form wound down and artists began to be rewarded by increasingly more commercial powers that be for renewing nothing but the clothes, the surfaces of their expressions, be they musical, cinematic, theatrical or literary. Idolizing the likes of Bertolt Brecht, Jean-Luc Godard, James Joyce or Miles Davis, the artist, who was up to that point brought up to believe that the revolutionization of the form, having marked the 20<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>1683</sup>, was a sole route to going down in history and reserving a place in the pantheon of a given art, thus became discouraged to experiment with the form and became the slave of high-

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<sup>1682</sup> "And you can make it last forever, you" and "come out to see the sun, you're all we've got" are two lines in the two respective songs that celebrate the beauty of You.

<sup>1683</sup> Still, everywhere and at all times, there will be a doubt over whether this innovation of the form, the invention of new language or the creation of a powerful emotional impetus through art is what is to be valued most highly in it. If the former prevails in significance, art threatens to turn itself into an intellectual endeavor and lose its soul in the process. But if the former prevails, then the pioneers, artists who have brought whole new languages to their arts, are threatened to be forgotten, as their place in the pantheon of the greatest artistic achievements will be occupied by their followers, the artists who were never inventive enough to build their own unique style, but who were skilled enough to use the already established forms to convey powerful emotions and touch people's hearts more profoundly than the pioneers did. Which matters most and whether rigorous historical, analytical perspectives at art are more important than the emotional heart and soul of it or *vice versa* is the question that will continue to perplex and haunt artists and art critics for ages to come.

tech fleshiness and superficial appeal, the shackles of which he has not liberated himself from to this very day. One year of this decade, 1984, is particularly illustrative of these ambiguities because it was the year when creative forces collided from so many angles, producing cultural milestones in various media, but it was also a very dark year in world politics, the one that saw the reelection of Ronald Reagan, the herald of the “new right”, the historic cuts in public expenditures on social programs<sup>1684</sup> and the peaking of the savings and loan fraud, which “would come to look like candy store shoplifting a generation on”<sup>1685</sup>, the election of the notorious progressive conservative, Brian Muloney as the prime minister of Canada, the election of the first far-right political group – led by Jean-Louis-Marie Le Pen - to the European parliament, and the coming down hard on trade unions during the infamous coal miners’ strike by Maggie Thatcher, reelected a year earlier, thereby fortifying the conservatives’ position in the seat of power in the United Kingdom until the end of the 1980s. It is no wonder, then, that this decade paved way not for a shinier era in music or film, but to relatively dark and depressing 1990s, the age of the druggy drum ‘n’ bass vibe, of the Bristolian trip hop melancholy and of sticky-haired teenage heroines lost and zombified in the dark and spooky Northwestern forest of grunge, the age wherein the enlightening glimmer of Britpop was but an ephemeral exception that proves the rule in question. And yet, all the time, I felt as if this era, with all the dialectical dichotomies intrinsic to it, like a pair of visionary rails posed side by side, would open up the way along which the locomotive of my spirit would stream forward. Notwithstanding my inability to judge on my success in transcribing this contrast into a musical format, it is this duality that I wished to have engrained in the sound of my Dreaming of 80s; that is, to deepen the beautiful visions that my childhood abounded with as I approach the old age and make my spirit ever more beautiful and ready for its divine final flight in joy and happiness is the aim that this song, made by me and Nature together, has whispered to me.

This all explains why when I am asked in the midst of extraordinarily sacrificial ordeals why, I may reply with the following words: “I have come to this planet not to live, but to die”, deep inside of myself firmly believing that there is no beauty like the beauty of dying, with the verses of the Moonlight Mile, “I am living to be dying by your side”<sup>1686</sup>, spreading their magic carpets for the flights of fanciful spiritedness all over the rooms of my heart. For, to relentlessly strive to eliminate one’s esteem in the eyes of the world, which are somehow at all times unable to recognize the most progressive values and ways of being in it, but look scornfully on them and try their best to eradicate them, is the mission to be followed by all enlightened creatures on this planet; for, only with these constant attempts to diminish our own value and, so to say, die in worldly eyes does our ascent to heavenly realms of being proceed. Finally, if one lives with goodness and honesty enlightening one’s heart, exhibiting the utmost outbursts of human creativeness, guided all life long by cravings not to egotistically dominate over others, but to selflessly spread the wings of angelic cocoons of shiny spirits from within the hearts of beloved creatures and then graciously ride off into the sunset, chances are that one will most probably not

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<sup>1684</sup> As historians have pointed out, the repercussions of this reactionary program were far-reaching because they were largely adopted by the Democrats when they won the elections in 1992: “President Reagan shifted US ideology further to the right by attacking labour unions and pushing market deregulation. Republicans had shown that this new conservatism was the only game in town, and after 12 years in the political wilderness, the Democrats would now follow the Republican lead”. Retrieved from <https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2017/the-people-vs-america/1980s.html> (2021).

<sup>1685</sup> See Geoff Pevere’s review of Listen to the City directed by Ron Mann (1984), Kanopy, retrieved from <https://www.kanopy.com/product/listen-city>.

<sup>1686</sup> Listen to the Rolling Stones’ Moonlight Mile on Sticky Fingers, Rolling Stones (1971).

become famous, adored and celebrated all over the planet, but forgotten, misunderstood by one's contemporaries and destined to die in poverty, though hopefully in beat with the conundrum coined by the renowned philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie: "He who dies rich dies disgraced"<sup>1687</sup>. For, as the Chinese proverb inscribed on a fortune cookie I opened on one of the last days of 2012 said, "It is nice to be remembered, but it is far better to be forgotten", ringing in accord with Calypso's offering Odysseus the gift of deathlessness at the cost of making him unknown and unremembered by the world and evoking the vision of a Taoist sage walking off into the sunset after his deeds are done, leaving no traces of his presence whatsoever and thus making the accomplishment of his mission immaculate. Plus, since Nature really "loves to hide", as Heraclitus deemed, teaching us divinity by never blatantly revealing the divine actor, herself, preferring the dance over the dancer and the journey over its goals, if we are indeed to live up to the premise of becoming a seamless copy of this ethereal goddess whose presence is literally everywhere, we might also have no other choice but to hide ourselves behind the scenes of social life. My native tradition, having in its center the life of my mother, a divine doer and the superbest storyteller, and expanding from there outwardly to embrace first the orbits of local street poets and philosophers - who'd rather let their words fly into the worldly skies, like white doves released to liberty, than freeze them into forever static and unchangeable forms - and then the whole wide universe is, in fact, typified by one such finding ultimate satisfaction in playing beautiful mental melodies from the core one's being without ever craving to transcribe them into communicable forms that bring the room for recognition and glory. All of this combined explains why I have always heartily stayed away from the limelight, in any of the social realms, knowing all the while that only insofar as a star resides all alone in darkness can it deliver its lifesaving light to planets circling around it. After all, one could spend endless hours musing over the popular drawing of the statue of Rodin's "thinker", whom the French sculptor envisioned, accidentally or not, adorning the entrance to Dante's Hell with his presence, sitting still in a museum and attracting millions of worshippers, while next to it is an empty pedestal on which it says "doer", a constant reminder of the fact that should we decide to walk in the direction of making our spiritual journey more complete by allowing our transformation from a churner of blissful thoughts to performer of sacred deeds, we would simultaneously make steps that send us away from the pedestals of human attention where we could have been praised for our alleged greatness, something which would continue to belong, believe it or not, to talented and timely but rather incomplete mindsets that tend to resemble authentic trees of knowledge from afar, but are essentially mildews that naturally spring forth like mushrooms after rain from the spiritual soil of this planet watered with the rains of grief and compassion, an ambiguity touched upon by the brush of Salvador Dali in his legendary painting, *The Three Sphinxes of Bikini*. Conversely, distancing ourselves from the human limelight can be considered as a necessary precondition for accomplishing truly marvelous things in life, which would genuinely help generations of people on Earth to navigate their way through the forests of perplexities and, hopefully, find a way to the crystal clear coasts of eternally sunlit being and knowledge. That is, to be removed from seeking guidance in human criteria as to what constitutes the right path for us is to be set for the truly astral creative voyages in our head and heart. Henceforth, we could be sure that one of the first steps on our ascent to the heavenly realms of being belongs to realization that the divine justice and the world justice are millions of moonlight miles apart and that things, deeds and creatures celebrated on one scale could easily turn out to be disvalued and underappreciated on another. To uproot any cravings for recognition by the powers that be from

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<sup>1687</sup> See Arianna Huffington's *Third World America*, Crown Publishers, New York, NY (2010), pp. 233.

the soil of our spirit and accept that there is nothing to cry about this state of affairs is thus to be truly liberated from the chains of social norms and expectations that place a constant burden, a downward drag on the creative uplifts of our being in this world. And then, when we free ourselves from dependence on any social norms and from the drive to either consistently conform to or rebel against the mainstream standards and paradigmatic stances that abound all around us, and when the only voice to obey becomes the divine call ringing from within our soul, our angelic flights to freedom may begin, as we leave all the phony senses of achievement and terrestrial triumph far below our highflying spirit. For, in this world, wherein inscriptions on park benches are placed not in memory of old, slouched souls who sat on them and fed pigeons with the crumbs of bread bought with the last dimes in their pockets, but in remembrance of those who figured out the ways how to make tool out of a multitude of other people and profit thereupon, “triumphant is, as in all ideologies for masses, the flock, due to a greater specific weight of stupidity, while profiting are the creators of the flock”<sup>1688</sup>, that is, those who embody the spirit of the Grand Inquisitor, as an anonymous online commentator noticed, to which Mao Zedong portrayed in Nixon in China, the masterful opera composed by John Adams and written by Alice Goodman, anarchic and enwrapped in profound paradoxes, would concordantly utter, “First come founders, then profiteers”, as he retreats into darkness. And so must all spirits on their route to the stars plunge into darkness and find solace in barren landscapes of the mind, free from the buzz of the dreadfully lame, unimaginative and conformist humans enslaved to one another and dragged in togetherness like zombies towards ever deeper chasms in vortices, having their real-life analogues in the Pripayat Ferris Wheel of Chernobyl, the abandoned flinty houses of Craco, a town at the instep of the Apennine peninsula, or the skyways of Nara Dreamland, “desolation rows” in which they could hear afresh the guiding voice of Nature and be able to unambiguously communicate with it, before they emerge to the social daylight once again, this time with a torch of inextinguishable love in their hands, with which they will courageously approach the surrounding souls, touch the foundations of these very same flambeaus dimmed by the social fears in them and magically light them up. For, as in accordance with the Way of Love, the lonelier we feel, the more intense the outbursts of our empathic outreach to others will be, and *vice versa*: the more eruptive and emotional our expressions directed to the benefit of another are, the clearer the meditative path towards inner bliss will be. In this world, however, those who teach the growing spirits to daringly walk along the thread of the Way of Love by being rebelliously different and yet empathically the same, who resist to walk in the sheepish procession of timid followers in life, tend to be blatantly pushed off the main stage and into the darkness behind the curtains. Being shoved offstage and far from the limelight could, however, be seen as a natural balancing mechanism involving Mephistophelean forces that crave to commit malicious acts, but helplessly create conditions for the promotion of good<sup>1689</sup>, yielding what seems at first as an unfortunate twist of circumstances, but later turns out to be an incredibly lucky stumbling over a rock that opened a path, narrow and strait, as it has always been, walking on which will enkindle our spiritual starriness an arm-span more with every step we make. Consequently, it has been an incessant fate of humanity that the emptiest, the bubbliest and the most misleading voices are those that are heard loudest, whereas the quietest ones, inaudibly cocooned in the corners of the world turn out to be “still small voices” (Kings I 19:12) in which divine messages could be heard, if we only learn how to lean our ears and hearts onto

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<sup>1688</sup> See the comment by darky on the thread discussing pros and cons of the usage of Facebook, following an article entitled Do You Love Facebook available at [http://www.b92.net/zivot/komentari.php?nav\\_id=569353](http://www.b92.net/zivot/komentari.php?nav_id=569353) (2011).

<sup>1689</sup> See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s Faust, W. W. Norton & Co., New York, NY (1832).

these silent things of the world in which the greatest secrets of the Universe lie inscribed. As usual, trends observed as valid for individual organisms in interaction are applicable to social and ecological networks of relationships too; hence, we should not be surprised by the fact that the most affluent countries of the world throughout the past centuries were not those that might have treasured the greatest spiritual potential, but those that imposed their neocolonial ambitions to societies that lay beyond their borderlines, loudly and unscrupulously trumpeting beliefs in immaculateness of their governance and teaching not the blessings of anarchistic fosterage of independence of others, but presenting themselves in the light of saviors, who would then, however, turn into oppressors on whom the oppressed will eventually become helplessly dependent. Cultures that never aspired to conquer or exert their power over anyone, as, I am proud to notice, is exemplified by the history of my own little country and by my South Slavic predecessors who lived in leaderless communes<sup>1690</sup>, anarchistic and genuinely democratic, for centuries following their arrival at the Balkan Peninsula, while their western contemporaries relentlessly engaged in invasive wars on the wings of the sense of superiority and desire to rule over another, have, on the other hand, been predestined for permanent struggle in poverty and defense against various ruthless occupiers. Therefore, drawing on Walter Benjamin's idea that "there has never been a document of culture, which is not simultaneously one of barbarism"<sup>1691</sup>, a controversial Montenegrin columnist pointed out that "civilizations rest on barbarism: peace and comfort to those in their center imply hell for those on the periphery and outside of their limits, which is why civilization, along with the state as one of its greatest achievements, is a complete instrumentation of hypocrisy"<sup>1692</sup>, that is, of *riyā*, the greatest of all sins in the Sufi microcosm<sup>1693</sup>, refreshing our memory of how all the emanations of human power, from the reigning religious, economic and political institutions to individuals with the artificial aureole of authority, have arisen from the grounds of hardship, misery and egotistic desires to rule over others. For this reason, crèmes of any society have always reflected sheer superficiality, whereas the authentic carriers of its essence ought to be sought among its secret alleys and passageways. If we are in search of an example in favor of the fact that the nature of the evolution of the world is such that the most fabulous pathways for the evolution of humanity turn into narrow passages that often seem as blind alleys to a shallow observer, while those whose cores are rotten and who rely only on superficial appeal tend to broaden into boulevards and avenues that millions of dazzled souls will blindly follow, we need to look no further than the linguistic state of affairs in the greatly globalized world of the modern day. Namely, drawing on the ancient etymologic distinction between Slavs as people in command of the written word ("Slav" as a word is derived from "slovo", meaning "word") and Germanic people as comparatively illiterate ("German" in proto-Slavic is called "němьсь", which itself is derived from "němь", meaning "mute"), the fact that English language with its gruff and croaky vocal sounds, alongside the deformed "r" and barbarically sounding articles, relatively short alphabet, poor correspondence between the written

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<sup>1690</sup> See the Byzantine Emperor Maurice's Strategikon: Handbook of Byzantine Military Strategy (6<sup>th</sup> Century AD), edited and translated by George T. Dennis, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA (1984).

<sup>1691</sup> See Walter Benjamin's On the Concept of History, Creative Commons (1940), available at <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm> (1940).

<sup>1692</sup> See Andrej Nikolaidis' Cosmetic Decoration of a Political Monster, Politika (January 13, 2012); available at <http://www.politika.rs/rubrike/ostali-komentari/Sminkanje-politickog-monstruma.lt.html>.

<sup>1693</sup> See Annemarie Schimmel's Mystical Dimensions of Islam, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC (1975), pp. 108.

word and the spoken word<sup>1694</sup>, the necessary use of personal pronouns<sup>1695</sup> and overly simplistic, flat and crude natural intonation became the informal and official language of the planet, despite being far less aesthetic, onomatopoeic and orthographically phonemic compared to many other languages, including my native Serbo-Croatian<sup>1696</sup>, is a good example of how not necessarily the most beautiful and progressive paths branch out and become roads for humanity to follow. Rather, more often than not this role is reserved for the loudest and yet the emptiest and the most voracious ones that, remember, lead to abysses rather than exotic dreamlands, while the beautiful ones that conceal an infinite potential for the enrichment of the soul are time and again left to self-effacingly wind down on the sides of the road and vanish from the face of the Earth, though always leaving behind them spiritual seeds from which wonderful trees of knowledge will sprout, if discovered, watered and replanted onto soils of fresh and visionary human minds on a bright future day. Or, as Gregory Bateson noticed, “There seems to be something like a Gresham’s law of cultural evolution according to which the oversimplified ideas will always displace the sophisticated and the vulgar and hateful will always displace the beautiful. And yet the beautiful persists”<sup>1697</sup>. When the Novi Sad chansonnier, Đorđe Balašević, for example, observed apologetically in February 1998, during his first concert in Sarajevo after the Yugoslav civil war of the 1990s, seconds prior to the performance of his decade-old hit and a heartrending plea against the war, *Samo rata da ne bude*, that he had wished to amend the world with a song, but had apparently failed, he echoed the sentiment that the world’s greatest artists have nurtured inside them, realizing disappointingly how the worldly vulgarities eclipse the beautiful messages of arts and humanities time and again. However, like mysterious undercurrents, these messages, as per this variant of Gresham’s law proposed by Bateson, continue to journey in-between the delicate root hairs of our existence, changing the world in inconspicuously subtle manners, bit by bit, byte by byte, one human being at a time. When Balašević passed away in early 2021 and tens of thousands of people from all across former Yugoslavia hit the streets to chant his songs, in the face of the ongoing viral pandemic, it was a sign that these sublime messages can endure the cruelties and the ugliness that the dark sides of humanity send into existence on the wings of hatred, greed, insatiable egotism and other vices. And yet, common to all these heralds of divine

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<sup>1694</sup> In comparison to this highly irregular phonemic orthography of English language, Serbo-Croatian language is often considered, along with the constructed Esperanto language, as the only naturally developed language to have an ideal phonemic orthography, where each grapheme corresponds to a unique phoneme, an accomplishment dating back to the works published by Vuk Karadžić for the Serbian, cyrillic version of the alphabet in 1814 and by Ljudevit Gaj for the Croatian and the Serbian, latinic version of the alphabet in 1830. In fact, so frustrating this phonemic fallacy of English has been to the English writers’ and linguists’ ears that Bernard Shaw, the first man to win both a Nobel Prize and an Academy Award, left a portion of his inheritance in his testament to a man who would simplify the English alphabet by making it phonemic, using Vuk Karadžić’s transformation of Serbo-Croatian as the model.

<sup>1695</sup> In Serbo-Croatian, sentences could be crafted with or without the personal pronouns, and when one has the freedom not to mention “I”, “You”, “It” and so on in a sentence, the aesthetic capacity of the language naturally increases.

<sup>1696</sup> Consider, for example, the following Serbian words: cvrčak, šuma, jecaj, cucla and zvezda, that is, a grasshopper, a forest, a a sob, pacifier and a star. In them one could almost hear the “cvr, cvr” sound of grasshoppers, the “šuuu” sound of leaves and branches humming and tree trunks murmuring in the wind, the “jec” sound of a feminine soul gasping convulsively while weeping aloud, the “cuc” sound of a baby sucking an object held in its mouth, and the “zvezzzz” sound of stars dazzling stargazing eyes that hold them in sight, respectively, being quite in contrast with the corresponding, all-but-onomatopoeic words that describe the same objects in English.

<sup>1697</sup> See Gregory Bateson’s *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity*, Hampton Press, Cresskill, NJ (1979).

messages, it seems, is that they must depart from this plane of reality for their signs to reach the deepest atria of human hearts and produce something glorious and everlasting therein.

Hence, as we see, the path of self-abolishment, of transformation into a dying Biblical seed (John 12:24-25) from which many fruits that feed the thirsty spirits of the world will grow, rather than the one of self-celebration and self-promotion, is the one to be pursued if we are to live up to the celestial mission reserved for us on Earth. And this is exactly the path I have chosen to follow: the one of poorness and beauty made notable by the teaching of the Christ and followers of many other religions of the world. For, only in such a way, by giving all that one has, by selflessly strewing the world with the stardust of beauty and love that emanate from our heart do we get a chance to let our spirit touch the sky of the most sublime feelings in life and draw landscapes of golden happiness therein. Only dedicating our lives to deliver these wonderful inner landscapes outside so that earthlings could plunge in their beauties could sustain their astonishing outlines in the inner domains of our consciousness, which thus contributes to an incessant spin of the wheel of evolution of our spirits between the meditative insides and expressive outsides of our being. And these rainbow patterns on the worldly skies for many eyes to wonder over could be, of course, drawn only insofar as rainy, compassionate sadness and sunrays of joy are let encounter in the space of our heart and mind and freely flow outwards in eruptions of enlightening creativity.

Be that as it may, in such a way, with our mind meditatively emptied, we realize that it is empathy that then starts to fill the cup of our spirit with precious emotions and thoughts, which will be, with the help of our meditative focus, forged into diamonds of divine expression whose sparkle will entice the eyes of the world and guide them towards destinations of an utmost spiritual fulfillment. Not only do meditative insights enkindle our secret energies and make us shine to the world with our inner creativeness, while the sense of empathic unison with the earthlings whose spirits twinkle around us like stars drives us to spread our stellar essence outwardly on the wings of our acts, but now we see that empathy begins to serve as the driving force for our meditative insights, whereas our meditatively entering the silence of our being serves the role of releasing the sunshine of our spirit to spontaneously bless the world with its immense potentials.

And so, as we immerse our mind into the shiny essence of our divine spirit, as we plunge ever deeper into the starry silence of the microcosm of our heart, the greater the inspirational breadths that our creative expressions could encompass. As we deliver acts that blow the gates of ignorance, derision and freezing fear, the gates that obstruct the free flows of love and wonder in the world, shattering the old and obsolete worldviews all until new towers of innovative human knowledge and being are built in their place, we should know that the eye of the strongest hurricanes is always still and clear-skied. Likewise, the heart of the one who sheds the most inspiring stardust of beauty around one is as silent as a starry sky and as placid as a sea at dawn. As the Way of Love tells us, these two, the ecstasy of love and outbursts of creativity that a spiritual sun sends outwardly, tending to dissipate the interior of the star into cosmic vastnesses, are always neatly equilibrated with the meditative pull inwards which tends to distance oneself away from the worldly reigns and install an untouchable starry silence within one's mind so as to be in an incessant contact with the voice divine, forever and ever washed with its glittery beauty. The sunshiny daylight of our being and the starry night thereof are thus inextricably merged as they dwell within each other's core and the progress of one leads to the rise of another in this dialectical spin of the planet Earth and all the aspects of our being and knowledge in their rolling towards some great and unforeseen, ever more enlightening evolutionary horizons.

“And God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night” (Genesis 1:16), says the Bible, and as Andrew Weil, a founder of the field of integrative medicine, reminds us, “By an extraordinary coincidence, the sun and moon appear to us to be the same size in the sky... if this relationship did not hold, total eclipses of the sun would not occur. Human consciousness has developed on the one planet where the lights that rule day and night are equal”<sup>1698</sup>. If you were to stand by the Temple of Kukulkan on the Yucatan peninsula day and night, all year round, only on the afternoons of spring and fall equinoxes would you glimpse the serpentine shadow sliding down its edge, as if the ancient seers who built it wished to tell us that equalizing the amounts of day and night in us is a prerequisite for the descent of divine powers from Heaven through the channels of our being and onto the Earth. And we have thus made a full circle and realized that the Way of Love is like the celebrated Tai-Chi-Tu diagram where by travelling for long enough in the direction of a single pole, black or white, we encounter its opposite, as well as that it is the opposites of the poles themselves that sleep at the center of the each. Just as the progress of the day results in the starry night and *vice versa*, just as breathing in leads to breathing out and *vice versa*, just as high tide leads to ebb and *vice versa*, just as the moments of the Earth approaching the Sun in its revolving dance leads to the moments when it distances away and *vice versa*, subtly whispering to us the ultimate secret of the Way of Love, the same is with all the polarities in Nature. Hopping from one light to another, somewhat like the Little Prince leaping back and forth between its own planet and those where other humans dwell, is what the destiny of all celestial travelers in this world is. To be firmly anchored within the seat of one’s soul at one moment and to launch oneself to the stars to become united in empathy with the worldviews of others at another moment, and yet to be back to the depths of our own being to sort out the memories and impressions collected on the way, although always only for the sake of enkindling the fire of spirit which will give light to others, is the way chosen by the sages of this world. For, “God made two great lights”, and attempting to solve any problematic situation in which we find ourselves ought to be based on discerning two poles and thence hopping from one to another, as if being a spider that builds a string between the two, upon which the music that brings solution and harmony to it all will be played. Should we not respect this rule and start relying on the ideals of following a single pole and rejecting the other, that is, searching for simple and unilateral solutions, our methodologies would result in nothing but an eclipse of the light that feeds the life on this planet, such as the one obtained whenever the Sun and the Moon turn out to occupy the same position on the celestial sphere. Hence, the way to go is to locate two poles, spread them apart, draw a line in-between them and bravely walk on it, like Napoleon cutting straight through the center of the enemy positions, between the Sardinians and Piedmontese at Mondovi to the west and the Austrians at Fombio to the east, thereby splitting the two armies and waging victory against them both during his first military campaign, in southern Italy in the spring of 1796. This may explain why the moments when the Sun and the Moon are found in opposition to each other, as if inviting one to spread one’s arms and reach out to both, resembling the crucified Christ thereby, have produced the twinkles of mysticism and magical feelings in the hearts of the alchemists of the world ever since the earliest dawns of human civilization.

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<sup>1698</sup> See Andrew Weil’s *The Marriage of the Sun and the Moon: A Quest for Unity of Consciousness*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, MA (1980).



Sometimes when I look up at the **starry sky**, I remind myself of the words inscribed in a diary by a fifteen-year old Serbian girl on the Christmas Eve of 1909: “When I look outside and see the trees naked, the earth naked, and it all naked, nothing dressed up in festive clothes in which the birth of the greatest groom has been waited – then it seems to me that nature forgot what is tomorrow, and that nothing knows anymore about the merits of the God-man whose birth is celebrated tomorrow. But no, I have no right, because when I directed my gaze to the sky, I saw that the moon and the shiny stars speckled the entire celestial sphere and that they – like the most precious diamonds – sought which one would elevate God’s glory with its blissful rays higher and welcome the arrival of the noble child more solemnly. There are still those that know how to appreciate what is sublime and noble, what revives our soul. No, not yet have materialism and the practical prosaicness of life overcome and totally triumphed; the idyllic, the beautiful and the sublime must subsist so long there are people and in them soul – the spark divine”<sup>1699</sup>. More often, however, I remind myself of the way in which Immanuel Kant summed up his lifelong philosophy: “Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily reflection is occupied with them: the starry heaven above me and the moral law within me. Neither of them need I seek and merely suspect as if shrouded in obscurity or rapture beyond my own horizon; I see them before me and connect them immediately with my existence”<sup>1700</sup>. What is implicitly inscribed in these words is nothing but the secret of the Way of Love. For, if you looked closely at the eyes that captivate with celestial radiance, you would notice neither a perfect dreaminess sparked by the starry wonders of the world nor soft and milky kindheartedness arising from a perfect ethical devotion to fellow earthlings, but a balance between the two. Those eyes would shine forth both with the inwardly oriented mindfulness, with wonderful splashes caused by one’s swimming inside of one’s own inner space and living in harmony with one’s own heartbeat on one side, and with the outwardly oriented attentiveness, with passionately living in empathy with creatures that surround us, that is, in accord with the heartbeats of the world on the other side.

This grand force of empathy that instigates us to send the inner radiance of our spirit outwardly and bless the world therewith becomes evident in our ability to sympathize not only with worldviews of creatures around us, but with the invisible essence of inanimate things too. Looking at a shimmering ocean at night and absorbing its great and turgid waviness, letting grandiose towers that cut the clouds to infuse erected spiritedness in us, field flowers to wash us with shy and delicate beauty, stones to ingrain integrating stability, animals to enrich us with

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<sup>1699</sup> “...dok pogledam napolje, pa vidim drveće golo, zemlju golu, i sve golo, ništa nije obučeno u svečano ruho u kome se do sada dočekivalo rođenje najvećeg mladencu - onda mi se čisto učini da je priroda zaboravila šta je sutra, i da ništa više ne zna za zasluge tog Bogočoveka čije se rođenje sutra proslavlja. Ali ne, nemam prava, jer kad sam pogled svoj upravila nebu, videla sam da su mesec i sjajne zvezdice išarale ceo nebeski svod i da su se - nalik na najskupocenije dijamante - trudile, koja će više lepotom svojih blistavih zrakova uzdići slavu Božju i što svečanije dočekati dolazak uzvišenog deteta. Još ih ima dakle, koji umeju ceniti šta je uzvišeno i plemenito, šta nam dušu preporučava. Ne, nije još ovladala i sasvim pobedila materijalizam i praktična proza života; idealno, lepo i uzvišeno mora opstati dok je ljudi i u njima duše - iskre božanske”, is the exact phrasing in Serbian from this diary whose release its author, Ljubica S. Janković, forbid until 40 years after her death, in 1974. Retrieved from [http://www.b92.net/kultura/vesti.php?nav\\_category=1087&yyyy=2015&mm=01&dd=05&nav\\_id=943733](http://www.b92.net/kultura/vesti.php?nav_category=1087&yyyy=2015&mm=01&dd=05&nav_id=943733) (January 5, 2015).

<sup>1700</sup> See Immanuel Kant’s Critique of Practical Reason, BIGZ, Belgrade, Serbia (1788).

agility and flexibility, we walk on the trail whereon many Indian sages and wise aborigines walked, learning from becoming One with all the details of the natural world and thereby expanding our spirit, who we ultimately are, with every breath of ours. Needless to add, the inner pull of the star of our spirit, which tends to integrate our core and stabilize the fusion of elements therein, from which vital spiritual energy that is to be dissipated all over the world is produced, is multidimensional. Intellectually, it is composed of introspective reflections and contemplative mindfulness that withdraws our intellectual foci inside. Hence, it is the power of Wonder that has its role in constructively withdrawing us inside, the same one that drives the rays of our attention outwardly, shifting them along the outlines of perceptive details of the world of our experience. Emotionally, the meditative pull inwards is driven by the force of love that tends to integrate our inner powers around the center of our heart, as if condensing our spirit into a prayerful muse, pulling the arms thereof inwards, all until they touch each other, forming a synergy that leads to fusion of creative elements and arising of the great light of spirit. And the same power of Love would have been, of course, unsustainable had we not incessantly had the arms of our spirit stretched outwardly, showing compassion and genuine sympathy with respect to beings that surround us, as well as objects and the divine voice of Nature that permeates it all. Empathically becoming all things and creatures that pervade our world is what integrates our spirit and facilitates our meditative journey inside, into the core of our spirit whereby we discover wonderful treasures of the soul, which we then bring outside to share with others, delivering soul-healing rays of happiness to their bodies and souls thereby. It is the powers of Wonder and Love that stand behind both the drives that pull us inwards and outwards, in the balance of which the secrets of the Way of Love and of the sustained shine of the starry spirit of our being remain hidden.

As we grow older, it turns out to be an incessant challenge to maintain a proper Middle Way between the passionate empathy on one side and meditative introspectiveness on the other. If you have ever watched a child in the moments of delirious and spontaneous expression of joy, you may have noticed that they always arise from a strong sense of empathy founded in the innate reflection of the surrounding people's emotions. Over time, however, conscious moves to suppress this childish spontaneity and become a "civilized and well behaving individual" take over and gradually take their toll. Namely, we forget the art of filling the cups of our heart and making them overflow with love and empathy, turning those divine qualities into mere considerateness and tolerance. On the other hand, neither do most of us maintain the true meditative connectedness with the Divine inside the space of our heart and mind as we grow old. Instead, this inner silence horrifies us and we run away from it most of the time, finding ourselves in an incessant cycle of rejecting love and empathy on one side and prayerfulness and meditation on another. Thus we become confused and stiff, emotionally and intellectually alike, which are all ungraceful symptoms of the old age. Or, as put into words by Chuang-Tzu, "Teeth are stiff and fall off; tongue is flexible and stays on". But still, there is a hope that we could emerge out of this vicious circle and that by spreading our hands farther and deeper wherever we turn, as epitomized by the symbol of the crucified Christ. Everywhere we turn, we should passionately and freely spread our hands, hearts and gazes, far, far away. As we look into the hearts and eyes of others, we should not be afraid of plunging deep into them, all until we realize the infinite beauty that swims within their oceans and awake the warmhearted feelings of empathy inside of us. And as we look deep inside of us, we should not look shallower than that great bliss that arises from the foundations of our spirit. Then, we will realize that touching the bedrock of our own being equals sitting and dreaming on the pillars of the worldviews of other

fellow earthlings, and *vice versa*: that only gazing at the world from the eyes of another can make us truly fulfilled and spiritually joyful human being.

The co-creational thesis which I proposed earlier is based on the idea that the perceptive impulses of the world of our experience arise only where the subjective creativeness of our being and the objective qualities of the world as-it-is crisscross and interbreed. In other words, the world as we see it is as much the product of our own creation and inherent imaginativeness as it is “the way that it really is”, objectively, that is, independently of our own observational stances. What this implies is that by gazing at the starry sky, we are inevitably glimpsing the starry essence of our own being, and *vice versa*: by immersing our attention into the starry wells of our spirit, we do glimpse the all-encompassing starriness of the divine Nature. Atman, the individual soul, thus becomes equal to the Brahman, the collective soul of the world, as in the moments of enlightenment according to the Buddhist theological concepts. Our tiny little self thus becomes ONE with the world, whereas the holy ONE becomes reflected in each detail of ourselves and the world. Consequently, searching for the greatest signs of divinity of the Universe may begin by our glimpsing the teeniest and the most ordinary details of our experience, such as this little dot that I will place right here.

○ne.

○ne dot.

★ star.

This is where we have started from and this is where we will return to every once in a while in this dizzying gaze at the sky of starry thoughts spun across the space of my mind that this book is. To the mystery of a star, to that great oneness that presents the beginning and the end of it all. For, around one such star the journey that this book has been revolves.

The starry train of our thoughts has guided us from a teeny tiny dot to a great shiny star that we strive to become. And when we have ingrained that holy oneness within the depths of our mind, when we have pervaded our heart with the feeling that we are ONE with the world, all that we do, be it even a slight raise of our shoulders, a single wink or a pebble thrown into the sea will radiate with an unexplainable charm, subtly capturing attention of the world and directing it towards more enlightened horizons. With such a spirit of One enrooted within us, having become an escapee from the realm of ego and akin to the alchemist who protruded his head out of an earthly sphere of being and into a celestial, heavenly enlightened one wherein the glow of the sense of oneness and empathy is seen as washing over the entire world, looking at even the most modest details of reality will make them tell us fabulous stories of eternal wisdom that they hide. For, having mastered the tenets of the co-creational thesis, we may know that everything that we are aware of is being drawn together by the imagination of our spirit and the motherly guiding hands of Nature, the one that in the eyes of the Serbian Tibetan traveler inspired by Nikola Tesla sheds falling stars for us to exercise our devotion and faith by running after them so as to catch them<sup>1701</sup> and hand as gifts to those whom we passionately love. In the spirit of the Way of Love we may also know that “Love says ‘I am everything’, Wisdom says ‘I am nothing’: between the

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<sup>1701</sup> See Stevan Pešić’s *Tesla or Adaptation of an Angel*, a play wrote based on the interview Nikola Tesla gave to John Smith of the journal *Immortal* in 1889 in his lab in Colorado Springs, CO.

two, my life flows”, as an Indian guru noticed in his book entitled *I am That*<sup>1702</sup>; with every breath of ours, with every *so ham* we may then absorb the meaning of these words - “I am that”, finding ourselves empathizing with all the details of our surrounding, feeling at all times as if “I am the space where I am”<sup>1703</sup>, as the French mystic, Noël Arnaud wrote. Then, intoxicated with the spirit of unity with all things around us, we may finally stretch the arms of our spirit and become crucified in all directions, like the Christ on the cross, ceasing to exist in our tiny, earthly self and emerging into an eternal plane of being, spinning endlessly like a ballerina on the stage with the cosmic joy planted in the center of our heart. The journey of each and every one of our lifetimes has thus proceeded from the beginnings marked by the sewing of the seed of divine spirit into our bodies to its sprouting in the fertile soil of Wonder and Love to the ends wherein the seed, that is, our tiny self seemingly separated from the rest of existence, has died and is being wholly born to the world.

The question which stood at the entrance to the yellow brick road drawn on the pages of this book - How does one become a star - could be therefore answered by returning to the heart of the very question in question. For, we should always be sure that implicit grounds from which a question is asked need to be probed on our way to the answer. As ever, it is the foundations that conceal the key to unlocking the gates on the castles of knowledge built upon them. Thereupon, we could conclude that one becomes a star by simply being One, by being what one is in one’s deepest essence, by simultaneously reaching the starry sense of oneness with oneself, meditatively, and the whole wide world and each one of its wondrous eyes and miniature details, empathically, as the Way of Love has spoken in favor of. Should we find and hold on to that spirit of divine oneness, which lies enrooted like a seed of a star in each and every heart of the Universe and from which an infinite, cosmic love that lightens up stars of wonder in human eyes and floods them with the waves of the motherly salty ocean of love, and make it glow and spontaneously enlighten the world as we exhibit the most trivial acts we could conceive of, from acrobatic juggling of oranges to rolling on meadows of melancholy hills to raising our arms, shyly and triumphantly, into the summery airs, we would bring to life the very cognitive balance of the Way of Love within ourselves and others. For, nothing in life is found for good; rather, we seek and find, but only for things to fall out of our grasp should we not let them fly from our soul like the doves of peace, the angelic messengers that will deliver heavenly beauties to the face of the world, leaving ourselves once again alone amidst stars, lost and perplexed and on the road, always anew lost and found and lost and found as the cosmic wheel of evolution spins towards ever more fabulous horizons of being. And as we incessantly search for the spirit of divine oneness within our inner starry space and yet let the sunshine of love freely burst from our heart, we reach the balance of the Way of Love. Meditative immersion inside of the microcosmic spaces of our soul and the outward shine of compassion and joy would be thence naturally equilibrated and maintained as such forever and ever in the marvelous fairytale that the soulful emanation of our divine being under the starry hat of the Universe is.

After all, such is the way of the Sun. To be untouched by what the world has to say about it, but to endlessly and constantly shine to it from a distance, bringing limitless love thereto and making it rise and dwell in an ever greater abundance of spirit. To deliver the enlightening rays of love not only to those who hungrily wait for it and send back the summer breezes of sheer thankfulness, but to those who are rebelliously and delinquently repulsive and ignorant to it. Or, as proclaimed by the Christ in one of the most beautiful evangelical verses, “And if any man hear

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<sup>1702</sup> See Nisargadatta Maharaj’s *I am That*, Acorn Press, Silver Spring, MD (1990).

<sup>1703</sup> See Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space*, Beacon Press, Boston, MA (1958), pp. 137.

my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world” (John 12:47). Yet, this does not mean that the Sun is insensitive to the tremors of the world that reach its surface. Likewise, neither is a great lecturer or a superstar on the stage completely isolated from the sensual stimuli that reach their sensory surface. They do accept their subtle signs and based on them build a masterful starry shine that blesses the world with its beauty. Still, somewhere deep inside of themselves they stick to the ideal posed by the ancient sages: “Change yourself, not the world”. For, a truly inspirational being judges not the world nor criticizes it driven by an obsession to change it; rather, this utterly creative being remains deeply immersed within oneself, burning the essence of one’s recollections, visions, memories and feelings into a fire that illuminates the world with its light, regardless of whether this very same world will frown at it and shove it or be blissed by it and wholeheartedly embrace it.

The ephemeral looking at the Sun for inspiration at this instance of touching the ultimate question on which, as if on a sacramental pedestal of a kind, this entire discourse stands reminds of the magic moment at which my writing transitioned from that of a scientific spirit driven by the yearning to never explicate any poetic, philosophical or theological talks, but to always keep them implicit under the veil of ordinary scientific expression, as if being sacred mysteries, to that of a poetic, philosophical spirit, who would eventually go on to write extensive treatises such as this one. That moment came at the very end of my work on the book containing 1001 scientific questions and answers. As 1000 questions and answers lay finished before me and scattered on the same number of sheets of paper, I was about to conceive the final, 1001<sup>st</sup> one. It occurred to me that I should, in the spirit of the most masterful storytelling, go back to the first question, “Why does the Sun shine”, and instead of giving a standard, scientific description of the cause behind the radiance of the star around which the Earth orbits that the answer to the first question provided, draw a metaphysical, mystical and poetical perspective on it, thus opening the door to these invisible grounds on which empirical sciences stand, without ever mentioning the given door or ascribing notions to anything that may lie on the other side. In the context of this discussion, let this be a permanent reminder that to become a star, radiant with love that blesses and beautifies everything and everyone upon which it lands, one must permanently wonder Why. For one millionth time this demonstrates the link between Love and Wonder, whereupon one feeds the other and lies in its center, like on the celebrated Tai-Chi-Tu diagram. As in accordance with the ties between *what* and *how* explicated earlier, to wonder about *what* on the back of the mountain of *why* is the key for sustaining the drive toward *how*, that is, toward the art of becoming a star of divine spiritedness, a star that, like the Sun in the sky, constantly alternates between (a) shininess and brightness whenever in sight and (b) darkness, secretiveness and mysteriousness whenever hiding behind the horizon.

Needless to add, nothing other but the Way of Love has lain concealed underneath this genuine Sun-like nature of the peaks of creativeness that we may exhibit in this life. For, all things around us are divine signs showing us the way to ascend to the angelic spheres of being, but none of them is shinier than the Sun and there is nothing beyond its greatness that we could strive to attain. The Sun, thus, must be a sign like no other on our path from stardust to starlight, the reason for which whole sciences could be founded to help us understand its secrets and translate their physical meanings into metaphysical and spiritual ones. Hence, there are infinitely many infinitely great things that we could learn from the way in which the Sun blesses our planet with its light, and, as I have always believed, should we learn how to shine like the Sun, in the metaphorical sense of the word, we would reach the peaks of the mountainous spirit divine that we ought to climb to with every breath of our being.

Finally, all things melt into oneness under intense sunlight and in the eyes bedazzled by the shine of the Sun, the object of worship of monists all the world over. In the end, thus, it all falls down to the oldest theological message ever told to humanity, the Emerald Table: “The work of wonders is from one”<sup>1704</sup>. Yet, as the legend says, this message was inscribed on a stone, as if reminding us that our exploration of Nature ought to start from little details neglected by the ordinary eyes of the world; for, it is in them that the paths towards enlightening encounters with the essence of divine Nature abide.



And as we lightly brush the sandy dust off seashore stones on a warm sunny day, with the sea waves splashing lovingly behind our back and the adventurous straw hat resting on our head, whispering Job’s message inside of our head, “Is my strength the strength of stones” (Job 6:12), we discover astonishingly strange signs on them, each one of which is reminiscent of the secret heliocypher inscribed on **an emerald stone** by Hermes Trismegistus five millennia ago, and become immersed in the beauty of hieroglyphic symbols ingrained in each pebble placed on the palms of our hands, as if it is telling us ancient stories of Nature meant to enrich our spirit in wonderful and mysterious ways. In that sense, I recollect that not far from Belgrade, the city in which I was born and which has ever since been situated at the intersection of the Oriental and the Western cultures of the world, creating the fire of life at its fullest as the two flints begin to flicker under friction, and offering vistas from which gorgeous views of the beauty of middle Ways and crucifying crossroads in life have opened before my eyes, kryptonite, a stone of the superman, was found a few years ago<sup>1705</sup>. And yet, I have claimed that each stone, irrespective of how tiny and meaningless it may seem, opens the gates to the flights of a superman by holding millions of beautiful messages and metaphors dormant in its appearance and structure. With the eyes of a systemic superman, capable of linking exciting parallels and analogies to the cabooses of primary insights in the starry trains of our thoughts, we have a chance to turn even an ordinary seashore pebble into cognitive stairs that would bring us a step closer to the Sun, the symbol of the ultimate ideal of beautiful being scattered like stardust across the pages of this book.

As we hold these little and yet infinitely precious pebbles on the palms of our hands and have the eye of our mind bears resemblance to the Sun, the rays of our attention begin to scatter in millions of directions and magically illuminate doors to wonderfully enriching insights in the

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<sup>1704</sup> The Arabic Translation of the Emerald Table, in fact, goes like this: “1. It contains an accurate commentary that can't be doubted. 2. It states: What is the above is from the below and the below is from the above. The work of wonders is from one. 3. And all things sprang from this essence through a single projection. How marvelous is its work! It is the principle part of the world and its custodian. 4. Its father is the sun and its mother is the moon. Thus the wind bore it within it and the earth nourished it. 5. Father of talismans and keeper of wonders. 6. Perfect in power that reveals the lights. 7. It is a fire that became our earth. Separate the earth from the fire and you shall adhere more to that which is subtle than that which is coarse, through care and wisdom. 8. It ascends from the earth to the heaven. It extracts the lights from the heights and descends to the earth containing the power of the above and the below for it is with the light of the lights. Therefore the darkness flees from it. 9. The greatest power overcomes everything that is subtle and it penetrates all that is coarse. 10. The formation of the microcosm is in accordance with the formation of the macrocosm. 11. The scholars made this their path. 12. This is why Thrice Hermes was exalted with wisdom. 13. This is his last book that he hid in the catacomb.”

<sup>1705</sup> See Kryptonite Discovered in Mine, BBC News (April 24, 2007); available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/6584229.stm>.

tinest corrugations, scratches and grooves on their crystalline surface. As ever before, where the unfathomably great and the infinitely small, the Father and the Son of a kind, meet, dazzling sunrises of the divinest grace could be expected to happen. It may be for this reason that Trismegistus, himself the epitome of a blend of Hermes, the Greek god that leads a way to the underworld and Thoth, the Egyptian god depicted as the heart and tongue of the god of Sun, Ra, inscribed this ancient mystical message on a piece of emerald stone while claiming the sign, the origin and the inspiration for the road to enlightenment impressed therein to be the Sun, spreading hands down in Love, while gazing up in Wonder, selflessly creating and giving and yet meditatively withdrawing oneself into the sun-like glow of the divine soul within, implicitly handing the key to utmost creativity to generations of humanity. If there is a way of the gods, it has to arise from the heart stretching itself unlimitedly upwards and downwards, like the Christ on the Cross, ascending ever higher into meditative realms of inner bliss and simultaneously descending down driven by the compassionate need to create and act so as to guide the perplexed earthlings to the sunlit horizons of spiritual salvation. For, the more we dwell in this inner kingdom, bathing in the ocean of the divine spirit that flows through our being, the greater the enlightening effect our acts will have on the world, and *vice versa*, as the Way of Love has pointed out on many occasions.

After all, it was what Hermes Trismegistus called the operation of the Sun<sup>1706</sup> that led him to the all-illuminating insight that One is the simple door to the uttermost creativeness in this life, that accepting oneness of it all and finding oneself as a part of everything, loving the entire world as much as oneself, equals entering through the gate of Heaven into its eternal rapture. Indeed, looking carefully at natural phenomena around us, we could realize that they are all signs as to how life should be lived. Nature is subtle in shedding the stardust of guiding signs all over our eyes, and yet she does it ceaselessly. It is enough to look at the Sun and posit that its loneliness on the sky may be a sign that oneness is the key that unlocks the gates of Paradise in our heads and hearts. The Sun is always moving, too, which is a vital sign that incessantly revisiting and revising our views of the world, changing perspectives of observing it and angles and styles of interacting with it and always fluidly breathing with our entire body as we dancingly move through space inside of ourselves and that which surrounds us is the key to immaculate being in this life. Although some may notice that the Sun is merely streaming along its own course through the galactic space, while Earth is the one to spin around its axis and revolve around the Sun, do not slip your mind that the solar planets were most probably ejected from the Sun long time ago. The movements of our planet have thus been predetermined by the Sun itself, which brings us over to the Hindu theological concepts according to which Brahman, spirit of the divine Creator, and Atman, individual soul, have been merely temporarily separated, the aim of human searching for the meaning of life being to restore this sense of unity, to arrive at the grand Hegelian synthesis of the individual soul and the universal spirit of the world. Still, the fact that the Sun leaves us for a period of the day, the night as we call it, speaks in favor of the vital importance of temporary retractions from things in life in keeping our relationships with them incessantly fresh and invigorating, as in concordance with the blind spot effect and the Way of Love. From the same insight, the necessity for the dialectical evolution of the world could be inferred too. The Sun is also always partly distant and mysterious, knowing that too closely

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<sup>1706</sup> The last, thirteenth line of the Emerald Tablet in the translation by Isaac Newton thus says the following: “That which I have said of the operation of the Sun is accomplished and ended”. “I have said all that is needed concerning the operation of the Sun”, says the same line in the anonymous Aquarius translation, while the earliest Latin text represents it as “*Completum est quod dixi de operatione Solis*”.

approaching the object of its affection, the planet teeming with life and the music of billions of hearts beating in cacophonous togetherness, would lead to its immediate meltdown. Therefore, it decides to stay in sublime ethereal spaces together with other stars on the night sky and from there on endow us with her precious energy; the same strategy, built on the well-established link between loneliness and creative genius<sup>1707</sup>, is employed by sages, gurus and other utterly inspiring creatures of this planet, the stars of spirit as I have called them. Yet, the Sun is still much closer to us than any other star of the night sky, thus finding the right balance between fascinating closeness and untouchable remoteness, which is paralleled with the simultaneous connectedness and distantness found engrained in the very symbol of the Way. Step by step, each one of the thirteen essential principles of my philosophy outlined in one of the previous subsections could be derived from a simple metaphor of the Sun traversing the celestial sphere in circles, whereby beginnings and ends are linked to each other, and dropping lifesaving rays of light onto all of us. The same insights could be undoubtedly arrived at from careful observations of any given physical event or detail. Each seashore pebble that we examine in our hands with the systemic sunrays emanating from the eye of our mind thus has a chance to install itself as a cornerstone of the pyramid of supreme human knowledge, providing the first steps, the prime inspiration and the stable support on our climb to its apex where the divine views of reality reside. As I pointed out in one of my previous books<sup>1708</sup>, the way from the littlest stones to stars and back is what we may call the way of the gods, the wizards of wisdom, in this life.

Thus we become dizzy by merely following the lines, bumps and boundaries engrained in the stony structure of the world with the sparkle of our childish curiosity. “Thou canst see no fault in the Almighty One's creation; then look again. Canst thou see any rifts? Then look again and yet again. Thy sight will return unto thee astonished and dazzled”, a verse from Qur’an (Al-Mulk(67):3-4) may thence start echoing in our heads. It is then that we may recall that had the Universe expanded after Big Bang into a sphere composed of perfectly uniformly distributed primordial matter, its local aggregates that would build stars would have never been formed. Without this seed of imperfection sown into the fabric of the Cosmos at its very birth, the perfections of life as we have them today would have remained only a distant dream of the cosmic consciousness. Neither would tectonic plates and, then, islands and continents arise from a hypothetical Earth in which matter was thoroughly uniformly distributed, as it occurred to me in the midst of a translucent dream. We could thus realize that not uniformity and oneness, but boundaries and differences are those that become diversified and multiplied with every new day, taking us by their fine hand into an ever more inspiring and wondrous world. Therefore, whenever we are about to draw a perfect circle or conceive a perfectly symmetrical whole in our storytelling, let us bring to mind Igor Stravinsky’s saying that “to be perfectly symmetrical is to be perfectly dead”<sup>1709</sup> and draw at least a miniature fault across it, turning O into Q, so to speak; for, only in such a way could a forward path be created. In fact, many nights I spent putting myself to sleep by visualizing an O as a reflection of my being at that moment, a symbol of its enclosure by the gates of loveless ego and selfish fears, and then pegging it with a little wooden wand, all until it becomes a Q and opens itself to the world, bleeding with the most precious of

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<sup>1707</sup> See Denot Proudfoot and Sean Fath’s Signaling Creative Genius: How Perceived Social Connectedness Influences Judgments of Creative Potential, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin 0146167220936061 (2020).

<sup>1708</sup> See Sketches of Stars and Pebbles of Wisdom: Essays of Human Heart and the Divine Ethics, retrievable from uskokovic.yolasite.com (2009).

<sup>1709</sup> See Robert Craft’s Conversations with Igor Stravinsky, Doubleday & Company, Garden City, NY (1959), pp. 16.

emotions treasured within once again, dissolving all the internal accumulations of pressure and beginning yet again to move around with otherworldly grace, naturally and spontaneously, as if gliding on the waves of Tao across the Earth, all in accordance with Ben Sira's idea that a heart must be pierced in pain in order to start shining with knowledge (Sirach 22:19). Or, as stated by Leonard Cohen in his Anthem, "Ring the bells that still can ring, forget your perfect offering, there is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in"<sup>1710</sup>. Had the world been immersed in the perfect unity of all being, in a perfect perfection and immaculate harmony, all things around us would become uniform and monotonous. And not only that, but even our perception would stop to work since it is conditioned by the existence of boundaries in our perceptive fields. Resting always in One would make us blind to many beautiful insights that feed our spirit and make us shine whenever we reassemble their seemingly shattered and disharmonized pieces into another great unison with an ever more blissful light. Following the line of this thought, we arrive at the inscription drawn by a 17<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese painter, "Even if I turned into rock, I would not be obstinate"<sup>1711</sup>, as if secretly telling us that even when our faith in certain conceptions is rock hard, it has to remain flexible, exploratory and open to revisions, always on the verge of losing old equilibriums so as to gain new, more progressive and elevated ones. Therefore, the sense of great unity is where one pole of our mind should be always oriented, whereas another pole of our mind should curiously follow the boundaries and differences that this world abounds with and creatively work in the direction of ramifying them. It is thence as if one hemisphere of our mind is akin to a sun that fuses millions of elements of perceptual reality into a single harmonious whole, while the other one incessantly tears these unities apart and shatters them into swarms of sensual stars, an exciting multitude of things. After all, the greater the analytical diversity of the world, the greater bliss will follow their meditative assembly into a wonderful unity of all being, and *vice versa*.

More than anything, our attention should be directed to building and preserving the dynamic equilibrium between (a) meditative withdrawnness into this sea of silence within and (b) eruptive expressiveness that explodes with boundless empathic energies all over the face of the Earth. To allow the darkness of the former to eclipse the shininess of the latter equals yielding to inexpressive cowardice and deadening indifference, hellish forces that push us ever deeper into dark abysses wherein we'd be vainly searching for enlightenment without even making the first step that leads to it - rejecting the very cravings to attain the enlightenment for oneself and instead pining for the delivery of someone else into this blissful state. The shackled and frightfully cocooned spirit of ours would then be badly waiting for the skyward savior's hands to be placed on us and proclaim that famous Ephphatha, that is, "be opened" (Mark 7:35), impelling it to explode outwardly with all the spiritual treasures collected inside of ourselves, all until all is given unto others and the holy "poorness in spirit" (Matthew 5:3) is attained, altogether with the ticket to heavenly states of being that it guarantees. On the other hand, should we let this mental pole of exciting expressivity eclipse its complements in terms of introspective inwardness of the focus of our intellect and the meditative connectedness with the transcendental luminosity that arises from the hub of our heart, a white noise of meaningless blabbering would result, along with actions destined never to profoundly touch and stir human hearts, having lost and never regained their authenticity and genuineness due to broken links with the silent depths of our soul, the empty spaces that Lao-Tzu envisaged as the centerpieces of the spin of every

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<sup>1710</sup> Listen to Leonard Cohen's Anthem on The Future, Columbia Records (1992).

<sup>1711</sup> See Holland Cotter's In 17th-Century Chinese Art, Evidence of Subtle Symbols of Protest, *The New York Times* (September 13, 2011), pp. 11. The inscription is from Huang Daozhou's painting Pines and Rock (1634).

wheel of perceptual creativeness. How much truth therefore lies in the portrayal of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza blindfolded on horses on a fresco decorating a chapel visited by Aurora and Jérôme in Eric Rohmer's *Claire's Knee*, with the painter's wish being to convey the belief that had they not had their eyes closed, they would have never led the procession of pioneers into a marvelous escapade. This is why we ultimately ought to be like those special types of dolphins, whales, seals, manatees, parakeets and seagulls that have evolved to engage in the so-called unihemispheric slow-wave sleep, i.e., be able to sleep with one of their brain hemispheres, while the other one is wide awake and alert, scanning their surroundings down to the finest details. Like these magnificent aerial and seafaring creatures, we should also traverse the azure skies and swim across the oceans and seas, discovering new lands, diving for pearls and the missing foundations of Atlantis, and all that while joyfully playing, keeping one part of our being immersed in the great One, in the great unity of all being, and another part vigilantly discovering and drawing new boundaries on the finest possible scales, diversifying the informational content of the world and contributing to its material evolution. And, remember, just as Buddhism was spread from India to China along the Silk Road, many spiritual treasures are nowadays being transmitted and seeded via optical cables and other technological channels as the planet revolves and evolves on its spiritual and informational planes in parallel. In that sense, spinning the wheel of human evolution on its scientific and technological side makes the spiritual and artistic side spin too, for they are both parts of a single rolling sphere. To grow in material and spiritual ways alike is thus the road which we ought to follow.

Walking along that majestic road, we will realize that these two, the meditative and spiritual unison which we awaken within us has navigated the analytical and intellectual powers of ours in the right directions, whereas the latter has provided the bases for spreading the wings of our spirit from ever more wonderful and sublime cliffs of life into the divine ocean of being.

And if an otherworldly creature, such as the extraterrestrial we hypothetically invoked at the very beginning of this stellar discourse, now suddenly pops up in front of us, we should trustfully hold it by the hand and let it take us on her spaceship to some faraway galaxies. For, since the trains of our evolution travel forward along a rail of science and technologies, of materialistic adornment of our planetary home and enkindling the lights of Wonder by these means, one side of the wheel whose spinning propels us to stars, and a rail of arts, theologies and philosophies, of spiritual beautification and enlightenment of the Universe, of lighting up the lampions of Love like sparkly serpents all across the gloomy faces of the world, we should be sure that intelligences endowed by such fascinating discoveries that would enable them to traverse tremendous cosmic distances would certainly be illuminated with the glow of divine goodness. To them, who have their minds washed at all times in the ocean of the light divine, the stages in the evolution of consciousness that we, as humans, are currently occupying may seem like a sheer step away from the animalistic muddles spoiled by the bloodily clinking jaws of greed, petty little black holes of selfishness, empty dark mansions of coldblooded insensitivities and indifferences, behavioral deserts of lame, creativity-draining conformism and the suffocating dust of hypocrisies. Although we may be taken to travel with them along some enlightened celestial circles for a while, with some refreshing cosmic coconuts held on the palms of our hands and stylishly sipped from, while surrounded by music that soothes the senses and spotless creatures glowing like little suns, we would always be prompted to land back to the planet from which we have originated. For, as an inherent part of the planet and humanity, our evolution as an individual is inescapably related to that of our terrestrial home as a whole. Thence, as we wave goodbye to our temporary intergalactic travelers, mysteriously distant and untouchable and

yet heartwarming intimate and loving, we would be reminded that our journey was nothing but a grandiose epitome of the Way of Love which spread itself like a Milky Way across the starry thoughts that comprise the night sky of the pages of this book.

After all, that is what the Way of Love has taught us too. To be one with oneself in meditative remoteness, withdrawn into cosmic visions and dreams of our scruffy head, and yet to leap from one pair of human eyes to another, from one planet of human worldviews to another, like the humble and beautiful Little Prince, empathically conjoining with all of them. It is thus that we begin to live up to the ideal of perfect confluence of the worlds inside and outside, of two faces of the Rubin vase, gazing at each other in perfect symmetry, finding the key to the puzzling paradox standing at the center of the co-creational thesis and unlocking the gates that open views to largely unexplored and uncharted territories of majestic experience and creativity. That is when we reach a perfect synchrony between being one with oneself and one with the others, all the while incessantly losing this perfect balance by gleefully wobbling and fluctuating left and right, knowing that a perfect balance can be perfect only inasmuch as it is perfectly imperfect.

To be one and to be many, to be the Sun and the starry sky at the same time is the way which the alchemists of the world – i.e., true followers of the teaching of that great One inscribed in a stone, a symbol of the infinitely small, minute and lifeless, though unceasingly pointing at the Sun, the epitome of the unassailably great, shiny, animate and powerful, secretly telling us that the more we bow down in front of the wonders of the world, with love and understanding glowing in our heart, the more we will ascend on our mission to become yet another star of spirit in this fairytale of cosmic evolution in which we are all actors - have ever since been journeying on, endlessly and unstoppably, with chaotic dizziness of a spinning galaxy and a solid and structured clarity of a diamond in their hands, one stellar move and thought after the other, somewhat like the forever enduring lineages of words in this and many other sentences along which our mind has breathlessly ridden, as if on a cerebral rollercoaster of a kind, throughout the lines and passages of this book.

Having this route as a guiding star in my mind, I give myself a vow to stretch one of my arms to grasp the Sun, the symbol of unity of all being, such as inscribed in the message of the sole star that stood at the center of the flag of my country, the one that, as exotic and saddening as it can be, does not exist anymore, and to spread another arm of my spirit in the direction of a multitude of stars, of celebrated difference and diversity, such as that scattered all over the flag of the country in which I abide as I write these words. I would thus pose myself as a bridge between an old world, the Ionic pillars of the tradition from which my spirit has arisen to walk along this planet and the sunset of Love blushing in beauty high above them on one side, and the stellar and supersonic flights of spirit towards stars on the spaceships of Wonder on another. For, only in such a way would I make myself a spontaneous deliverer of the message of the New Atlantis with every word proclaimed and each move shed forth, of the Christ of the modern age, with a superman streaming upwards to reach the stars and an angel descending down to earth to touch people's hearts encountering in the center of my being and producing an explosion of creativity that dazzles and beautifies, akin to that of a superstar, shedding stardust of Love and Wonder everywhere around one, dying in everlasting beauty and yet being born as an eternal star of spirit in the twinkly eyes of the Cosmos.



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Like stars aligned on the night sky, residing on a soundless background and illuminating the darkest of nights, the same is with starry spirits walking seamlessly across spaces on Earth. Silence that speaks untouchability is sensed in them, enthralling every cell in the viewer's body with the spirit of divine mystery, and yet every glance of theirs gleams with a loving familiarity, immersing the lucky catchers thereof into the unexplainable warmth of the sunshine of their cosmic souls. The eyes of the latter shine inwardly, onto the treasures of their own spirit, recollecting inspiring memories and thoughts, stretching their hands to the great One and washing their face and heart with the sacral waters flowing in its midst, bringing forth a state of sheer bliss thereto, but they also shine outwardly, opening up to other people's eyes with fanciful freeness, radiating a vibe of caring sincerity all around them and watering these windows to the soul with geysers of whimsical wonder spewing out straight from their heart of hearts.

**“Quiet nights of quiet stars,** quiet gorge of my guitar and a window that looks out on Corcovado”<sup>1712</sup> - so sang the slender, long-necked muse of my dreams, gliding gracefully through the night, like a starlit shadow, while watching the monument I depicted seconds ago as trembling with towering spiritual powers and with the mountain-moving wish to redeem the world it overlooked, the world lying under her feet, thrilled with millions of sparkly yearnings, shimmering with its swarms of city lights and in just about everything resembling the starry sky that encases her with silent splendor from all sides. With feet not touching the ground, levitating above this neon-like streams of consciousness, is how she swifts through the air. And yet, despite this graceful glide she could cast any moment, the muse sits by her window with a broken wing, on the rusty sill, despondently but dreamingly, crooked like a cocoon, just as I sat years ago on the creeky windowsill wherefrom the maroon paint peeled in tiny flakes, with Fido fallen asleep near me after a soft goodnight hug, listening to Pet Sounds and murmuring “I went through all kinds of changes, and I looked at myself, and said that’s not me; I miss my pet, and the places I’ve known, and every night as I lay there alone I would dream”<sup>1713</sup>, gazing at the stars above, yearning wholeheartedly to meet my true nature, to travel deeper and deeper inside and

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<sup>1712</sup> Listen to Astrud and João Gilberto singing Corcovado (Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars) on Getz/Gilberto, Verve (1964).

<sup>1713</sup> Listen to the Beach Boys’ That’s Not Me on Pet Sounds, Capitol (1966).

bring the muse of my dreams to the surface of my being, so that it can enlighten the world with the bliss with which it has illuminated my mind.

Years later, I would find myself in the city of Saint Francis, the great protector of pet sounds and animals, walking places happily, hand-in-hand with my Little Bear, while tempering the timid spirit of a mousy mouse inside of me. Yet, I have known that this fearfulness of mine, the nectar of which I have been nourished with ever since I made the first summersault in the oceanic teardrop of my Mother's womb, could be a great incentive for the derivation of acts beautiful and inspiring, most of which are yet to emerge through the cocoon of my dreamy self. But how dazzling and pure the shine of my spirit would become if this aura of dreaminess, encasing it like a shield of stardust, were to be shaken off. Yet, how impoverished in the long run this very same shine would become were this protective casing that the careworn eyes of my Mother had woven over the years to be shed in a second, like a serpent's skin, with not even a shadow of a doubt. Thereupon, from the landscape of dark hallways and starry tunnels, loneliness and silence, broken only by wavering cypress trees, sea splashes, star twinkles, and wooden floor step cracking sounds, I imagined myself emerging onto a colossal lit-up stage, facing what may seem as millions of starry eyes gazing at me from the darkness.

But then, moments before I enter the stage, while the curtain has still not come up, the prayer comes, the prayer that serves the purpose of awakening the divine potentials that implode inside of us and yet explode outwardly, sending the sparkly signs divine all over the world. This prayer is like travelling inward all until our sincere pining to get in touch with the divine light penetrates through the clouds that our human nature with all of its distracting thoughts, feelings and desires poses on the sky of our mind, and finally touching the Sun. Many great performance artists have been known to spend an extensive amount of time in meditative, prayerful silence prior to making a move to enlighten the world with its immense, and yet sophisticatedly subtle power. Although Adolf Hitler with his monstrous immorality does not set an example to follow by any means, he did know how to deliver the audience during his orations to the edge of delirium, the art he owed to his habit of standing in silence on the podium and simply gazing at the audience for minutes before beginning his entrancing speeches. Far more enlightening examples that happened to be equally engaging performers similarly spend extensive amounts of time in meditation as they wait for the curtains of the starlit stage to be lifted. In fact, according to methods developed by Stanislavski and Strasberg, two of the standard systems taught in the acting schools, the first step prior to shedding enticing moves on the starlit stage lies in erasing all the pockets of tension piled up in muscles of our body and letting it turn into a placid surface of the sea, the silence of movement, sustained only on the basic tonic contraction that exists even in the state of perfect relaxation<sup>1714</sup>. Another routine exercise is the so-called "lights out" practice where actors first perform any movements that bring them relaxation in a fully dark room and then freeze their posture as the lights are switched on<sup>1715</sup>. By becoming familiar with the unexpectedly adopted posture and acting it out in pure frozenness, the actors' mind journeys along the same road as that of a powerful singer reaching an ever greater oneness with the sea of silence on which the melody of her voice will float, becoming more and more intimate with perfect stillness, the antipode of exciting movement, from which the latter will always originate and to which it will always return. For, the vaster the stillness and silence in our moves and words, the greater their moving effect will be. In fact, one of the most essential principles behind

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<sup>1714</sup> See S. Loraine Hull's Strasberg's Method: A Practical Guide for Actors, Teachers and Directors, Ox Bow Publishing, Woodbridge, CN (1985), pp. 23.

<sup>1715</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 106.

creative acting that novices in the world of performance arts become familiarized with is that which tells us that all gestures on the stage ought to deliberately arise from a state of perfect stillness, free from any incidental, inadvertent and aimless moves<sup>1716</sup>. Not only did Constantin Stanislavski, a most famous acting teacher of them all, claim that stillness and silence can and should be as eloquent<sup>1717</sup> as gestures and words that they intersperse, but he had also “come to the conclusion that before you learn to add accents you must find out how to diminish them”<sup>1718</sup>, which was why he encouraged his students to first become familiarized with the perfectly expressionless state, so as to free themselves of clichéd expressions that “bad habits have allowed to become fastened on”, before letting the moves that bring sheer enthrallment to the viewers pour forth from their silhouette in the stage light. In that sense, an utmost authenticity of our expressions can be achieved only insofar as we ceaselessly return from them to their antipodal state of meditative nothingness and also let them arise straight from this expressional ground zero, the baseline on top of which the amplitudes of our acts appear with striking, wholly mountainous intensity. To eliminate any ripples of habit that exist on this still surface of the sea that depicts our being in its utterly expressionless mode and make every movement of ours arise from the silent bottom of the ocean of our soul is thus the first step in elevating our acts to the most sublime acting vistas imaginable, such as the pinnacle of the column on which the statuette of Victory dances over San Francisco’s Union Square. Isadora Duncan was one of performers aware that her potential to enlighten the audience with dancing directly depended on her ability to produce and maintain this state of immaculate stillness within her, and this is what she said on one occasion: “I spent long days and nights in the studio seeking that dance which might be the divine expression of the human spirit... For hours I would stand quite still, my two hands folded between my breasts, covering the solar plexus. My mother often became alarmed to see me remain for such long intervals quite motionless as if in a trance – but I was seeking, and finally discovered, the central spring of all movement, the crater of motor power, the unity from which all diversions of movement are born, the mirror of vision for the creation of the dance – it was from this discovery that was born the theory on which I founded my school... After many months, when I had learned to concentrate all my force to this one Centre, I found that thereafter when I listened to music the rays and vibrations of the music streamed to this one fount of light within me – there they reflected themselves in Spiritual Vision, not the brain’s mirror, but the soul’s, and from this vision I could express them in Dance”<sup>1719</sup>. Along the same line of thought, suggesting majestic stillness within as a precursor for the majestic movement, another renowned dancer, Yvonne Rainer ended her famous 1965 NO manifesto with the phrase “no to moving or being moved”<sup>1720</sup>. Similarly, having found inspiration in Swami Rama’s classic Yoga class given to Tibetan Lamas, when he insisted on their adopting nothing but the simplest yogic posture, *shavasana*, whereby the body lies flat on the ground with all the muscles maximally relaxed, as well as in a class given by Indian nuns who made the attendees sit on the floor and move the

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<sup>1716</sup> See Hermon Ould’s *The Art of the Play*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., London, UK (1948), pp. 37 - 38.

<sup>1717</sup> See Constantin Stanislavski’s *Building a Character*, Routledge, New York, NY (1936), pp. 150. As he further claimed, “A great actor once said: Let your speech be restrained and your silence eloquent... The wordless conversation can be no less interesting, substantial and convincing than one carried on verbally”.

<sup>1718</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 167.

<sup>1719</sup> The quote was found in Rayner Heppenstall’s *The Sexual Idiom* (1936). In: *What is Dance?* Edited by Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen, Oxford University Press, New York, NY (1983), pp. 276.

<sup>1720</sup> See Camille LeFevre’s *The Dance Bible: The Complete Resource for Aspiring Dancers*, Barron’s, Hauppauge, NY (2012), pp. 38.

soles of their awareness-filled feet forward and backward for hours, one of my Mom's most memorable Hatha Yoga classes, when everyone expected an exciting display of *asanas*, involved pure meditation, merely sitting in silence and listening to the splashes of the sea waves below our lotus-shaped bodies, as if she wished to tell us, her disciples, that without mastering the stillness existing in the center of the spinning wheel of our being, no harmonious movement can ensue. On one hand, "our nature consists in movement; absolute rest is death"<sup>1721</sup>, as Pascal noticed, and just as knowing that light requires looking deep into dark abysses of being, profound appreciation of life asks for meeting the agonies of death and the very day could not be defined without an implicit acknowledgment of the existence of a night, let alone manifest itself in reality without its antipode, so is the buildup of an inspiring movement conditioned by our standing face to face every once in a while with its direct opposite in the form of untouchable stillness and silence. On the other hand, the seeds of uttermost empathy and the shine of divine creativity are sown deep within our spirit and their sprouting and growth calls for a powerful introspective focus of the sunrays of our attention. A complete meditative silence of our being is thus a prerequisite for the loud and radiant outbursts of our spirit and the more we are ready to travel deep into this silence of the soul, the greater the fruits the stem of our body will yield with its outward expressions. Human spirits could thus be visualized as vibrating springs, pendula or crucified bodies with arms stretched in opposite directions, inward and outward; although the current stage of our spiritual evolution may be the one inhabited by spirits shyly and constrainedly oscillating between these ins and outs with quite tiny amplitudes on both sides, the enlightened future, the way I see it, will consist of mortals captivantly immersed in the divine silence of their inner bliss, while at the same time shedding enchanting signs that dazzle the eyes of the world with their surreal beauty. Getting back to our backstage dancer in meditation, once she has touched this inner Sun from which an expanding divine glow radiates, explosive expressions of moving energy could begin. For, as the Way of Love has taught us, this travelling inwards can be done only at the cost of expanding our being outwards, in love and compassion, opening channels for this light divine to penetrate the hearts of many. Thence, it is as if we have fallen into trance, and while fully resting in that great One, moves are magically made and words uttered to impress traces of wonderful inspiration onto minds of others.

And then the words that disgorge tidal waves of inspiration over the bedrocks of my consciousness and instill mysterious energies all through my body come to me, as if through an act of magic. "Think of how the light of the Sun eclipses the night stars, never suddenly, in a matter of milliseconds, but by gradually sending them to distance with an imperceptible slowness. Remember that there is almost always a disparity between the excitement of an onstage performer and the lethargy and the drowsiness of the audience, the reason for which an instant jumper and screamer on the stage will never be able to reach out to the spectators and touch their hearts as well as the one who starts off by mimicking the state of the audience, such as speaking with the deliberation of a slow train and gesturing lazily, with the coolness of a Siamese cat. This demand to speak the listeners' language to effectively convey a spoken message is a testimony to the necessity of beginning the performance quietly, like a rising sun, before slowly, imperceptibly increasing its glow to the point of bedazzlement, all the while embodying the neo-Platonist philosopher, Iamblichus's coda from *De Mysteriis*: 'The gods when they appear, diffuse a light of so subtle a nature, that the corporeal eyes are not able to bear

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<sup>1721</sup> See Blaise Pascal's *Pensée* No. 641, Series XXV, Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK (1669).

it'<sup>1722</sup>. Therefore, start off intentionally insecurely, like a baby learning how to walk and tripping constantly over jaded glass, stammering, cutting sentences in half and making uncomfortably long pauses, somewhat like the Little Tramp in the Great Dictator, acting as unfocused as the prelude to an average Plato's discourse, and then gradually intensifying and polishing the stream of your expressions, resembling a distant train quietly and remotely whistling in the distance at first, but then, as the time goes by, ending up swooshing by with a deafening roar, blowing away the minds of the audience. Dominated by the open display of insecurities, this first stage of the performance serves to relax the audience, to make it feel as if it is at the same level as you, the performer and ensure it that there will be nothing lofty, let alone to fear, going on. This stage melts into its followup, a stage during which the approachability is elevated to even higher levels by building trust between the performer and the audience, and this is done by the transmission of values that connect the two together. And then, when this is done, the third and the final stage can commence, at which you, the performer, now holding the audience in your grasp, can do anything you want with it: wipe up the ceiling, open its hearts into millions of colorful flowers, spin it in dizzying circles under the starriest of semantic skies or petrify and stupefy it. And in spite of these colossal powers resting in you, approach the curtain with a childlike lack of pretension, albeit keeping the heart in focus and just waiting for the right moment when it will signal its burst into an electrifying array of bedazzling expressions and light up the way toward starriness for the surrounding souls. From here on, use your flexible body as a whole and be grounded well. Proceed unhurriedly, slowly, as if through a dream, thus giving a distinct rhythm to the talk that captivates the audience and makes it more receptive to the message and the energy that you wish to convey. Walk freely and fluidly all across the starlit podium. Let the voice of yours find its way up all the way from the ground, reverberating throughout your entire body. Speak with your whole body thence. Let the streams of excitement travel into every segment of your body, electrify your figure and make you naturally and spontaneously use your hands and facial expressions to deliver the message. And fear not your fear. Psychologists could tell you that grandiose aspirations lie at the root of all stage frights<sup>1723</sup>. Getting rid of both thus naturally implies the rise of phlegm and the extinguishment of the potential to electrify, to inspire and immerse the worldly spirits whose wiggly glances rest on us into dazzling starriness that revives with its wisps of divine air. All in all, being free from mildly fearful excitement on the stage is equal to being free from a sense of great responsibility for bringing forth an enlightening message via lecturing, which is the basis of every truly inspiring performance, the performance that, remember, if utterly inspiring, is never a performance, but rather a 'social appearance', as Morrissey insisted<sup>1724</sup>, having nothing affected and pretentious in it and consisting of 100 % realness and honesty. Hence, not shaking off your excitement and nervousness but channeling them into a flow of enthralling signals to the audience is the key. In fact, if you ever realize that stage fright has ceased to seize your spirit prior to a big performance, you should revisit the rigidity into which you have grown over time and find the way to soften the stem of your spirit and start to mildly tremble in view of an approaching act, like a bamboo shoot in the wind, lest your acts wholly lose their inspirational radiance. Be a timid mouse frightened to the bone before getting on the stage and let your heart beat frantically, like that of an unborn child or a rabbit

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<sup>1722</sup> See Iamblichus's *On the Mysteries*, Translated with Introduction and Notes by E. C. Clark, J. M. Dillon and J. P. Hershbell, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, GA (ca. 300 AD).

<sup>1723</sup> See Aleksandra Mijalković's *Terapija za ispitnu groznicu*, *Politika Magazin* (September 9, 2012), pp. 2 – 4.

<sup>1724</sup> See Tony Fletcher's *A Light that Never Goes Out: The Enduring Saga of the Smiths*, Random House, New York, NY (2012).

faced with immediate peril, I say, for such is the way to seed your whole being with stardust of excitement that will propel your performance into stellar realms. ‘I am always incredibly nervous, even if I have to give a speech. If I’m not nervous, then I am nervous because I am not nervous’<sup>1725</sup>, Marina Abramović answered when she was asked if she had a stage fright before her memorable silent show in the Museum of Modern Arts in New York, communicating the same point: without trembling in excitement, no performance able to truly excite and inspire the audience could be given. Thus, stay away from the obscenities of Džoni Štulić, but learn to like his sweetly pretentious arrogance and appreciate when he rants the following: ‘Man has fears. If he hadn’t had them, he would not make songs. I am afraid of everything. I am the biggest coward on planet Earth. The holy book says, ‘When man loses fears, something frightening will happen’. Fear is godly. Fear is good. And whoever fears more will win. Unfortunately. Once I said, ‘I am a coward because I am a man. Whatever a man does, he does out of fear’. I have to quote myself because no one said it better than I did’<sup>1726</sup>. Think further of Thomas Huxley, considered by many to be one of the finest lecturers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>1727</sup>, who was sick with anxiety every time he entered a lecture hall stage. Or how about Swami Vivekananda, who described his experience prior to giving the speech of his lifetime at the World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893, as resolute as the Himalayas, in a letter to Henry Wright: ‘Dear brother, I was so, so afraid to stand before that great assembly of fine speakers and thinkers from all over the world and speak; but the Lord gave me strength’<sup>1728</sup>. Remember, it was right before he gave the speech of his lifetime. Bring then to mind Elizabeth Fraser who trembles prior to newspaper interviews, let alone big concerts, and yet manages to flawlessly pull an awesome singing performance each and every time. Think also of 80-year old Tony Bennett’s observation, after 55 years of career as a vocalist: ‘The most famous artists I’ve ever met are the most nervous when they hit the stage’<sup>1729</sup>. Or think of performance poet Sarah Kay who said how ‘my knees still buckle every time I get on a stage, my self-confidence can be measured out in teaspoons mixed into my poetry, and it still always tastes funny in my mouth’<sup>1730</sup>; for, exactly due to her fearful breathlessness on stage does she succeed in touching people’s hearts with the inspirational flow of air through her lungs and throat, the wondrous flow onto which many birds of paradise could pleasantly glide. Had we systematically uprooted these shaky fears from the core of our being rather than letting them freely permeate each cell of our being, a vital energy to spark the celestial lights of our creativity would be lost for good. Hence, think of these flickers of fear arising in you as you gaze at the audience from the backstage as the divine stardust without which your performance would end up being sunken in the muddles of phlegmatic boringness. Correspondingly, catch these little tensions with the butterfly net of your heart and channel their energy outwardly along the subtle waterways that link the inner center of your being with its

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<sup>1725</sup> Watch the documentary movie *Marina Abramović: The Artist is Present* directed by Matthew Akers (2012).

<sup>1726</sup> See the interview with Džoni Štulić: *Nikada nisam bio idol*, *Pop Rock* magazine (1990), retrieved from <http://www.yugopapir.com/2019/04/johnny-stulic-90-na-domacoj-sceni.html>.

<sup>1727</sup> See Gilbert Highet’s *The Art of Teaching*, Vintage Books, New York, NY (1950), pp. 213.

<sup>1728</sup> See Chaturvedi Badrinath’s *Swami Vivekananda: The Living Vedanta*, Penguin Books, Haryana, India (2006), pp. 177.

<sup>1729</sup> “No matter how much you feel it, you want to feel it even more so that it becomes an honest recording”, said Tony Bennett right after this line of thought, offering a principle that calls for the conscious arousal of a complete multifaceted emotional makeup of one’s being prior to a big performance in order to suffuse it with energies that will move listeners and spectators for generations afterwards. Watch *Amy* directed by Asif Kapadia (2015).

<sup>1730</sup> Watch Sarah Kay’s TED talk: *If I Should Have a Daughter...*, available at [http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah\\_kay\\_if\\_i\\_should\\_have\\_a\\_daughter.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah_kay_if_i_should_have_a_daughter.html) (March 2011).

gestural and verbal surface. Resist the temptation to drown these rattles and hums of excitement and anxiousness in the rivers of cold carelessness, and accept them instead as something downing on you from the heavenly heights of being. Do not submerge them either beneath the sea of entertainment and superficial joy, to which end you must swim against the stream of peer pressure and counteract the style that is being quietly demanded from teachers all over America. Rather, keep on living up to the ideals that you set forth when you began teaching your first class, the one on biomaterials, insisting that the students should not feel good, but rather feel the anxiety of a person waiting in a cold clinic for a biomaterial to be implanted in her, believing that conveying medical ideas without resting on the pedestal of empathy and a tremendous wish to rescue one's brethren from illnesses that have befallen them would amount to a terrible hypocrisy. Moreover, if Søren Kierkegaard was right, the closer you bring viewers to a view of the truth, which to you, as a knowledge seeker and transmitter, should be a goal, the more disturbed and chilled to the bone they would become, the reason for which your performance should be less entertaining before this 'faithless and perverse generation' (Matthew 17:17) and more akin to the sound and the looks stapled onto the back cover of *Kid A*: solemn and beautiful, yet grave to the point of making one's blood run cold. Remember, therefore, what Hector Berlioz said brusquely to a person sitting next to him during the performance of a Beethoven's symphony and advising him 'to better retire for a while' after noticing that the composer was sobbing: 'Are you under the impression that I am here to enjoy myself'<sup>1731</sup>? Rather, in the spirit of Alfred Hitchcock's intention to 'always make the audience suffer as much as possible'<sup>1732</sup>, do it all to arouse a magical vibe in the air that would pluck a tear or two from that egg-shaped sun that the sages have called soul and create the same effect the ancient Greeks intended to provoke with theatrical tragedies, the effect christened 'catharsis' and describable as the cleansing of one's most intimate insides. Therefore, fear not to descend deep into the shrine of thy heart reigned by the cosmic sadness because, while entertainment is shallow and can only graze the surface of the human spirits, having your words and gestures originate from these mysterious depths is the only way to touch the surrounding spirits profoundly, with a wisp of divinity. Though this is not to say that starry joy is not to pervade your performance, do it all to make the viewers of your act tremble, the effect of which, need I add, you could not achieve without trembling from the inside in the first place. The oldest love poem known to humanity rests inscribed on a clay tablet in the Museum of the Ancient Orient in what used to be known as the city of Constantinople and says only this in Sumerian, 'Bridegroom, you have taken pleasure of me, you have captivated me: let me stand trembling before you'<sup>1733</sup>, pointing together with the spirit of Søren Kierkegaard at 'fear and trembling' (Philippians 2:12) as the way to salvation of our souls in the sanctuaries of godly beauties that subtly pervade each and every corner of this world. Skilled daters and romantic heartbreakers have advised their protégés that a girl facing whom does not make their knees all jerky is not worth hitting on and, having picked this piece of advice and converted it to the art of inspirational performances, I am telling you that a talk with no quirky and unconventional elements, the very thinking of proclaiming which makes our heart palpitate and tremble like a bamboo shoot in the wind, is probably not worth giving at all. Some may say that it is the animal brain in us that makes us feel like a prey upon perceiving beady eyes

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<sup>1731</sup> See Norman Lebrecht's *The Book of Musical Anecdotes*, The Free Press, New York, NY (1985), pp. 118.

<sup>1732</sup> See Adam Brent Houghtaling's *This Will End in Tears: The Miserabilist Guide to Music*, HarperCollins, New York, NY (2012), pp. 11.

<sup>1733</sup> See John Freeman's *The Tyranny of E-Mail: The Four-Thousand Year Journey to Your Inbox*, Scribner, New York, NY (2011), pp. 1.

gawking at us from the dark, signaling for the flight of fight response from the back of our mind, but I tell you that it is the angelic portion of the brain too that sheds the stardust of fear all across the floor of our consciousness, marking the path that is to be taken if we wish to express ourselves enlighteningly; for, the greater the fears that we absorb in devising creative action, the greater its outcomes will be and the greater the benefits we will reap at the end of our ways. In that sense, do your best not to avoid this state of constructive anxiousness, but build it wisely and let it be a wave on which your talkative surf will make the deeply touched and dazzled audience go ‘Aw’. Therefore, reflect the image of Gustav Mahler whose ‘personality was dramatic’<sup>1734</sup> and who ‘diffused an atmosphere of high tension’<sup>1735</sup> by not drowning these little sparkly stars of stress and anxiety that begin to pile up in you before the performance in sluggish ponds of lukewarm carelessness, but by building them up inside of yourself and then explosively releasing them like geysers of inspirational impulsiveness all over the stunned faces of the audience. In a key scene from *All About Eve*, when elusive Eve Harrington tosses herself on bed in distress, right after her dishonest past was exposed, sobbingly mumbling out that she could not perform that night by any means, Addison courtly closes the door and softly says, ‘You’ll give the performance of your life’, seconds after which we learn that indeed ‘it was a night to remember that night’, subtly shedding the sign that stress gives us a vital source of energy to be harnessed and used to propel our beings toward magnificent performances. The radical nature of the art of acting taught in Elia Kazan’s Actors Studio in New York around the time of Rod Steiger and Marlon Brando consisted in the concordant enforcement of the accession, rather than suppression, of fears, all until one turns into a ‘pressure cooker’<sup>1736</sup> that sublimates all the inner trepidations into something deeply humane and utterly inspiring. Remember, therefore, that ‘where fools rush in, angels fear to tread’, but also know that ‘all those things that scare us may be only things that crave for our love’. Hence, step forth with love beaming out its blessing rays from the center of your heart. For, it is like a lantern that illuminates the way forward, through the haze of fear and antagonism. It is also the shield that protects us from the rays of negative thoughts that are sent forth by judgmental human minds. But you, you should be the one who lives up to the wonderful ideal of ‘having come not to judge the world, but to save the world’<sup>1737</sup>. And on the way to fulfill this great ideal by your astonishing being in the world, remember the Little Prince’s saying how ‘the stars are beautiful because of the flower one cannot see’. Therefore, let the revolving door of your consciousness open in full swing and let the memory of all the things that mean a world to you, but are not here with you, stream through it. Let your mind be flooded in an instant, as if by a flash of lightning, with the random scenes from your life rich with beautiful memories, so rich that if they could build a mountain, the mountain would reach all the way to the Moon. Then pick one or two of these scenes that popped up on your mental screen, linger a bit longer on them and absorb their emotional energy, but remember all the while that mind whose ‘thoughts are flower strewn, ocean storm, bayberry moon’, the mind throwing ‘ginger, lemon, indigo, coriander stem and rose of hay’ all around it like confetti on a New Year’s eve, the mind that thrilled and transported you to some transcendental realms of thought oh so many times as a youth, the mind that gave away it all so as to empty itself ‘to the tide’ and ‘fall into the ocean’<sup>1738</sup>. Like it, let all your rivers of thoughts, regardless of whence

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<sup>1734</sup> See Bruno Walter’s *Gustav Mahler*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY (1958), pp. 77.

<sup>1735</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15.

<sup>1736</sup> Watch *The Story of Film: An Odyssey*, Season 1, Episode 6, directed by Mark Cousins (2011).

<sup>1737</sup> See Antoine de Saint-Exupery’s *The Little Prince*, Mladost, Zagreb, Croatia (1943).

<sup>1738</sup> Listen to R.E.M.’s *Find the River on Automatic for the People*, Warner Bros (1992).

they come, flow into the ocean of love that the memory of your Mom represents. Think then of your Mom and of love and the solemn beauty she infused into you, and let her be this great flower in the center of your mind. Reckon then her sailing away to that incomprehensible Great Beyond while waving at you from the shore, with her velvety hat, the shabby jacket and beat-up shoes on, still a child in her heart who has sacrificed her life for love, that divinest of all the godly gifts bestowed upon you, and produce thereby a silent shiver in the air, for from it, not from humoresque lightness, will the greatest impressions be born. Think, then, of how much you have passed through to be here and of how great the foundations of human civilization ingrained in you and your knowledge are. Talk with showing the implicit greatness of it to the world around. Talk with charms and subtle beauties that all your life has compiled into memories that twinkle like stars inside of your head. Dwell in the landscapes you love. In the rooms of your juvenile solitude with moonlit tree shadows dancing on the walls and hearts of the loved ones beating in the distance, all enwrapped in starry memories. On the beach, brushing your fingers against the stony surface, reading mysterious messages of Nature inscribed on lines and ridges of pebbles crunching on the palms of your hands. Driving a red train on the edge of the sidewalk, beneath the s-m-a-l-l *palma* on the corner of Knightsbridge and Westhaven<sup>1739</sup>, picking yellow Bermuda buttercups and *nemesia sunsattia* coconuts under mystical cypresses, or standing under the orange tree where Castlegate Drive bends, counting palms, one by one, from one to nine, with that little god who tirelessly points his finger at the Moon, the treetops, *šišarkas*, balloons, *žbuns* and myriads of other mysteries under the Sun. Know that for as long as beautiful emotions and remembrances reverberate across the celestial space of your mind and heart, simply letting this inner flow of enlightening energy emerge on the surface of your being would be enough to exert a mysteriously thrilling effect on the audience. To that end, look after obeying the call Godard's muse would wish to whisper to your ear: 'Make sure you use everything you communicate using silence and stillness'<sup>1740</sup>. 'Speaking of the hidden by means of the hidden – is this not the content?'<sup>1741</sup>, the concordant words Wassily Kandinsky carved out of a bleeding heart somewhere in the midst of his abstract art treatise, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, may be then posed before you as a road to follow, all paved with golden dewdrops. And when you do succeed in this communication of the holily mysterious using the wordless language of the holy mystery herself, although your appearance may be as quiet and motionless like a placid sea, you would still radiate with unexplainable waves of rousing energy everywhere around you, magically attracting attention like the Christ walking through the streets of Salamanca in Dostoyevsky's story about the Grand Inquisitor. In the light of this insight, think of Ivan Karamazov's reflecting on this story about the Christ's second coming with the following words: 'He came softly, unobserved, and yet, strange to say, everyone recognized Him. That might be one of the best passages in the poem'. Still, never cease to be as widely awake, alert and present right here, right now as you could be, knowing that 'you, the artist, have come here to live out

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<sup>1739</sup> It was the very same baby palm tree that would be cut down by the municipal authorities soon after Theo and I played under it, only because it grew excessively sideways, widthwise, insinuating the fate of all the thinkers that think sideways, contextually, systemically, who'd wish to reach out to people around them more than, loftily, to the skies over them like their slim, snooty and sky-high neighbors. Yet, by contrasting the narrow mindsets that are ideal for manipulation by the worldly authorities, these very same authorities would go on to derogate the sideways-thinking romanticists, the thorns in their eyes, for being "an ocean wide and an inch deep" and cruelly, cold-bloodedly sign the order for their extermination.

<sup>1740</sup> Watch *Histoire(s) du cinema* directed by Jean-Luc Godard, Chapter 2b: *Deadly Beauty* (1997).

<sup>1741</sup> See Frank Whitford's *Kandinsky: Watercolours and other Works on Paper*, Thames and Hudson, London, UK (1999).

**LOUD**, as Émile Zola had it. Explode all over the podium then, in fireworks that illuminate the world, like those you watched with Theo on Westberry Road, knowing all the while that ‘a hit finds a flicker in the flint’, as Njegoš’s Abbot Stefan put it<sup>1742</sup>. However, do not be reactive to the point where you’d become stressfully rigid and unnaturally uptight, like a defused stick of dynamite that never busts and burns. Instead, at the same time as you pull magnificent moves, be calm and meditative, deeply withdrawn inside, for it will like a strange magnet pull other people’s attention into the core of your heart where all the stars of beauty that you are swirl. For, as Kahlil Gibran observed, ‘How can one be indeed near unless he be far?’<sup>1743</sup> Think, then, of your overhearing four-year old Theo’s monologues, words he would mumble thinking no one else hears him, and realizing that they are infinitely more interesting, captivating and sweet than those he uttered in a social circle, when he knew he was being observed – it is the same sense of aloneness that you must awaken inside yourself when on the stage or elsewhere in order to produce a mesmerizing experience and touch the hearts of spectators and other people around you. For, only through this inwardness and descent deep into the divine depths of yourself will you be able to incarnate that equation mark that made ‘playing concertos and working miracles the same thing’<sup>1744</sup> in the worldview of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Remember, then, that ‘the ancient Greeks believed that artists were like holy seers possessed by the spirit of divine muses’<sup>1745</sup>, and immerse yourself deep inside this ocean of divine spiritedness that shimmers within your soul, all until you begin to swim with ‘the mermaids singing... riding seaward on the waves’<sup>1746</sup>, and feel the clepsydrae of Cosmos running through your veins and heartbeats echoing the euphonies of eternity. This is why you are spinning these thoughts and absorbing the energy created by their mental vortices as you journey deep into yourself seconds before the curtain is lifted - because how you prepare yourself while you are far from those whom you wish to enlighten matters more than what you do when you finally come face-to-face with them and when all you need to do is release yourself, in all the spontaneity of your lively spirit, to the holy waves and undulations that you drew inside yourself in these moments of silent rumination; or, as John Stockton, that impeccable stealer and giver, said after being sent to retirement by your Serbian basketball countrymen, ‘In a lot of ways it is more important what you do before you go on the court than what you do on the court’<sup>1747</sup>. Know also that feeling good and happy is a prerequisite for making others feel the same way, whereas feeling rigid, stiff and fishy faced will produce the same sense of boredom and indifference in others. However, know also that feeling good and happy but without the sense of mysterious depth that our profound meditative connectedness with the divine brings forth turns us into a superficial and irritatingly insipid performer, whereas a lack in the playfully joyous spiritedness on the account of mere seriousness would instill the sense of unpleasant tenseness in others. Being childishly bright, sprightly and joyful and yet deeply rooted in the gravest grounds of our mind and heart is the key to an enchanting experience for all, provided our performance sticks all of the time to the ideal of jazzy spontaneity and naturalness. Yet, be aware of a vital aspect that the traditional jazz music

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<sup>1742</sup> “Udar nađe iskru u kamenu”, says the Montenegrin poet in his epic, *The Mountain Wreath*, Nova Knjiga, Podgorica, Montenegro (1846), to which we could add another common Serbian proverb: “Bez starca nema udarca”.

<sup>1743</sup> See Kahlil Gibran’s *The Prophet*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY (1923).

<sup>1744</sup> See Norman Lebrecht’s *The Book of Musical Anecdotes*, The Free Press, New York, NY (1985), pp. 58.

<sup>1745</sup> Watch *Top 10 Secrets and Mysteries* TV show, Season 1, Episode 3: *History’s Mysterious Works of Art* (2018).

<sup>1746</sup> See T. S. Eliot’s *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, In: *Prufrock and Other Observations* by T. S. Eliot, The Egoist, London, UK (1917).

<sup>1747</sup> Watch John Stockton’s last post-game press conference, retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXQb5RbbJ70> (April 30, 2003).

has been lacking and which has made its classical harmonic structure intrinsically imperfect: the sense of awe, of simultaneous fear and astonishment in face of the greatness of the world. Hence, know that ice breakers need to be light, quirky and goofy and that such a clownish, poetically entertaining element of our behavior is vital in letting others loose, but also know that awakening an immense sense of responsibility and a passionate desire to pine for the stars and bring them down to earth to make others happy is the complementary aspect of the shine of a perfect personality. Hence, achieve the balance between Björk's giving an interview humbly and gracefully on one side and her ecstatically yelling and leaping all over the place in *It's Oh So Quiet*<sup>1748</sup> on another. Let unsteadiness emanate from every segment of your talk, such as during Jeff Buckley's performance of James Shelton's *Lilac Wine*<sup>1749</sup>, as if all will fall apart at any given moment, and yet let everyone feel the strength of the stream of willfulness that runs from the center of your being towards the surrounding world, like a steaming train that is about to smash all things lying on its way, a graceful windmill that unstoppably spins its arms while milling the wheat, or a powerful waterway that is about to wash everyone away with its herculean flow. 'Nature is as subtle as she is strong'<sup>1750</sup>, Emerson noticed, and the same ideal of balancing soft shakiness with unyielding strength ought to be lived up to with every cell of your being while on the stage. Know that a blend of love and punchiness, such as that Björk herself personified while running in a zigzag pattern with tears of devotion flowing from her eyes and screams of joy and ecstasy sent to fly in the air amidst the yellow balloons<sup>1751</sup>, yields the combination of elegance and grace on one side and wild and fanciful freeness on another, which is nothing but pivotal for the sake of ensuring a stylish and memorable performance of yours. Be a child and a sage, a dove and a serpent at the same time, as the Christ advised (Matthew 10:16). Be an acrobat on the wire who touches stars with one hand of his and is at the same time thoroughly down-to-earth with the other, knowing that only in such a way, while combining unpretentious humanness and stellar streams of consciousness, can he bring divine guiding stars down to earthly reigns, stretching one arm far, far away, risking to fall into the abysses of arty-farty inflatedness, and the other arm farther and farther away to the opposite side, risking a slip-off into the voids of overly relaxed carelessness and slumped indifference, yet magically balancing each other out and yielding an equilibrium between softness and tension that characterizes all the supremely vital physical systems that shed divine signs all around them like confetti on a carnival day. For, after all, in life it's all about balancing the seemingly non-balanceable and whenever you realize that one thing solely, one direction only, would be good for you, remember to reach your other hand to its opposite, and stay crucified between the two poles. For, such is the nature of our progressive being in this life. Like a tightrope walker, like the great Valerio<sup>1752</sup>, we need to walk along the Middle Way. Should we overly lean to any of the sides, the risk of falling would become imminent. Still, know that falling from a balanced state is just fine. For, only by falling can we truly progress forward; only by always searching anew for balances from fallen-from-grace states do we advance in life. And while advancing forward gingerly, with such inherently insecure steps, epitomizing angels who 'fear to tread'

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<sup>1748</sup> Listen to Björk's *It's Oh So Quiet* on Post, *One Little Indian* (1995).

<sup>1749</sup> Listen to Jeff Buckley's *Lilac Wine* on Grace, Columbia (1994).

<sup>1750</sup> See Emerson's *Nature*, available at <http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/emerson/nature-contents.html> (1836).

<sup>1751</sup> Watch the official video for Björk's *It's Oh So Quiet* (1995), retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htobTBICvUU>.

<sup>1752</sup> Listen to Richard and Linda Thompson's *The Great Valerio* on *I Want to See the Bright Lights Tonight*, Island (1973).

rather than extensively predetermined and robotically preprogrammed fools who ‘rush in’, you will give an impression that things may instantly slip out of your control and fall apart, shattering the entire lecture and your career to pieces. And yet, resembling an acrobat on the wire who may tumble down onto the audience at any given moment is an invaluable trick used on behalf of superb lecturers to keep the audience on the edge, in the state of constant suspense, as if the whole performance might just suddenly collapse. These masters on the lecture podium certainly know that acting so is the only way to prevent the attention of the watchers from dissipating or falling to sleep and keep it focused throughout the whole presentation. What they also know is that this wobbly walk over the edge, giving the impression that everything can fall apart at any time, is the best way to win the hearts of the audience, too. Hence, remember: on the stage, behind the lectern, when crafting the written word, and everywhere else in life, you always tiptoe over the cliff overlooking an ocean of everlasting being, out there where the views are at their most beautiful and where discoveries of new lands lurk behind each glimpse into the distance, out there where everyone watching is being shaken by awe and, because of this daring stance of yours, people’s hearts fall into your embrace like the droplets of the monsoon rain. Let your talk, then, not be a march, lest they all pass out into an absent state of mind; let it be a wobbly stroll through a magical space, whereby you’d stumble and up yourself and gingerly wipe the dust off your tattered coat and continue to walk and stumble and walk and stumble, all until the very end. To that end, remember that forgiving oneself and everyone else is the first step in shattering the weeping wall of judgmental outlooks posed between our ego and the rest of the world and getting in utterly intimate touch with one’s divinely potent self as well as that reflecting on hurdles crossed or stumbled on in the past can make us trip over and over again, and that ‘someone who feels guilty does not make a good performer’<sup>1753</sup>, as a Metropolitan Opera host noticed once, but, on the other hand, be aware that a perfect sense of certainty and security that such zero reflectivity bears could only make us narcissistically standoffish and unable to truly move human hearts around us unless, of course, we find a thin balance between the two extremes and ‘rise above only to fall and rise again’<sup>1754</sup>, as an artist described Judy Garland on the stage, along with her windy gazes transfixed on colorful lands of fancy that lie far beyond the gloomy fields of reality. Therefore, whenever you find yourself resting in a comfort zone, whatever the form it takes, be it oratorical, gestural or mental, a zone in which the chances of your stumbling along the way are minimal but the chances of earning satisfactory pats on the shoulder by the audiences maximal<sup>1755</sup>, immediately step out of it and be ready to engage in this alternation of slumping and soaring, for such and such only is the way to victory for a performance artist in the long run. Hence, all in all, do not be afraid of making mistakes. Do not look back at them regretfully without coupling these disheartened looks with starry-eyed optimism, lest, like Lot’s wife (Genesis 19:26), you turn into a pillar of salt and crumble into a shapeless pile of dried-out emotions all over the stage. Embrace thine imperfections, therefore, with smiles shimmering underneath your breath, knowing that they are irreplaceably vital evolutionary impetuses. Think first of two of the twenty five Oblique Strategies designed by Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt to spur the timely outbursts of the creative force, namely ‘Emphasize the flaws’ and ‘Look closely

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<sup>1753</sup> See Peter K. Elkus’ *The Telling of Our Truths: The Magic in Great Musical Performance*, Peter K. Elkus (2007), pp. 36.

<sup>1754</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85.

<sup>1755</sup> See Zorica Kojić’s interview with Sajsi MC: *Podnošljiv život je onaj sačinjen od iluzija*, B92 News (January 1, 2018), retrieved from [https://www.b92.net/kultura/vesti.php?nav\\_category=271&yyyy=2018&mm=01&dd=01&nav\\_id=1342462](https://www.b92.net/kultura/vesti.php?nav_category=271&yyyy=2018&mm=01&dd=01&nav_id=1342462).

at the most embarrassing details and amplify them<sup>1756</sup>, then think of Barney Bubbles' deliberately cutting off the E from Elvis Costello and the T from This Year's Model on the cover of the town cryer's landmark record, so as to surprise and awaken others into new dimensionality of artistic experience, then of the graphic designer, then of Terry Quirk's misspelling the first word in the title of the Zombies' record now known thanks to his premeditated error as Odessey and Oracle<sup>1757</sup>, then of Marshall McLuhan's demanding that the typesetter's erroneous spelling of 'message' as 'massage' in the title of the book that was to repeat the author's popular phrase, 'medium is the message', remains on the front cover<sup>1758</sup>, then of Johnny Cash's interrupting a live performance, which was to become a part of his most praised, *chef-d'oeuvre* record, At Folsom Prison, to say 'no laughing during the song please, it's been recorded'<sup>1759</sup>, then of Bob Dylan putting a blurred, out-of-focus photo of himself at the cover of Blonde on Blonde to signify the impromptu casualness as the key to touching the depths of the human soul, then of Clyfford Still's Untitled 1953, where the monotony of a blue canvas got interrupted only along the edges, by seemingly accidental smears of red and yellow, then of Andy Warhol's justifying his use of the rather messy 'blotted line' printmaking technique<sup>1760</sup> for a shoemaking business he worked for in the 1950s by saying, 'When you do something exactly wrong, you always turn up something'<sup>1761</sup>, and then, to close the circle running from askew to askew, fancy hairdressers with Cockney accents always making cuts diagonally, implying that all that we do in this quirky universe wherein creativity is craziness' next of kin must be done tilted, at oblique angles with respect to the grounds on which we bounce to the cloudiest skies and back. Think, then, of how Maya Angelou began her autobiography, which would span her entire life in seven books and 44 years of writing, from I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings in 1969 to Mom & Me & Mom in 2013, with the memory of her forgetting her lines during an Easter morning church service<sup>1762</sup>, suggesting to the reader that if a mistake always marks the beginning of something grandiosely beautiful, then why not making it, with deliberate spontaneity, the type of act she resorts to over and over again in the course of this autobiography, as in an instance where she breaks the English grammar to conclude that 'it be's like that sometimes'. In support of the idea that imperfections give life to a performance, think also of Godard's deliberate introduction of a myriad of technical errors in his *Film Socialisme*, the film in which the French *nouvelle vague* auteur deconstructed the plot and the dialogue to the point of impossibility of predicting or

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<sup>1756</sup> See Nicholas Rombes' A Cultural Dictionary of Punk, Continuum, New York, NY (2009), pp. 155 - 156.

<sup>1757</sup> When I titled my and the world's first stream-of-consciousness scientific paper, "An Odessey at the Interface – A Study in the Stream of Consciousness", it was meant to be an homage to this quirky misspelling of the word "odyssey" on the cover of one of my most favorite records from the 1960s, yet the journal production office did not tolerate this and they rephrased "odessey" to "odyssey" prior to publishing the piece. See Vuk Uskoković – "An Odyssey at the Interface – A Study in the Stream of Consciousness", *Biointerface Research in Applied Chemistry* 12 (4) 5150 – 5160 (2022).

<sup>1758</sup> See the Wikipedia page on Marshall McLuhan's book, *The Medium is the Massage* (Penguin, UK, 1967) available at [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Medium\\_Is\\_the\\_Massage](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Medium_Is_the_Massage) (2022).

<sup>1759</sup> Listen to Johnny Cash's *Dark as the Dungeon* on At Folsom Prison, Columbia (1968).

<sup>1760</sup> See Lesson: Andy Warhol's Blotted Line retrieved from <https://www.warhol.org/lessons/andy-warhols-blotted-line/> (2023).

<sup>1761</sup> See Marina Kochetkova's *Andy Warhol: Religious Artist for a Secular Society*, *Daily Art Magazine* (August 6, 2023), retrieved from <https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/andy-warhol-religious-artist/>.

<sup>1762</sup> See Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Random House, New York, NY (1969). See also Yolanda M. Manora's "'What You Looking at Me For? I Didn't Come to Stay': Displacement, Disruption and Black Female Subjectivity in Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*", *Women's Studies* 34, 359 – 375 (2005).

insinuating what will be said or done by a character next, thus portraying a brighter future of verbal communication and immersing the viewer into a magical space of anarchic freedoms that liberates the spirit like no cinematic expression revolving around a narrative thread can do, alongside creating an authentic Brechtian experience, which ought to be the horizon that your performance should steadily walk to too, an experience that may be boring, painful or perplexing to the audience, but will have the viewer leave the hall enriched with a sprinkling of divine sense to be disseminated into the world, influencing him deeper and more lastingly than even the most captivating, amusing and mouthwatering plot is able to achieve. Think also of handclaps used in place of cymbals in Belle & Sebastian's *Boy with the Arab Strap* and of your throwing a metronome out the window during a rehearsal years ago, or of the Stone Roses' aforementioned going down in history with their faking the power outage during their premier BBC appearance and abruptly aborting their performance less than a minute into it<sup>1763</sup>, substituting music with apish cusses and thus doing more favor to the message they wished to convey through music than years of playing live would do. Think of the sympathetic computers from the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, breaking down, offering seemingly meaningless answers to the cosmic puzzles, humanizing themselves by becoming imperfect and saving the universe thereby. Think of Thom Yorke on the stage, rejecting the idea of robotically preplanned and flawless performance and embracing instead exhibition of insane erroneousness that is so far beyond the limits of conventionality that it unambiguously appears inarticulate and creepy to the majority of the mainstream audience, and yet managing to inspire more people to live up to the ideals of truly sustainable living than armies of bureaucratically boring and bland declaimers of benevolent doctrines in suits can dream of doing. Remember that rock 'n' roll and the entire 20<sup>th</sup> Century popular music that emerged from it are good only if they sound as if being composed in the blink of an eye, lest it 'go stale if it sits too long'<sup>1764</sup>, on a chalky paper tissue with a crumbly piece of charcoal the size of a nail, and delivered casually, semi-carelessly, with a tipped hat, in a greasy jacket and soiled shoes, a cigarette in the mouth and one arm leaning onto the wall while the other rests inside a holey pocket of one's tatty trousers, and make sure that your performance incarnates the same spirit of spontaneity and rejects the pharisaism of expressing prefabbed thoughts and emotions not tuned to the spirit of the moment, to the ever-changing 'signs of the times', whose vibes hover over one like transient clouds. Reckon, then, that the evocation of the holy spirit in your words and moves is possible only insofar as you act as a gambler, so to speak, as you ceaselessly improvise and surf on the waves of Tao, of the inexplicable spiritual energy that pervades all things, twisting like a spiral that falls after each upward turn and ascends after each fall, in support of which the words of Michael Stipe can resonate across the space: 'The place I always like to push towards is instinct and the mistakes, which is where the God lives, and that's where you find the inspiration that comes from somewhere else, you don't know where, you don't need to question it, you know when it's real, you know when it's authentic and you run with that, you turn your thinking brain off'<sup>1765</sup>. Hence, give up preconceived presentations and do not hesitate to hesitantly improvise. Or, even better, prepare yourself well in advance, but then, as the moment to perform comes knocking on the door of your consciousness shrilly electrified with excitement, scatter all these preconceived words and ideas into the air,

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<sup>1763</sup> See Simon Spence's *The Stone Roses: War and Peace*, St. Martin's Griffin, New York, NY (2012), pp. 146.

<sup>1764</sup> See Mihajlo Dajmak's *Džoni Štulić: Ja nisam trgovac, ja sam revolucionar!*, *Rock 82* (June 1982), retrieved from <http://www.yugopapir.com/2013/04/branimir-dzoni-stulic-ja-nisam-trgovac.html>.

<sup>1765</sup> Watch the interview with Michael Stipe and Mike Mills titled *R.E.M. – Monster, Track by Track* given for Radio X (October 31, 2019), retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJJe9gA9jsI&t=1162s>.

step forth and go freely with the flow, razing and rebuilding at the same time, without the slightest clue as to where the discourse is heading to and what its final destination will be like. Fernando Flores used to say that the most important things in life, be it being born, sailing to the Great Beyond, saving a boy from the oncoming train or choosing whether to run left or right as bombs fall all around one, are done only once, implying that, in turn, if you wish to make a talk or any other expression truly memorable, you need to deliver it only once, resisting to repeat yourself in any of its aspects and turning it instead into a one and only jazz improvisation of a kind. I do not know if the orphan from Minsk was right when she said that ‘God only gives you wings once in a lifetime’<sup>1766</sup>, but I do know that where you stand is now and never again. Now is the one and only time that this exact moment is here, with all these souls burning like candles in the night aligned in this precise configuration, so this is your only chance to shine, like never before or after. And if this moment is so unique, then it naturally calls for a unique expression, never told to the world before, for only one such expression adjusted in its every element to this special occasion can light up all these hearts pining for enlightenment. Temptations will always be there to pull your sleeve down which waterfalls of inspiration slide and distract you, but whenever during the talk you find yourself at a crossroads, one way from which leads to the repetition of a previous performance and the other way from which leads to the adventurous, improvisatory quest for an act that has never been told to the world, know that the former path is the path to safety, while the latter path is the path to freedom and is the one to embrace with nil reservations, on the wings of perceiving improvisation as ‘the ultimate human (i.e., heroic) endowment’<sup>1767</sup>. Open your heart to the mystery of Now and think out loud with an eye for the moment, involving everyone’s spirit in the audience and beyond in this thought process, all until a strange resemblance becomes born between your onstage performance and the lecturing of Marshall McLuhan, as immortalized in the following lines drawn by Douglas Coupland: ‘Marshall was a terrific professor, burying students in cascades of ideas generated on the spot. As time went on, Marshall’s classes were packed and overflowing... It’s not as if there was a formal agenda and one either learned it or not. The key to getting the man seemed to be to open your mind and then expose yourself to his thoughts... During classes he would ramble, seemingly unaware of those around him, clicking in and out of reality... He found it much preferable to do his thinking in real time, out loud, with an audience or a classroom as his catalyst. *Conversation* is what he called it’<sup>1768</sup>. Not incidentally at all, the italicized word here implies the act of mutual conversion: of the speaker and of the spoken to. Hence, just when the audience thinks they know who you are, make a turn and do something that conveys the message of Vijay from Pyaasa, ‘I am not that Vijay’, incessantly self-renewing yourself, becoming a new You with every moment of your existence – a diamond with an infinite number of facets,

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<sup>1766</sup> Watch *I Won’t Come Back* (Ya ne vernus) directed by Ilmar Raag (2014).

<sup>1767</sup> “Improvisation is the ultimate human (i.e., heroic) endowment” is a quote attributed to the book *The Hero and the Blues* by Albert Murray in Stanley Crouch’s *Considering Genius*, Basic Civitas Books, New York, NY (2006), pp. 175.

<sup>1768</sup> See Douglas Coupland’s *Marshall McLuhan: You Know Nothing of My Work!*, Atlas & Co., New York, NY (2010), pp. 118. At another place in the book the description of McLuhan’s teaching style is reiterated, sounding almost as if Douglas Coupland portrayed myself in the classroom: “Most anyone who attended or audited his classes or went to any of his speeches will agree that Marshall became random quickly. He was tangential and self-contradictory, and could really piss people off. With his protective oblivious coating, it all bounced off him. He was out to stimulate people into making up their own minds and stimulating their own ideas, using his thinking as a catalyst. If they became wrapped up in a specific, it meant they’d lost sight of the big picture. He almost felt sorry for people who took him the wrong way” (pp. 154 – 155).

reflecting the whole Universe in its glister. The watchers would be thus kept on the edge of their seats, their receptiveness maximized, and you, you would gracefully overcome the obstacle noted by Cesare Pavese: ‘The difficulty of art lies in rendering with astonishment the things which we know while treating them in a surprising manner’<sup>1769</sup>. After all, in the academic milieu dominated by robotically monotonous presentations, a staggering improvisation, whereby we may stop talking all of a sudden and merely stand out there scratching our head or stammer out mumbles haltingly for a second or so, implicitly speaks rebellion against the dead hand of academic clichés, accentuating the drive to crush all habits and norms around us as the source of true creativity along the way. For, if our aim, as a teacher and an inspirer, is to lead the viewers by the hand to the top of the pyramid that Bloom’s taxonomy is, whereat the word ‘creativity’ stands inscribed in bold letters, we must speak against the structure in whichever the form it is being presented to us and incessantly improvise, knowing that only if we shatter the firmly structured concepts, beliefs and methods that we have become accustomed to can we be creative and innovative in our doings. Hence, do your best to embody the essence of jazzy artiness in you. Always be open to present your ideas using new words and new expressions. Remember what Robert Irwin carved onto the floor of the plaza of the central garden of your favorite pastime place in the city of LA, the Getty Center, amidst a maze of azaleas and bougainvillea arbors: ‘Ever present, never twice the same; ever changing, never less than whole’. For, if you are to deliver ever greater and more inspiring words and moves during your lecture and your entire life alike rather than fall into traps of routine after having been allured by the approvals of the world and thus act in the spirit of the Christ’s first miracle during the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee, for which he turned water into wine, simplicity and ordinariness, little things of the world into those shining with captivating beauty, urging one of the guests to comment how ‘every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now’ (John 2:10), you need to keep on being that rolling stone that grows no moss on its surface and never stop searching for novel ways of expressing yourself in the spirit of the moment and signs of the times which flash everywhere around you like little stars, in spite of the riskiness for your name and reputation that this approach naturally brings. For, without being ready to fall flat on our face, we could never stream forward in all the greatness that sprouts of divine spiritedness instilled in all of us have destined us for. In that sense, remember that the greatest mistake is thinking that one is free from mistakes. By thinking in this manner, one closes the channels through which precious insights flow in and brim over our mind with peace-awakening and beautifying impressions. By opening them, however, endless novel ways of expressing oneself flow into one. Hence, be a small, humble and modest mouse and yet strive for the stars. Remember how the Christ rejected the Devil’s offer of the power in the desert. ‘Power wears out those who do not have it’, you may hear the devilish words whispered to your ears, but you will let them pass like a cold and wintry wind in one ear, out the other and embrace instead the words of Elbert Hubbard from his Message to Garcia, saying ‘I am an Anarchist. All good men are Anarchists. All cultured, kindly men; all gentlemen; all just men are Anarchists. Jesus was an Anarchist’<sup>1770</sup>, and then hear the echo the words of Ivan Illich in your heart: ‘He was an anarchist savior... he wants to be counted

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<sup>1769</sup> See Aldo Tassone’s *From Romagna to Rome: The Voyage of a Visionary Chronicler*, In: Federico Fellini: *Essays in Criticism*, edited by Peter Bondanella, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK (1978), pp. 269.

<sup>1770</sup> See Elbert Hubbard’s *A Message to Garcia and Thirteen Other Things*, Roycrofters, East Aurora, NY (1899).

among weak and the poor'<sup>1771</sup>. Hence, be humble, like the sea that is below the rivers that other people's eyes are, and yet into which all those rivers flow. As such, not desiring to place yourself above others, but quite opposite, to see the world from other people's perspectives and act so as to bring light to them is what will make you act in an enlightening manner and make gods truly happy. For, to travel as low as possible, driven by the urge to empathize and help others reach for the stars, with one side of our consciousness, and to be distant, withdrawn and sublime, resting ourselves in those elevated starry reigns of heart and mind with the other side of our consciousness is what makes us incarnate the sun and the stars within our being, the ideal that alchemists of the world have celebrated ever since. Remember how one of the most striking messages conveyed by the theological legend of Bhagavad-Gita was the guideline handed to our hero by the divine creature, teaching him how to incessantly stream upward in his thoughts, as if stretching the arms of his spirit to touch the clouds of sublime and meditative thought whereupon gods and gardens of paradise rest, while at the same time engaging himself heartily and sacrificially in bringing selfless love to the creatures of the world, tirelessly dancing and directing the inner energies ever lower and closer to earth and human hearts, to the battlegrounds of life where contradicting forces that sustain life (e)merge. In such a way, we install a dialectical cross in the midst of our heart, which makes us able to embody sublime starry energies within our being and radiate with them outwards, as in the spirit of the aforementioned accentuation of similar dialectical encounters in artistic pieces as the keys to their timeless beauty. From this balance between the divine in us streaming downwards and landing on people of the world with its sublime grace and the humane in us streaming upwards to touch the stars in its chaste wonder, the mindset which blends passionate affection with careless flights of our imagination and meditative swimming in the starry pools of cosmic joy arises in its full bliss. Thus we become untouchably remote, as if floating across distant universes, and yet empathically receptive, shining forth with an enthralling directedness. By sinking deep inside yourself, not only do you come closer to the divine source of expression that would bring about the most genuinely empathic and communal of feels, but you also, as in accordance with the central tenet of Brecht's epic theater, alienate the spectator from the stage on which you walk and talk, contributing directly to self-reflection as a route to enlightenment. Concordantly, renounce the homey feel that typical lectures of the modern day try to evoke and see in them nothing but reflections of soap operas or cheap pop songs, which do provide a temporary emotional solace for the viewer or the listener, decompressing stress piled up inside of them, but earning them nothing of lasting profundity at the end of the day. Thus, step inside the cosmos of your infinite soul and from these mystical spaces weave a veil of the thrilling mysteriousness of the starry sky between you and the audience, all until the spirit of Brechtian alienation, in fear and trembling alike, sets in, drawing milky ways toward enlightenment all across the celestial spheres of minds watching you. Although such an approach is bound to urge many to protest against this estranging feel, each of these protesters will resemble a patient that shoves the doctor away because of making him temporarily uncomfortable for the purpose of administering the cure and healing him for good. And if you, now, begin to feel as if a mountain is rising behind your back, tempting to swallow everyone in sight, adding a grandiose tinge to your presence in the room, know that this may be because there is indeed a whole, albeit invisible, army behind thee, consisting of long passed souls who would have opposed this dry, money-centered sphere of self-interest that science, once an altruistic, romantic, Don Quixotesque endeavor, has become, adding fuel to the

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<sup>1771</sup> See Ivan Illich's Lecture entitled The Educational Enterprise in the Light of the Gospel, Chicago, IL, November 13, 1988. Retrieved from [http://www.davidtinapple.com/illich/1988\\_Educational.html](http://www.davidtinapple.com/illich/1988_Educational.html).

fire of your awareness that ‘you’re not alone’<sup>1772</sup> in spite of your standing alone and backing farther and farther away, into the deepest darkness and distance from another in search of an authentic voice, a voice that could come nearer to the surrounding souls than millions of voices craving to get closer and closer in their vain conformism and submissiveness. If you glimpse, now, in the corner of your eye, through this vacuous wall of stars separating you from the audience, faces shriveling in disparagement or sheer disgust, pay no heed thereto, for, as your Mom surely would have said, if only one soul out there is tuned to recognize the treasures you toss generously before the audience’s feet, it will be just about enough for your mission to be completed. On top of this, keep in mind that those disgruntled ones, who roll their eyes most, are those whose deepest cellars of consciousness are most receptive to your message and who are in greatest need of your advice and, thus, of your love too. Therefore, let it not discourage you when you drop your guard and pull down the shield that protects your tender heart, wishing to remove the obtuse oriole of authority around your aura and empower the watchers by bringing them over to the brink of realization that you and them and we all, deep down, are one and the same, but then realize, yourself, that swine, with pearls gathered ‘round their feet, have started shooting arrows into this wide open, fully vulnerable, feathery heart of yours, because that is the fate awaiting all souls that shine brightly like suns and light the way for millions in this world. At that instant, recollect where your true home is - away from this world, in the seventh heaven of your mother’s womb - and continue to tap the nectar of divine inspiration from this transcendental realm. This mysterious withdrawnness will allow you to balance the coolness of Richard Strauss’ checking on his watch in the midst of conducting a symphony orchestra, of Lou Reed’s mumbling into the mic at the opening of the set of the Velvet Underground at the End of Cole Avenue in Dallas in the autumn of 1969<sup>1773</sup> or of Miles Davis’ refusing to announce the songs and walking offstage when other players soloed<sup>1774</sup> with the energy of an exploding supernova or an erupting volcano: the former, even if faked, relaxes oneself and the audience and puts it in a comfort zone, serving as a stable pad for the launching of the latter, of the rockets of expressions that will turn it all into a firework of bedazzling impressions and immerse the surrounding spirits in a sea of stars. In that sense, be like any of Matisse’s paintings that were ‘seeking compensatory reduction in overpowering architectonic design’<sup>1775</sup>, including *Open Window*, a composition made of strokes that appear on the surface as if they are all about nonchalance, cool and careless, as if they originate from the hands of a child at play, as if they produce the sketch of a painting rather than the real painting, when deep enough they were being superbly thought-out, meticulously drawn, with an utmost stringency and attention to detail. Hence, remember not to try too hard, but do not let not trying too hard turn you into a cynical and lame hipster-like persona on stage, careless about the impression you will leave. Think about Cain’s sin emanating from his words that showed a thorough absence of care for his brother, asking cynically, ‘Am I my brother’s keeper’ (Genesis 4:9), and remember to discard the urge to overcome fears and insecurities of being out there, on the stage, by telling to yourself how this whole experience matters not and ‘who cares about how well I will perform’. Likewise, know

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<sup>1772</sup> Listen to David Bowie’s *Rock ‘n’ Roll Suicide* on *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and Spiders from Mars*, RCA (1972).

<sup>1773</sup> Listen to the Velvet Underground’s *I’m Waiting for the Man* on *1969: The Velvet Underground Live*, Mercury (1969).

<sup>1774</sup> See John Litweiler’s *The Freedom Principle: Jazz After 1958*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, NY (1984), pp. 112.

<sup>1775</sup> Watch the documentary on Henri Matisse from the *Artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* series, Kultur International Films (2004).

that your nervousness comes from the fact that you respect your audience, but never think of transcending your fears by disrespecting it and telling to yourself how they are not worth it all. Instead, think how great of a responsibility it is to have other people's attention focused onto you, and how much light you could mysteriously deliver to them, how great of a divine messenger you could be, and all that not while preaching explicitly, but by teaching with no words, sparking enlightenment in others using flickers of subtle and impalpable signs, as in accordance with Lao-Tzu's teaching. If van Gogh, having been rejected by the Calvinist Protestant seminary and banned from entering the priesthood, moved to painting because his goal was 'preaching continued by other means'<sup>1776</sup>, then you, the grandson of a priest and canonized saint, should know that those means can be anything beside the plain word, including the gesture, the flow through this cosmic space, the cry of the eternal soul and the spiritual vibe that is impossible to harness by things tangible and effable. Even more importantly, there is no formula on how to explicate this divine force except the one telling you that this formula is impossible to formulate; rather, expressions must be improvised from the beginning to the end. Remember, then, what the Bible says: 'Take ye no thought of how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say; for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say' (Luke 12:11-12). Hence, forget about the fixed transcripts you may have prepared or spun in your starry head in advance. Let the spirit talk through you instead. Be an antenna that spreads a glow of spirit around you, and know that all things will turn out good then. Remember how when you played guitar, whenever your mind rested on that great One, the meditative oneness with the whole Universe, any note you played, intuitively and spontaneously, fit perfectly well. Do the same thing with your delicate moves and words. Plunge yourself into the great One within and let it shine outwardly with every word and move of yours. Let every gesture of yours open up channels that release this inner shine outside, like a great dam that opens its doors and liberates divine oceanic waves of light to overflow and wash the arid and dry surrounding souls with their splashy summery vibe. To do so, plant one pillar of your perception deep inside of yourself, plug it into the ocean of divine energy that overfills your soul and prayerfully, meditatively dwell in it. Then, plant the other pillar into every pair of eyes that surrounds you like an enchanting carousel and keep it stably sustained by means of sacrificial empathy and a burning wish to deliver the light of salvation, to give all that you have inside of you to them. For, the cravings to give, give and give, more than one has or will ever have, are a most vital step in producing conditions for the outbursts of inspirational energy all over the place. 'Behold, I do not give lectures or a little charity, when I give I give myself'<sup>1777</sup>, Walt Whitman poetized in an evangelical verse whose incarnation in every single word and body movement of yours would lead to their unutterably entralling electrification. Finally, spread strings between these two pillars, produce the right tension and let this electrifying energy that enlightens the world stream in waves along them. And when moves begin to spontaneously appear on these waves, remember that they, not their physical source, should be the focus of your attention. As Jason Alexander advised<sup>1778</sup>, it matters not whether you are bald, chubby, scruffy and whether your collar is misfolded, shirt wrinkled, shoes stained or one sleeve of your pants longer than the other; what matters is the movement,

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<sup>1776</sup> See Alan Gowans' *The Restless Art: A History of Painters and Painting, 1760 – 1960*, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, PA (1966), pp. 266.

<sup>1777</sup> See Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself*, available at [http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/s\\_z/whitman/song.htm](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/s_z/whitman/song.htm) (1855).

<sup>1778</sup> See Mick Berry's and Michael R. Edelstein's *Stage Fright: 40 Stars Tell You How They Beat America's #1 Fear*, See Sharp Press, Tucson, AZ (2009), pp. 36.

for it brings the energy that captivates the audience. Erase, therefore, any awareness, shamefaced or snooty, of your physical features from your mind and, light as a bird, bring forth the movement that enlightens. When you adopt one such state of mind, you shall see, great things happen. For one, when the performance is over and the applause begins to roll through the air like a thunder, you will remain strangely unattached to it and able to swiftly disappear in the darkness behind the curtain, into that great mystical void that you had emerged from in the first place. As the applause echoes through the hall, you will know that what deserves the praise for every miracle made is not the maker of the miracle, not You, but rather God, that ocean of Love that is in, of and above all things. ‘A water-striding faith does not show how big you are. Only how great God is’, reckoned Leo Sweet in the final statement of his book on quantum spirituality<sup>1779</sup>. Thus, when you speak, remember that it is not you who speak; it is the Universe, dark and deep and infinite, that speaks through you. Speak clearly, not too fast, and sing a little bit beforehand, in the backstage, to refresh your voice. Use your tummy when talking and ‘cater for the space you are meant to fill’<sup>1780</sup>, spreading your presence to the entire space, talking as if the whole Earth listens. Be focused on the content of your talk and think just about enough to have your thoughts well consolidated and flowing along the tracks of your mind like a river, but do not over-think, lest you become caught frozen in the so-called ‘paralysis by analysis’. Let the other, non-analytical, intuitive part of your mind provide instinctual impulses to make you resemble ‘a tiger (that) isn’t thinking about where he’s going to put his paws’<sup>1781</sup>, as a music critic described Van Morrison on the stage. For, such instinctive movements that are let spontaneously stream to the surface of your being along the sunshiny rays of your attention directed inwardly, straight to the celestial core of yourself, are of vital importance in breathing life into your performance and ‘whipping the crowd into a frenzy and then stopping on a dime’<sup>1782</sup>. Do not forget to intersperse your talk with the moments of silence, as silence is equally important in getting your message across, especially after powerful statements. It is in silence that the essence of music dwells, Debussy claimed, and the same can be said for any similar kind of performance. And since from the deepest silence of the soul your performance will emanate, in an equally deep silence will it immerse the viewers, meaning that it is not the hearty applause that will mark the end of a stellar act, but a response resembling that witnessed by the viewers of Marian Anderson’s spirituals sung sweepingly on a Salzburg stage in 1935, amidst the standards by Schubert and Bach: ‘At the end there was no applause at all – a silence instinctive, natural, and intense, so that you were afraid to breathe. What Anderson had done was something outside the limits of classical or romantic music. She frightened us with the conception, in musical terms, of course, but outside the normal limits, of a mighty suffering’<sup>1783</sup>. For, if the essence and the ultimate message of your performance emerges from and disappears into that same primal, ineffable, spiritual sea of energy that marked John Coltrane’s onstage presence captured by the following critic’s words, then there is really ‘nothing to fear and nothing to hide’<sup>1784</sup>: ‘What the saxophonist and his musicians did was beyond material and beyond logic. The music seemed more about the atomic presence of creation than its content. All of the scales and polyrhythms and advanced or simple harmonies were secondary to the power of four human burners with their

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<sup>1779</sup> See Leonard Sweet’s *Quantum Spirituality: A Postmodern Apologetic*, United Theological Seminary, Trotwood, OH (1991), pp. 214.

<sup>1780</sup> Listen to KT Tunstall’s *False Alarm on Eye to the Telescope*, Relentless (2004).

<sup>1781</sup> See Erik Hage’s *The Words and Music of Van Morrison*, Praeger, Westport, CN (2009), pp. 71.

<sup>1782</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1783</sup> See Stanley Crouch’s *Considering Genius*, Basic Civitas Books, New York, NY (2006), pp. 189.

<sup>1784</sup> Listen to Radiohead’s *Pyramid Song on Amnesiac* (2001).

flames turned all the way up. The meaning of the music? There may have been none other than some sort of charismatic paean to existence itself, a sweeping sense of density, something like the spectacular motion of gases and liquids that beget solid forms'<sup>1785</sup>. You are alone and yet one with it all. Gaze at the audience and do not insecurely lean onto anything nor hide yourself behind the speaker stands. Still, walk whenever you want to make your message clearer, somewhat similar to what Dick Feynman did while lecturing, or even jump off tables, do cartwheels in the air and fly all over the place, hopping and yelling, letting your heart 'open up and bleed' to the world. In the midst of these exhibitions of craziness, though, cease not to remember that neither in the thunderous hurricane that shook the hills and broke rocks into pieces nor in the earthquake nor in the fire did Prophet Elijah hear the long sought voice of God at Mount Herab, but in a 'still small voice' (Kings I 19:12). Yet, regardless of whether you express yourself in whispers or in shouts, whether you act for a moment in the style of a grand gatherer, instilling a joyous sense of unity of it all inside everyone's heart, or you step quietly into the darkness and continue to play in it, like Miles, with back turned to the audience, be a Michael Furey out there, on the stage, with heart engulfed in flames, ready to die for love at any given moment. And if you notice a 'he's crazy' flash in someone's eyes, worry not, for 'it is because the teaching is crazy that it is great', as Lao-Tzu mentioned in the 67<sup>th</sup> poem of his Tao-Te-Xing. Hence, if the content of your talk and your persona while delivering it do not live up to the criterion of excellence handed to us by Albert Einstein when he disparaged a student's idea for not being 'crazy enough', know that it has been more of a failure than a success. For, true success necessitates invoking a sense of failure in the majority of the eyes of the audience, since real progressiveness is inescapably related to negative critiques received from the mediocre minds that make up the mainstream. The greatest filmmakers have known that the point is not to produce a flashy spectacle that captivates the audience momentarily and keeps it amused for the duration of the show. Great cooks have, likewise, known that the real goal is not to produce the sensation of deliciousness in the taste buds<sup>1786</sup>, but to pave ways for the perception of the beauty that transgresses the boundaries of gastronomy and enters the realm of divine experience that befalls upon the consumer long after the food was tasted, be it hours or even days or months. Therefore, what matters is 'what happens after what happens happens'<sup>1787</sup>. In other words, the parameter that defines the filmmaking success is the feeling the audience will bring home, and the same can be said for every other art form. And so it must be with memorable lectures: even if the recipients of your verbally, gesturally and tonally delivered messages look all bedazzled, baffled or dulled during your performance, your mission could still be accomplished if a divine seed, blessing and blissful, becomes unknowingly to them sown in the soils of their souls, the seed which would die at first and seemingly disappear, but then begin to slowly sprout and stem into a taller and taller tree, rising like the Sun from their insides, from the moment they walk out of the lecture hall throughout the following hours, days, weeks and years. This is all to say that whatever you do, do not seek approval in other people's expressions because most of the time they could be all but mirrors to glimpse the greatness and true success of your performances in. Still, if you are able to make eye contact with the audience, do make it. Do not loftily pretend that you do not see people. Like the Little Prince does, hopping from one planet to another, driven by the genuine and compassionate curiosity to see the world from the eyes of another, you

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<sup>1785</sup> See Stanley Crouch's *Considering Genius*, Basic Civitas Books, New York, NY (2006), pp. 317.

<sup>1786</sup> Watch *Big Night* directed by Campbell Scott and Stanley Tucci (1996).

<sup>1787</sup> See the anonymously posted essay entitled *Presentation Skills Considered Harmful*, Serious Pony, available at <http://seriouspony.com/blog/2013/10/4/presentation-skills-considered-harmful> (2013).

will jump too, from one pair of eyes to another. But if eyes are in darkness and there is too many of them, then imagine them as city lights from the Corcovado hill which you looked at years ago from your window with a broken wing, with the loving memories of childhood flying and hopping like white angels and rabbits all around you. Thence, it will be your God and you alone on the stage. After all, even with the perfectly lit seating area and thousands of eyes blinking at you, you must descend deep and deeper into yourself, remembering all the while that He ‘wants his witness to be nothing; the quality of witnesses is such that they must exist always, everywhere and wretched; he is alone’<sup>1788</sup>. Hence, under no circumstances be a sellout who prostitutes oneself to gain respect, hear hand claps, embrace approvals and reap rewards, whatever they may be. Rather, while anchoring the solemn ships of your attention to the memory of Godard’s fierce attack on the pervasive prostitutions and depersonalization in this modern, consumerist society, never compromise and simply be who you are on the stage, knowing that truth will melt down the gates and guards raised all around the divine souls of people seeing it. It will dispel the dark clouds of fear, of obstructed flow, dam-like, that the epithet of ‘satanic’ originally meant, gathered around their inner suns, and sanctify them, silently and unnoticeably, the way only truth can (John 17:17). Meanwhile, dwell in your own world, knowing that it will be a magnet pulling everyone else into its magical interior. To strengthen the confidence in the power of this remoteness, remember the part from Nyegosh’s Mountain Wreath where Serdar Voukota convinces Serdar Ivan that Abbott Stephen would not have been able to poetize so brilliantly had it not been for the fact that he was blind, holding that visual perception is a deterrent to poetry between ‘oft impedeth sight both speech and mind... the mind o’erclouds, and tangled is the tongue and so is lost what fain thou wouldest say, whereas the blind, they are not hindered by this outward eye; they quietly do pass on, as men in cups do hold the hedge along’<sup>1789</sup>. Yet, the deeper you anchor yourself and the deeper you trace the threads extending to the depth of your soul, the more open you should be. Therefore, to complement this submersion into the subliminal spheres of one’s psyche so as to keep digging and delivering to the surface the divine words and gestures, talk ‘not to audience, but to a whole wide world’<sup>1790</sup>. Talk as if gods have gathered around the corners of the hall to listen, as if angels watch from all the angles. Yet, you must have heard of people advising imagining a candlelight burning in the back of the room, so as to push the eyes of the audience in the darkness of one’s awareness and coldly focus in the distance, but I tell you, forget it. It will pull the heart out of your performance just about the same way Shakespeare’s Henry V wished for when he prayed to the god of battles to ‘steel my soldiers’ hearts; possess them not with fear; take from them now the sense of reckoning, lest the opposed numbers pluck their hearts from them’<sup>1791</sup>. For, by loftily staring in the distance and rigidly resisting to face through fear and trembling the eyes twinkling with wonder all around you and adjust ad-lib your words and moves to their intuitively sensed needs of the moment, all will verily fail. Stones would crush the columns and colonnades raised on the basis of the

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<sup>1788</sup> See Blaise Pascal’s *Pensée* No. 1, Series XXII, Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK (1669).

<sup>1789</sup> See Petar Petrovich Nyegosh’s *The Mountain Wreath*, rendered into English by James W. Wiles, George Allen & Unwin, London, UK (1846).

<sup>1790</sup> This is how Marvin Minsky described the onstage, behind-the-lantern appearance of Warren McCulloch in “a little meeting with about six or seven people”, a scientist “for whom all the world was a stage”, a scientist who could “see such importance in ordinary things... like Feynman, who would look at a little wave on the water and understand how the universe works”. See an interview with Marvin Minsky, retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHVAlEmyKoM> (2016).

<sup>1791</sup> See William Shakespeare’s *Henry V*, available at <http://shakespeare.mit.edu/henryv/full.html> (1599).

theatrical proverb, ‘When the audience is not there, the actors aren’t there either’<sup>1792</sup>. Neither would the creation of magic in the air be possible because the following guideline implemented by Franz Liszt, allegedly the world’s first musical showman and pop star, would be blatantly betrayed: “Don’t play the piano, play the room”<sup>1793</sup>. Hence, not candles, but muses giggling behind the clouds resting on tops of Corinthian columns that radiate with some ancient grace, while stars of wonder and sunrays of love gleefully shimmer in their eyes is whom you should feel as if surrounded with. Talk as if you are telling your stories not only to the wiggly eyes whose rays of attention have landed on you like sweet doves of peace, but to the whole Universe too, as if goddesses and muses from all corners of the Cosmos have gathered behind the dark edges of the walls and ceilings to take a peek at you with their pearly eyes and hear the healing words that come straight from the geysers and waterfalls of divine inspiration that flow through your heart. Still, never cease to see the starry skies in the eyes of the audience, for only in such a way would you be able to sow stardust of celestial inspiration all over them. After all, what we see we helplessly become: a monster if we battle egotistic monsters in life; inert trains or phlegmatic hippos if no soul passing us by leaves an imprint on the landscape of our spirit; or angels on earth if we see such celestial beings all around us. Thus, when you hear Marlon Brando say ‘f\*\*\* you’<sup>1794</sup> in his thoughts to the cameraman, to the producer, to the director and to everyone else on the set so as to liberate himself from the clutches of submissiveness and conformism and set grounds for channeling some divine energy flows from the deepest fountains of his heart and toward the audience, know that it is an approach that may work when trying to deliver the roles of Don Corleone in the *Godfather*, of Paul in the *Last Tango in Paris* or of Colonel Walter Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now*, but not if you want to be that ballerina that swished in pirouettes by the Little Tramp on his deathbed at the end of *Limelight*, leaving traces of unforgettable beauty in her wake. Therefore, whatever you do, never forget to love each and every one and accept them unconditionally into the room of your heart, the room which is merely an entryway to a greater cosmos than the one any of us have known of. And not only that: because Love alone can make one lifelessly soft, blend it with Wonder, as ever, all until every soul/star in your proximity becomes an endless source of amazement, worth going to the moon and back by foot to explore just a little bit more. Therefore, let your spirit stream like a summer breeze instead of waging wars against this or that. Flow gently through space. Take yourself for a walk. Have a good time. Literally, provided that ‘good time’ has a deep, spiritual connotation, which, I assume, after this bedazzling train of thought, it must have. For only if you do have a good time out there will you make others feel good too. Asked how he, at the age of 94, can look at life with such a radiant optimism, Stephane Hessel said, ‘My mother is really the one to thank for that; she taught me that you have to be happy yourself before you can make others happy’<sup>1795</sup>. Bertolt Brecht, who undoubtedly did have a feel for the magic of the stage appearance, noticed concordantly that ‘no man whose work does not amuse him can expect his work to amuse anybody else... a man who strains himself at the stage strains everybody else on the parquet’<sup>1796</sup>. At the end of the day, it is music of the words and body language that leave much greater

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<sup>1792</sup> The saying is attributed to Jacques Copeau. See Harold Clurman’s *On Directing*, Macmillan Company, New York, NY (1972), pp. 159.

<sup>1793</sup> Watch the lecture on Liszt’s Sonata in B Minor, which, curiously, ends in B Major, by Robert Greenberg, The Great Courses Series (2013).

<sup>1794</sup> Watch *Listen to Me Marlon*, a documentary movie directed by Stevan Riley (2015).

<sup>1795</sup> See Mandana Razavi’s *Vive la Révolution!*, *Credit Suisse Bulletin* (5/2012), pp. 79.

<sup>1796</sup> See Bertolt Brecht’s *Schriften Zum Theater I-VII*, Translated by Darko Suvin, Nolit, Belgrade, Serbia (1966), pp. 40.

impression to the listeners than the meaning of the words uttered. And if this body language is stiff and boring, the audience will be left frozen, bored and put to sleep too. If you are yet another one of the ‘creatures who locked up their spirits’, be sure that whatever the message you crave to convey to others is, the effect of your expressions will produce not delightful opening, but tight locking of their spirits. But if you let the liveliness of your spirit, the millions of inspiring visions and feelings that fly across the sky of your mind permeate every bit of your body, which would then become a carrier of the divine spiritedness of yours, know that similar flights of spirit will be sparked in others too. Hence, if your body language is exciting, captivating, natural and enjoyable, the same impression will be handed to the audience. If you are drowsy, cumbersome and fishy looking, do not expect the audience to feel any way different during your performance. It is in human nature to spontaneously sympathize with body language seen and emotions sensed in others. Still, despite these incentives to enthrall and electrify the audience with sparkles of excitement emanating from you, do not ceaselessly pantomime rotating windmills with your hands or turn into a tap dancer out of sheer nervousness. Feel free to be a real wild child on the podium, delivering tsunamis of thrill with your energetic gestures, but remember that every move, no matter how miniscule, has a meaning attached to it; or, as Jacques Lecoq had it, ‘the body moves and speaks as it moves... there’s a link, a reverberation between inner and outer space; if I make a physical action – pulling or pushing – it’s analogous to internal emotion, love or hate... in the theatre making a movement is never a mechanical act but must always be a gesture that is justified’<sup>1797</sup>. Each move should be thus made spontaneously and yet meaningfully. As the law of supply and demand teaches us, the lesser the number of moves we employ during a performance, the greater their semantic value. Henceforth, avoid uncontrolled gesticulation like a plague, as it rarely achieves anything but transmittance of some of the performer’s nervousness to the audience so as to keep it somewhat awake and receptive, but still remember that studies have shown that teachers’ hand gestures boost learning in the classroom<sup>1798</sup>. Although such so-called garbage gestures can thrill the spectators, as in the case of Slavoj Žižek’s touching nose maddeningly, Dick Feynman’s swaying wildly, twitching and dancing in place while lecturing characteristically in short pants, shoeless<sup>1799</sup>, or Sam Herring’s of Future Islands pounding chests ecstatically during performance, their usage most often distracts the listeners from the semantic points that one aspires to get across. Or, as the abstract expressionist painter, Mark Rothko noted in his Scribble Book on teaching children’s art, ‘The mistaken notion that physical vigor implies action; it implies nothing but that the person who practices it wields the brush vigorously’<sup>1800</sup>. From the perspective of the choreographic aesthetics, waving hands wildly should be, therefore, substituted with more conscious gestures. To do so, you can, for example, let any stardust-shedding silhouettes that muses dancing in your head adopt in this entranced and yet infinitely calm mental state you dwell in be bravely delivered to the surface of your being as soon as they are being glimpsed by the translucent eye of your mind. Finally, never wander off the Way of Love. Hence, foster familiarity, speak with

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<sup>1797</sup> See Anthony Frost’s and Ralph Yarrow’s *Improvisation in Drama*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY (2007), pp. 86, 129, 133.

<sup>1798</sup> See, e.g., Susan Wagner Cook, Ryan G. Duffy, Kimberly M. Fenn – “Consolidation and Transfer of Learning after Observing Hand Gesture”, *Child Development* 84, 1863 – 1871 (2013).

<sup>1799</sup> Watch, for example, Richard Feynman’s lecture presented at the annual meeting of the American Physical Society at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) on October 25, 1984, retrieved from <https://youtu.be/4eRCygdW--c>.

<sup>1800</sup> See Mark Rothko’s *Writings on Arts*, Edited by Miguel Lopez-Remiro, Yale University Press, New Haven. CT (2006), pp.14. Rothko’s *Scribble Book* was written between 1935 and 1943.

an open heart, but never cease to be deeply withdrawn inside of the starry space of your mind. Tie the invisible threads running from the center of your heart to the hearts around you into knots and let all the words and moves shudder across these strings, but also draw a wall of silence around you, as an impassable chasm of mystery. Like the desolation row, of which the Duluth prodigy sang his hymns and praises<sup>1801</sup>, preconditioning the entrance to the most glorious spheres of artistic expression, this ring of remoteness stretched before ye, with an open sky for the divine inspiration to descend on you and you in its center, is to become the space you will strew with stars that entrance and bedazzle the audience. For, without enshrouding oneself in mystery, no divinely inspiring movements can be given rise to. In turn, the deeper you descend into the mystical, divine atria of your soul, the more radiant your expressions and the greater their potential to move and enlighten the surrounding spirits will be. Remember, to that end, how caressing the hair of your beloved and gazing at her starry eyes is as beautiful as it could be for as long as one part of your mind is focused inwardly. Reckon Nona and sages you envisaged counting beads, drawing vertical connections with the Divine and giving unassailably profound advices to the world through this consummate immersion in the inside world, and then the Christ insisting thunderously that ‘only after you make the inside outside and the outside inside would you come to the kingdom of God’. Be, thus, the quiet muse of your dreams, gorgeously silhouetted, still sitting at the bottom of Corcovado with dreams of wonder and love swirling around her head, resting somewhere deep in the seats of your heart, but also let the beauty you have concealed there for a long time explode freely in all directions, leaving the world in speechless astonishment thereby. Remember how a star lives in silent darkness and yet shines with the greatest imaginable light. You are one such star. Go forth and shine. And if all these messages seemed to have made you dizzy with interspersing the space of your mind with their a starry twinkle, which has by now probably started to resemble a celestial symphony, spin like a dancing dervish or a ballerina and shake it off until it all disappears and you are left alone on the stage, amidst starry lights gazing at you. You are the One. Let it all fade away, and let the One act. Place the desire to save the world, to bless and sanctify others, like a flower at the throne of your heart and feed it with every breath of yours, and the whole world will be yours. Pray to be the divine messenger, to bring the celestial lights and heavenly beauty to the face of the world and, verily, it will be so. Whatever you say then will glow with an enchanting and mysterious beauty. It will be the beauty that saves the world”.

As we stand behind the curtain of the stage of life, looking upwards in wonder, each one of these thoughts has been like a twinkle of a star on a dazzlingly glowing mantle of the starry sky surrounding us as far as our eyes can stretch. This symphony of twinkles of little stars we faced in the meditative moment of an enchanting introspective stillness lasted for only a brief moment in the passage of the train of time. Over and brought to its final notes, the time has come to raise the curtain and enter the stage, with the beauty that saves the world gleaming from our hearts<sup>1802</sup>. This beauty is the graceful cosmic force that we have sought all our lives, the force that can be found only insofar as it is constantly being sought and given away the moment one comes to grasp it in its infinite elusiveness and remains poor like an orphan under the vast skies of the Universe, with open arms, unfolded fists, an upward gaze and a simplest AUM resting on one’s flaming lips, a solitary orphan blessed more than millions of those bathing in the world’s most princely opulence for the senses or the intellect. We are to be one such orphan, a child of

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<sup>1801</sup> Listen to Bob Dylan’s Desolation Row on Highway 61 Revisited, Columbia (1965).

<sup>1802</sup> An allusion is made to Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s Idiot and its protagonist’s, Prince Myshkin’s belief in “beauty that will save the world”. See Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s Idiot, Prosveta, Belgrade, Serbia (1869).

the cosmos, with here and now as the only nest to lay our heads in, and glide through it, like the “driftwoods floating underwater”<sup>1803</sup>, breaking the stars of our spirits into pieces and shedding stardust into the air, thus making trails for the lost and for the blest to follow, towards some similar stars on skies of their minds and hearts and vast universes hovering over them. Along the way, we ought to keep on alternating between stupefying simplicities of expression and complexities that get everyone befuddled and lost, but never forget that, deep down, the point is reducible to the homely heart of one such cosmic child filled with love and wonder and nothing else. As the Way of Love has had it, only through one such sense of aloneness, like that of a star submerged in the cosmic darkness from all sides, can we shine forth and illuminate souls enfolded by this darkness, thus bringing bliss to their lives. And once and for all, we are to step forward and plunge into the ocean of oneness that will mysteriously guide our words and moves from now on until the eternity. For, rather than being like lonely suns that find satisfaction in forming little cold planets of matter circling around them, we shall not stop before these seeds of future stars of spirit revolving around our being begin to show signs of irretrievably thriving with life. To that end, only the magical liveliness that touches people’s hearts with the language of love can yield similar outbursts of life in the surrounding soulful space. Likewise, only living these words that blinked like wonderful guiding stars that have inspired us and showed us the way to an eternal blessing of our souls in the blissful light of God can take us there. Only by shedding the pen on the side of the road and letting these words die can their seeds be dissolved and let yield wonderful trees of knowledge that will feed many thirsty spirits of the world and help them reach similar heavenly heights in their outgrowths beyond this spiritually embryonic but immensely beautiful planet of ours. Only then can we grow into a star that sheds not any light, but the light of love all the way around it.

In that spirit, I proclaim: “Goodbye writing, hello life”. ☺



**“Don’t think of a manatee”**. And, you did, right? For, once I have pronounced or written the word, it matters not anymore whether I had beautiful or bad features to attribute to this sirenian mammal; rather, once the word is being mentioned, an impression corresponding to this word will have already been formed in the interpreter’s mind and it will be unavoidably personal and not subject to control by linguistic means employed by the composer of the words. In Terence Davies’ *The Long Day Closes*, there is a beautiful scene of a boy, Bud, sitting in a crowded classroom, leaning over a book, then redirecting his wistful gazes to the lancet window and beginning to dream to the sound of a lullaby a.k.a. *Blow the Wind Southerly*. At the exact moment when the line “but my eye could not see it wherever might be it, the barque that is bearing my true love to me” begins to echo in his head, he starts to vividly see this barque in his imagination, the impression of which was so intense that everything around him descended into darkness and all he could perceive was a barque traversing the discolored, tumultuous seas of his fancy, the daydream from which he awoke soaked wet by the splashes of the rolling waves, albeit abstract in nature. Then, a story tells of an Arabian prince who was told that the flying carpet that he sat on would rise in the air only when he stops thinking about the giant bird Simurgh. And so the prince said, “Okay, I have stopped thinking about Simurgh”, and both the

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<sup>1803</sup> Listen to Travis’ *Driftwood* on *The Man Who, Independiente* (1999).

carpet and himself stayed on the ground. “When I try not to see monsters, they are everywhere”<sup>1804</sup>, a child noticed in quite the same spirit, forgetting that focusing on an ethereal fairy, a pretty flower or a traveling cloud instead would be the right way of expelling the scary monsters from the rooms of his mind. “There is no hippopotamus in this room at present”, Bertrand Russell is likewise said to have said in 1911, sharply a 100 years ago from now, to Ludwig Wittgenstein, an intellectual misfit who just began to attend his philosophical lectures in Cambridge after giving up his 3 years of doctoral research on flying kites at the Victoria University of Manchester<sup>1805</sup>. Wittgenstein, however, did not believe this proposition and considered it nonsensical, even after Bertrand Russell theatrically looked for a hippo inside drawers and under the tables. For, what the Viennese philosopher might have wanted to tell us was that at the very mention of a hippopotamus, it has fully begun to live in our heads. For, “the limits of my language mean the limits of my world”, he would have possibly reminded us, adding that “language sets everyone the same traps... what I have to do then is erect signposts at all the junctions where there are wrong turnings so as to help people past the danger points”<sup>1806</sup>, as he wrote in one of his notebooks. One such nature of our thoughts, to which negation is foreign and wherein all is colored by the deepest emotion underlying verbalizable logic, explains why the rock guitarist Steve Vai, in one of his metaphysical moods, claimed that “whatever you really, really, really want you get, and whatever you really, really, really don’t want you get because whatever your mind is focusing on, you pull these things into your life”<sup>1807</sup>. Knowing this, it becomes clear why Calvin’s spinning the thought “attention all monsters! I am now going to stop thinking about you”<sup>1808</sup> yields only an impression of ever more of them creeping on him from the darkness of his bedroom. It was for this reason that the earliest book I wrote, the one with 1001 scientific questions and answers, the first one of which was Why Does the Sun Shine and the last one of which was What is Love?, subtly setting grounds for this discourse on stars of spirit being written now, a decade later, was created using only words I found universally blissful and consoling. Hence, like the Little Prince who could easily recognize a sheep in a box or an elephant in the belly of an anaconda, so should we be able to discern the essence from the facade on all occasions and never lose out of sight the awareness of language as a helplessly imperfect tool for the transmission of meanings, feelings, drives and aspirations to others and an insufficient means for sharing our existence with fellow earthlings on this planet of ours in truly fulfilling ways.

One day, as I have always thought, I will stop in the middle of an exuberant stage performance, like the actress playing Electra in Ingmar Bergman’s *Persona*, the epitome of the eruption of the fire of anguish and rage in the theatrical realm, and start gazing in the distance, with eyes open wide, meltingly flickering in oneness with the flanking limelight, dazzling and all glittery, being stricken by the realization of the imperfections of the language and in the blink of an eye discarding it for good as a means to sending the shine of our being through space and

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<sup>1804</sup> See Lynda Barry’s *Picture This: The Near-Sighted Monkey Book*, Drawn & Quarterly, Montreal, Canada (2010), pp. 64.

<sup>1805</sup> The eccentric Austrian thinker will remain to be a degreeless philosopher for the next 20 years, during which he became famous for his tractate published in 1918, at which point he did not need a degree anymore, just as Albert Einstein did not need his after he released his works that earned him the Nobel prize and the status of a genius.

<sup>1806</sup> See Marjorie Perloff’s *Wittgenstein’s Ladder: Poetic Language and the Strangeness of the Ordinary*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL (1996).

<sup>1807</sup> Watch the video interview with Steve Vai available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mIErgaixVzE&t=17s> (2012).

<sup>1808</sup> See Bill Watterson’s *The Days Are Just Packed*, Andrews and McMeel, Kansas City, MO (1992), pp. 133.

time. Looking left I would see language as a tool for the impoverishment and vulgarization of the infinite and ineffable beauty of life around us, and looking right I would see it as a channel for the corruption of the divine spirit in us by the stifling and graceless spirit of the society and souls deeply fallen from grace constituting it. The only solution to restoring the divineness and holy spiritedness in me would then logically be to toss language through the backdoor of my consciousness and reinstate myself in the infinite silence of being, so as to draw all my future moves from it and into it. I might feel then as if the train of pure starry silence swished by my mind, somewhat like that drawing creatures towards the mysterious emptiness of being in the Louise Bourgeois' 1947 series of drawings named *He Disappeared into Complete Silence*, joyful and hilarious as much as moody and reclusive. I would feel myself becoming the embodiment of the amusing point made by the black artist, Gary Simmons when he produced a miniature black chalkboard, with a black, not white piece of chalk next to it, as if saying, "Here, now try writing anything on it", and insinuating the necessity of going beyond worded symbols, in a manner as antiauthoritarian as it can be, if we are to become the conveyers of godly messages. I would feel then as if guided towards starry eternity and washed away in waters of moonlit consciousness in front of which doors to glimpsing the beauty divine slumbering in each corner of the world miraculously open, while the whispers akin to those of Margarita at the end of the tonic Bulgakov's novel, with "the sand crunching beneath her bare feet", are heard everywhere: "Listen to the silence. Listen and take pleasure in what you were not given in life – quiet"<sup>1809</sup>. Then I might start guiding conversations in a completely silent manner, in the spirit of David Lynch who appeared insane during his first press conference, saying only two words and remaining silent for the rest of the time<sup>1810</sup>, or of the Stone Roses who were gifted with the "ability to stay on the news pages of the rock press almost permanently for years on end... by hardly saying anything at all"<sup>1811</sup>, that is, by building their interviews around "shy guffaws, muttered asides, dispassionate staring, foot-shuffling silences and complete mind-numbing gaps"<sup>1812</sup>, or of Jónsi of Sigur Ros who had once, at the peak of his fame, given a thoroughly silent interview<sup>1813</sup>, or of yet another Icelandic superstar, Björk, who would instead of communicating in ordinary and clichéd ways incessantly shed twinkles of graceful signs that would embrace others with bubbly auras of protection and love and yet awake and astonish the world with words and acts rebellious and shocking, instilling oases of starry wonder in other people's eyes. For, this sense of necessity to say something lest one's stature be shaken counts in my universe of thought as a most toxic cultural trait marking our beings at this moment in space and time, imperceptibly lifting walls of insecurity that guide the rivers of our psyches in clichéd and lackluster directions and, like fog, blocking, instead of opening, the view of the sun of the soul shining inside of each and every one, which is why, to rebel against it, I have navigated through communicational waters with more silence than anyone I have ever known. And if we only learned to find merit in immersion in the unfathomable sea of silence pervading our spirits, how much more blissful and healthier the world would become. Awkwardness in communication would be done with for good and people's acting would be tuned again to the divine energies of

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<sup>1809</sup> See Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, Ardis Publishers, Dana Point, CA (1940), pp. 325.

<sup>1810</sup> See an interview with David Lynch available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RhqvSEoiB7o&feature=related> (2006).

<sup>1811</sup> See John Robb's *The Stone Roses and the Resurrection of British Pop*, Random House, New York, NY (2001), pp. 225.

<sup>1812</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1813</sup> Watch Sigur Ros' interview on NPR's Bryant Park Project, available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIMGPIH4XPo> (2007).

Tao streaming within them day and night. Purity would be restored in their hearts as the release of an enormous amount of pollutants, spiritual and physical, is stood in the way of once and for all by eradicating from the root this idea that putting a word, a sign or a product out there is necessary to justify one's dedication and standing. For this reason, in my visions and dreams I have always seen our world evolving in the direction of a reality pervaded with swaying silhouettes dancing enlightened under the starry skies while glowing like neon lanterns on the move by night, quite like those rendered in the video for Super Furry Animals' Juxtapozed with You<sup>1814</sup>, living and communicating in unadulterated sincerity with each other and with the divine essence from which they are made in sheer silence interspersed only by the twinkly sound of stars nested over their heads as symbols and signs of things they are on the unstoppable route to become. In doing so, they would not need to use language to penetrate through their moves and body language straight to the heart of their starry desires and aspirations and read them the way one reads an animated book. Instead, they would be tuned in to the starry silence of their beings in which the communication of the celestial music of their hearts proceeds uninterrupted by the clichéd need to show signs of respect by uttering words and gazing at each other, although thereby merely constraining the flights of each other's imagination in absorbing impressions of the world, contemplating and acting. Each word of theirs will be a hymn to the silence, pointing at the gorgeous effect of stopping the train of unnecessary verbalizations that in its rolling makes the soulful landscapes around us blurry and nebulous, immersing our spirits in communication far more profound than those dominated by long-windedness and wordiness that mostly suck the spiritual energy out of our beings. Hence I Love Your Silences, They Are Like Mine as the title of a minimalistic, barely one-minute long video directed by my friend, Darko Dragičević a.k.a. the Dolphin, showing grindingly dancing bodies in communication via physical movement only, as its creator wished to tell us that the foundations for the most cordial communication between our starry selves are set deep underneath the visible towers of words, in the silent music of our hearts, the angle from which silence could be seen not as the absence of language, but rather as its crown and the root, the beginnings and the ends thereof, the womb and the epitaph, making language, on the other hand, pictorially representable as a Wittgensteinian ladder suspended in space, levitating between two nothings. Now listen closely because I will tell you something that reverberates all across the vestibules and atria of the pantheon of philosophy nested in my chests, setting its columns to shake, façades to crumble and roofs to collapse so as the view of the starry sky, the final destination for our spirits on their voyages through time and space, to open, in grace, the way flowers unfold their leaf petals to the way of the Sun. The words that I am about to lay before you, I know, will have disappeared from the orbits of your mind and, at best, only a puff of the winds of memory will remain. Yet in the center of that puff a heart of hearts will continue to rest, made of finest stardust, and from it, if God's grace be, if descended to it deeply, something beautiful will arise, proving this celebration of nothingness worthy of erecting towers of an exquisite somethingness. Once, merely for kicks, I measured the average number of words in email messages sent out by various members of the academic community at UCSF and inferred that the greater the stature of a person, the briefer their wordings, all until it all sunk into nothingness after the results became extrapolated to the first data point beyond the most statuesque character I chose for this amusing sideways study. Sometimes it feels as if there is an internal academic competition among the faculty as to who will be the sender of more scantily worded emails, as if the number of words in them is directly and inversely proportional to their stature, I remember I continued and noted how the best way of telling a colleague that one is

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<sup>1814</sup> Watch the video for this song at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jw7u4f-Ujg> (2001).

above him or her on the hierarchical ladder is to express oneself in a lesser number of words. Yet, all this amusingness aside, this trend I discovered spoke something of a monumental profoundness to everyone in the audience, including myself, who had then, unknowingly, allowed the invention to invent the inventor, so to speak, which is, of course, more normal than abnormal in this reality of ours wherein causes and effects are always interlaced so tightly that most of the time they cannot be untangled, not even with the stroke of an Alexandrian sword. Namely, when a question mark popped next to the point of this word vs. stature graph where the number of words equaled zero I did not know that weeks later my Mom would set herself exactly there, speechless and standing on the edge of enlightenment, having let “the voice of the river be emptied into the Ocean and now laughs and sings just like God”<sup>1815</sup>, as in one of Hafiz’s poems, and that this lecture of mine would be more touchingly prophetic than any before or after. Already as I was presenting on this direct correlation between silence of one’s insides and the height one occupies on the spiritual ladder that takes one from being an Earth, a shimmery satellite feeding on the blazing lights of surrounding stars, to becoming a Sun, a soul that shines with love for all life regardless of whether it is being praised or spitted on, the left hemisphere of my Mom’s brain, the one governing mastery over language, logic and a myriad of calculative skills, was starting to shut itself, leaving only the right one, intuitive, imaginative and artistic, to work intact. Coincidentally, just as I, myself, had been given grave predictions about my survival when I bathed as a baby in my Mama’s belly, which she, weaving a giant tapestry depicting the Sun, decided to brush off and bravely give birth to life brewing inside of her, so would she now be given an ultimate bad prognosis by the doctors, who would treat her approaching enlightenment, the state of mind in which, according to the Oriental theological traditions, all that remains inside of one is a silent bliss of the sense of union with all that is, as an illness of a kind. This time, however, it would be me who would walk sturdily through the landscape of the mind wherein the chilling winds of fear relentlessly clash with the warm Sun of hope, the landscape which my Mom traversed too while deliberating my fate as a soul that was to be born against all medical advice. And so, just as she had done many years ago, so did I decide not to take these medical foredooms too serious and confronted them with a sunshiny smile on my face and with stellar optimism in my heart. For, in their callous limitedness, these minacious medical verdicts symbolized to my humble self what society has and will have always considered those who have come to the apexes of the quest for the incarnation of divine knowledge and being: as obtuse, insane or plainly ill, sentencing them to quarantines, asylums or surgery knives. Be that as it may, not knowing then what was promptly to befall upon the goddess of my life, a living epitome of the Way itself in the most glorious of its forms, her who has clapped a puny pair of angelic wings instead of delicate dresses and jewelry all her life, I serenely concluded in front of my peers that one indeed has to kill language and merge with nonverbal silence as the core and the wings of one’s expressions if one is to reach the highest possible esteem in the eyes of the little gods and demigods that watch our earthly performances from some impalpably transcendental angles<sup>1816</sup>. Moreover, at the very end of this talk, so as to return to the beginning

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<sup>1815</sup> See the Preface to Hafiz’s *The Gift*, Translated by Daniel Ladinsky, Penguin Compass, New York, NY (14<sup>th</sup> Century), pp. 3.

<sup>1816</sup> To add to the prophetic character of this and other talks I have held since then, two and a half years later, in December 2014, I would visit my Mom for a week and then immediately fly back to the university I was affiliated with at the time only to give the last lecture of the biomaterials course I designed and taught to the seniors and grad students that semester. The course, strangely, happened to be the first I held in my life. Its final lecture was supposed to be dedicated solely to ethics in the science of biomaterials. The last slide of this talk contained the aforementioned story of al-Bistami and his route to wisdom, always stemming from care for some frail creatures of the world (the

and wrap it all up into a perfect circle, I placed Doris' punkish description of her teaching approach and the mention of "care and love" as two qualities that stand at its foundations<sup>1817</sup>, and then crushed these words into pieces as I let the stick figure of one of her heroines emerge from the background, with a pile of book depicted as a ladder to the stars standing next to her. With this series of images I wished to show to the audience that only when words dissipate into stardust on the palms of our hands and we become overfilled with realization that far beyond them does the true communication with Nature and with each other begin and end will we truly take off from these earthly lowlands of spirit on our voyage to the stars. When the words vanish, "after that it becomes simply the world"<sup>1818</sup>, wrote down Tom Lubbock as his final words of the diary wherein he followed his progress towards sheer speechlessness, poignantly insinuating that only when the words cease to pollute the celestial space of our minds do our ascents towards creative infinity truly begin. "A savior or a scribe: to be or not to be, that is the question", I thus often sing in my head, reminding myself of the crossroad on which every intellectual finds oneself, one road from which, taken by many, Pharisees, phony preachers and moralists primarily, leads in the direction of pursuance of knowledge for the sake of knowledge, while the other one of which, taken by but a few Christ-like creatures that blessed the Earth with their presence, wishing not to judge the world, but to save the world (John 12:47), leads towards transformation of knowledge into blissful forms of being. "My propositions are elucidatory in this way: he who understands me finally recognizes them as senseless, when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them (He must so to speak throw away the ladder, after he has climbed up on it). He must surmount these propositions; then he sees the world rightly"<sup>1819</sup>, Ludwig Wittgenstein thus said in his legendary tractate and, indeed, surrounded by a talkative clique, a little deity of my dreams on Earth begins to climb on Wittgenstein's ladder all until she reaches starry heights in her heavenly communication with the spirit of Nature, which is whence she throws the ladder off and turns into a levitating star. It is thence that the stardust of truly graceful and dazzling acting can she shed over the creatures of the world.

Therefore, the genuine muse of mine, with eyes filled with revolving stars of wonder, finding herself at a party rarely exclaims a single word or engages in an intricately tangled conversation. Even when she does, she speaks in enigmatic expressions, in tongues, creating more of one's own, "bebop language"<sup>1820</sup>, full of improv and broken grammar, rather than falling prey to the trap of conventional communication through language and to the deadening effect it has on everything alive inside her. She knows that language is a barrier and not a gate between the human hearts, driving them towards automatism and superficiality and away from inventiveness and depth in the long run. If cordial connections are to be made, language has to be given up, she knows, and pure, wordless semantics embraced, the reason for which the letters

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practical take-home message for the students was that biomaterials, as a field of study, could be ethically involved in only insofar one leaves any temptations to seek profit, fame and glory behind and cordially work to bring benefit for some fragile souls of this universe), which, in his case, and mine, too, was Mother, not ill, as the story in its original form put it, but merely undergoing a spiritual phase transition, getting rid of the physical shell born for such a long time and continuing the karmic journey further, into some unknown and unforeseen regions of this endless reality, the journey my Mom indeed embarked on the first following Friday, exactly a week after this story, perhaps the saddest and the most beautiful of them all, I told.

<sup>1817</sup> See Doris # 29 by Cindy Crabb, Doris Press, PO Box 29, Athens, OH (2012).

<sup>1818</sup> See Tom Lubbock: A Memoir of Living with Brain Tumour, The Guardian (November 6, 2010), available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2010/nov/07/tom-lubbock-brain-tumour-language>.

<sup>1819</sup> See Ludwig Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, Routledge, London, UK (1918), proposition 6.54.

<sup>1820</sup> Watch Ranko Munitić's interview with Sonja Savić (1996), available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUsMKEpGszQ>.

and signs she found beautiful while climbing on them to the stars she eventually drops from a nearby star and into the dark cosmic abysses so as to begin to live all the bliss inscribed in them. And so she spaces out and dances, using words only as a means to convey music of the celestial spirit of one instead of relying and leaning on meanings transmitted by standard communication codes of words and their intonations. In the spirit of shocking solecism, guided by the words whispered by Dean Moriarty to Jack Kerouac, “Get it all down and without modified restraints and all hung-up on like literary inhibitions and grammatical fears”<sup>1821</sup>, she would exclaim things that may appear meaningless and moronic, and yet would come straight from the heart and carry a beautiful implicit message on their wings. In the name of this way of speech, “direct, unmediated by orthodox syntax or rhetorical glissades”<sup>1822</sup>, she may also occasionally scream an “I resent that” as a response to the voice of conscience telling her how “our actions show what’s in our hearts” following the thought of “do you think our morality is defined by our actions, or by what’s in our hearts”, just as Calvin did in his punkish and subversive spirit<sup>1823</sup>. And yet, seconds later, she, in her lively internal dialogue, would realize that it is all alright, that if our acts somewhere deep inside of them hide sprouts of unspoiled goodness, they will produce light in the world, and that even when their superficial meanings speak opposite to what our bright and loving intentions are, they will turn out to present good deeds in the long run. For, once our heart is enlightened by the sun of Love and the stars of Wonder, I believe, anything we do will deliver light to the world, subtly and inconspicuously. Therefore, I too prefer to break the rules of clichéd communication through language<sup>1824</sup> and thus demonstrate that the reason why we are all here is because we should evolve beyond language and use it merely as a medium to exchange sparkles of the true essence of our minds and hearts, as a ticket to the carousel of starry communication of our souls. Whether I may resort to statements such as Gertrude Stein’s “a rose is a rose is a rose is a rose”<sup>1825</sup>, a train of affirmations of identity whereby the meaning of this identity, along with the meaning of the word *per se*, is being dissipated in the wind, or an ever more profound assertion uttered by a Buddhist monk after he had picked a yellow rose from a vase, “a rose is not a rose; that is why it is a real rose”<sup>1826</sup>, the ultimate mission of my verbalizations will be the same: to use words as a tool for their own sacrifice and annihilation, so that our minds could no longer be stopped by their barricades on the way to coalescing with and comprehending reality in a most direct fashion possible. In such a way, instead of stopping at the gate of language, we would pass through and emerge on the other, sunlit and spiritual side of livelier and much more interactive being. After all, once you get rid of any expectations to communicate through words and discard them as a means to convey the most precious meanings to others as well as to absorb the most precious messages from the world that surrounds us, social and natural alike, the communication channels for the transmittance of the real essence of our creative beings become rejuvenated and start sending wonderful streams and bursts of gleaming starry information back-and-forth throughout the space. This is why each time I

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<sup>1821</sup> See Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road*, Penguin, New York, NY (1957), pp. 4-5.

<sup>1822</sup> See Peter Ackroyd’s *Ezra Pound and His World*, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York, NY (1980), pp. 82.

<sup>1823</sup> See Bill Watterson’s *Attack of the Deranged Mutant Killer Monster Snow Goons*, Andrews and McMeel, Kansas City, MO (1992), pp. 53.

<sup>1824</sup> My books can certainly be seen as an evidence of these grammatical, stylistic, formalistic and discipline-wise rule-breaking creative norms of mine.

<sup>1825</sup> See Gertrude Stein’s *Rose Does Something*, In: *The World is Round*, a collection of children’s stories, Shambhala, Boston, MA (1938).

<sup>1826</sup> See Mary Paterson’s *The Monks and Me: How 40 Days at Thich Nhat Hanh’s French Monastery Guided Me Home*, Hampton Roads, Charlottesville, VA (2012), pp. 28.

traveled to a foreign country where natives spoke a language I could not understand at all and yet tried my best to communicate using gesticulation and other elements of the body language, I would come home with the sense of communion and amity brushed up on, as if every stranger walking by me in the street would be warmly hugged by the clouds of my saintly thoughts. My being deprived of the lame habit to lean onto verbal maps in communication and forced to be in touch with others by more primal and soulful means would thus liberate myself from a slavish attachment to language and let my spirit soar more freely and lightly into the social air. For, when we begin to live solely on a map by extensively elaborating the features of the territory that it represents, as all the scholars are familiar with quite well, there is always a danger that we might find it to be a territory in itself, losing out of sight its genuine purpose: to help us navigate our voyages across the real territory rather than being an art for art's sake, so to say. This is when the words uttered start to be devoid of emotionality and deflated of passion, and when the hypocritical acts of announcing one frames of mind while holding on to their opposites become fully feasible, as we find Karen O, the wannabe punk superstar, to sing "I love you like I love you" to the ear of our mental capsule, reminding us that all that is left of the true feelings is only a bland verbal copy thereof. Even worse, this is when the words such as "I love you" become easily confusable with the true feelings of love lighting up one's insides like the most blissful and colorful light show imaginable, but silently, with no words to justify and dilute them sent into the air from the flaming runway of our lips. For, just as it has been shown that one's liking posts by charitable organizations on Facebook gives one a false sense of satisfaction of engaging in a charitable activity and diminishes the probability of one's engaging in one such activity for real<sup>1827</sup>, so should we be sure that talking about beautiful living, in fact, stands in the way of living beautifully most of the time. To cease to talk about the ineffable and dive deep into the sea of silence, the only place where the genuinely affable could be fully embraced is thus the first step in healing our spirit from this bleaching effect that language has had on the liveliness of the content of our psyche. Concordantly, Voltaire used to say that "theology is to religion what poison is to food"<sup>1828</sup>, echoing the hereby expounded message that language cannot be a means of arrival at the peaks of the most sacred knowledge in life; only the prayerful music of the heart and blissful actions arising from it can. For, language is never an aim in itself, but only a useful tool and, like all other tools, it inevitably poses traps in the space of our mind should our use thereof become such that we assign it the role of a master instead of that of a servant. Therefore, it is quite common to realize that language does not foster, but conceals and obscures the waves of love that are to ideally travel between the coasts of human hearts during our daily communications. "The banality of conversation tends to opacify rather than clarify feelings"<sup>1829</sup>, the UC Berkeley professor of rhetoric and a prominent American narratologist, Seymour Chatman thus pointed out in the context of celebrating Michelangelo Antonioni's retreat from verbal communication and into the usage of postures, bodily movement and placement in the environment as a language that reveals the characters' truer feelings, by means of which the Italian director cut the thread that tied cinema to the theatre once and for all and enabled "visual images to speak for themselves"<sup>1830</sup>. Having used *via negativa* approach of "ascension through

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<sup>1827</sup> See Pet načina na koje vam Facebook uništava život, B92 News (April 5, 2015), retrieved from [http://www.b92.net/tehnopolis/internet.php?yyyy=2015&mm=04&nav\\_id=976983](http://www.b92.net/tehnopolis/internet.php?yyyy=2015&mm=04&nav_id=976983).

<sup>1828</sup> See Béla Hamvas' *Anthologia Humana: 5000 Years of Wisdom*, Dereta, Belgrade, Serbia (1948), pp. 162.

<sup>1829</sup> See Seymour Chatman's *All the Adventures*, In: *L'avventura: Michelangelo Antonioni, Director*, edited by Seymour Chatman and Guido Fink, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ (1989), pp. 4.

<sup>1830</sup> *Ibid.*

reduction”<sup>1831</sup> and arriving at what *is* by eliminating what *is not*, the great worshipper of the nonverbal in the filmmaking realm can be said to have discovered the essence of communication by cutting through its superficial layers that merely conceal the latter from the sight of the eyes of the heart. He must have recognized that no language can express the essence of being and thus decided to wholly live up to the Shakespearean advice given by a Croatian villager to the three adventurers as they crossed onto the other side of a mystical borderline depicted in Maja Weiss’ Varuh Meje: “Do not rest your thought on language”<sup>1832</sup>. On the contrary, the increase of our linguistic masteries is, then, akin to increasing the height of the Babylonian tower of our ego that poses walls between us and others instead of sustaining the shine of love that should be streaming from one heart to another. This tower, however, undoubtedly has to be toppled down if we are to reach genuine oneness with every detail and creature of the world, the ultimate aim on the path of the evolution of our spirits. Silent, voiceless transmission of meaning is thus often the way to escape from the blind spots in which we fall by using language unremittingly and reawaken the awareness of the real purpose of its usage in the sphere of our consciousness, which is to bind our hearts together in love rather than merely find satisfaction in wordplays, witty remarks, wordy vows or unraveling a plethora of linguistic puzzles that buzz around our scruffy intellectual heads at all times.

When Fyodor Dostoyevsky portrayed the second coming of the Christ in his famous allegory about the Grand Inquisitor, the Christ, imprisoned by the very Church which had been founded through his majestic deeds, spoke no words<sup>1833</sup>. At the very end of the story, having carefully listened to the monologue of the Grand Inquisitor, he merely stood up and kissed his lips as a response, implicitly demonstrating the merits of simple acts of love that in their value stand far beyond any teaching that insists on mere words. In a likewise manner, “I talk and talk, yet accomplish little; it’s better to preach by example than by words”, St. Francis of Assisi instructed brother Ginepro to begin each sermon he was about to preach in the village with and after he did so before the robust soldiers of despot Nicolaio who held the village under siege, he was tortured and taken into the tyrant’s tent where he merely looked him in the eye with an infinite meekness and love, just as the Christ did when he stood face to face with the Grand Inquisitor, thus freeing him of his steely armor first, then softening his heart without a single word spoken and eventually prompting him to call for the end of the siege of the village<sup>1834</sup>. With this relinquishment of the spoken word on the account of the silent vibe of the heart, the Christ, who had during his first coming referred to the teaching of the prophet Esaias, saying how “this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me; but in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:8-9), merely reverted what the Church had reverted at the first place: the original Christ’s valuing of acts and deeds over the phony pharisaic insistence on words and the “pale religious...virginity that wishes but acts not”<sup>1835</sup>. It was through one such spontaneous reversion of values whereby a tree of knowledge was flipped over so that its surface became the

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<sup>1831</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1832</sup> “Na jezik svoju misao ne stavljaj”, said the villager in his native Serbo-Croatian as a response to a protagonist’s saying that she was a linguist, ostensibly quoting William Shakespeare. This Slovenian movie had been released in May 2002, exactly a month before I moved to Slovenia, the country whose citizen I became a little bit less than four years later.

<sup>1833</sup> See Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*, Prosveta, Belgrade, Serbia (1880).

<sup>1834</sup> Watch *The Flowers of St. Francis* directed by Roberto Rossellini (1950).

<sup>1835</sup> See William Blake’s *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, In: *Portable Blake*, Selected and Arranged by Alfred Kazin, Viking Press, New York, NY (1946).

roots and the roots found their way on the surface that the Church transformed itself from a charitable home for the hearts in need of spiritual solace into an oppressing inquisitional movement that shamelessly tormented and humiliated all those who did not accept its teachings through words, while blatantly overlooking that with music that reverberates across the depths of one's being, where one's aspirations, intentions, prayers, visions and emotions churn, one truly communicates with Nature and God. Such a relapsed teaching where what is on the surface, on our lips and our garments, has meant more than what is on the foundations, in our heart and soul, led many profound thinkers to find comfort in Mahatma Gandhi's words, "I like your Christ, but I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ"; in Erasmus' pacifistic criticism of the Crusades and other wars supported by Christians, "If the Christian religion be a fable, why do we not honestly and openly explode it? Why do we glory in its name? But if Christ is 'the way, the truth, and the life', why do all our plans of conduct differ so far from his instructions and example?"<sup>1836</sup>; and in those of Frederick Douglass, "Between the Christianity of this land, and the Christianity of the Christ, I recognize the widest possible difference – so wide, that to receive the one as good, pure, and holy, is of necessity to reject the other as bad, corrupt, and wicked... Indeed, I can see no reason, but the most deceitful one, for calling the religion of this land Christianity. I look upon it as the climax of all misnomers, the boldest of all frauds, and the grossest of all libels"<sup>1837</sup>. Innumerable features of the moral and customary law of Christianity never embraced by the Christ, but traditionally reinforced by the Church could be thus brought to mind, from the religious fundamentalism to the torture of heretics to the dogmatic rather than wondering approach to knowing God to unprivileged voices of women throughout the history to the existence of kings and castes and aerial races. The great disparity between what is written on paper and flashes on human mental screens on one side and what emanates from human deeds on the other can be clearly magnified by a plethora of cases where the applications of the Christ's teaching widely differed from the theory, so to say. For example, even though the Christ professed nothing but equality and brotherhood, it was his word that the conquistadors and other colonialists used to instigate slavery and occupy foreign lands; or, as pointed out by the former Kenyan president, Jomo Kenyatta, "When the missionaries arrived, Africans had the land and the missionaries had the Bible. They taught us to pray with our eyes closed. When we opened them, they had the land and we had the Bible"<sup>1838</sup>. Even if implicitly brushed against in a sideway thought offered by the Christ, there could hardly be any justification for identifying such references to cases of social inequalities as regular and acceptable as essential features of his teaching. For, not only are we social creatures inevitably affected by the culture and customs of the actual times, but each one of us needs to accept certain traits of the tradition upon which one stands in order to meaningfully communicate one's message to the world. In other words, even the most rebellious messages need to be delivered from the grounds of admiration and acceptance of the tradition of ours, which brings us back to the already elaborated inextricable connectedness between empathically and respectfully being one and the same as others on one side of an enlightened consciousness and rebelliously striving to be different and unique, to break all the boundaries of standardized, customary and clichéd

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<sup>1836</sup> See Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam's *Antipolemus, or, the Plea of Reason, Religion, and Humanity against War*, reprinted in *The Book of Peace: A Collection of Essays on War and Peace*, George C. Beckwith, Boston, MA (1845), available at <http://mises.org/daily/4134>.

<sup>1837</sup> See the Appendix of Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Signet, New York, NY (1845), pp.120 - 126.

<sup>1838</sup> See George B. N. Ayittey's *Africa Betrayed*, St. Martin's Press, New York, NY (1992), pp. 4.

modes of being on the other side of it. For, as it should have become clear by now, only those who find themselves going against the stream of common thinking, facing hardships and rejections on their paths, can realize one day that they have journeyed along truly progressive roads in life. Or, as Mark Twain wittily pointed out, “If Christ were around, there is one thing he would not be: a Christian”<sup>1839</sup>, a remark that would be reechoed a hundred years later in Nick Cave’s observation that “he believes in God in spite of religion, not because of it”<sup>1840</sup>. Twain’s remark might have prompted Shaikh Kharaqāni to nod his bearded head and utter the words of everlasting relevance, “A Sufi is he who is not”<sup>1841</sup>, underlying the authenticity of our spiritual and creative lives as existent to the extent we renounce any identifications with humanly crafted values and standards of being imposed on us from the outside. Likewise, had they been with us today, Leonardo and Michelangelo may have been “too busy educating themselves to attend schools”, as Bob Dylan noticed once, and may have been writing books on the merits of systemic and truly imaginative thinking, such as this one, rather than attending regular science classes and learning how to be obedient followers in life. Thus, they would have opposed the uncreative boredom of the modern educational institutions and the conformist nature of the contemporary academic environments, reminding us how questioning it all and constantly raising one’s voice against standardized worldviews and clichéd ways of perceiving, interpreting and acting is the way to turn dusty ceilings of our mind into wondrous and everlasting starry skies.

In the book of Bhagavad-Gita, a similarly revolutionary shift away from the mere obedience to the Vedic guidance in words and into placing an emphasis on acting divinely while being unattached to the fruits of one’s work has been raised on the pedestal of the most sublime ethical knowledge that we could attain and can be epitomized by the following verse: “When your mind is no longer disturbed by the flowery language of the Vedas, and when it remains fixed in the trance of self-realization, then you will have attained the divine consciousness” (Gita 2:53). When towards the end of Douglas Coupland’s *Microserfs*, a literary sign of the zeitgeist whose importance was of macrocosmic proportions, the characters shockingly experience the falling apart of linguistic constructs that they have relied on to coordinate themselves in the world, feeling thereby as if they “fell down life’s cartoon holes... dreamless children, alive but not living”, but then “emerged on the other side of the cartoon holes fully awake and discovered we were whole”<sup>1842</sup>, it stands forth as a powerful metaphor of the nature of human knowing. That is, seeing is indeed forgetting the name of the thing one sees, as Paul Valéry noticed once, and crashing of the language jigsaw puzzle that we constantly assemble in our heads as we explain the world to ourselves seems to be a prerequisite for a truly profound perception thereof to occur. The Romanian philosopher, Emil M. Cioran, commonly known as a “negative theologian”, hinted at this epistemic earthquake that entails rejection of words as shackles that one has to liberate oneself from before regaining the childlike lightness of spirit that allows ascension towards heavenly states of being and seeing the world when he noticed the following: “The one who builds with words, albeit being a master of sapience, lives in fetters of ignorance. Contrary, insofar as he rebels against them and, shuddered, turns his back thereto, he approaches liberation... A mentally retarded poor man who in the midst of his wretchedness suddenly senses

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<sup>1839</sup> See Mark Twain’s *Letters from the Earth* (1904 - 1909), Harper Perennial, New York, NY.

<sup>1840</sup> See the Wikipedia page on Nick Cave retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick\\_Cave](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick_Cave) (2021). The remark was made during a conversation with Jarvis Cocker of Pulp in a BBC talk show in 2010.

<sup>1841</sup> See Annemarie Schimmel’s *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC (1975), pp. 16.

<sup>1842</sup> See Douglas Coupland’s *Microserfs*, Flamingo, London, UK (1995), pp. 362 - 371.

this is closer to the real knowledge and more ‘liberated’ than a philosopher incapable of this convulsion”<sup>1843</sup>. In that sense, it is as if throughout our entire lives our beings stand on a crossroad, one direction from which leads to our embracement of the word and the other one of which leads to our dodging the word and latching onto the cosmic delights of life instead. As Kaj Munk’s play *In the Beginning was the Word* and its filmed version entitled *The Word* and directed by Carl Theodor Dreyer thirty years later, in 1955, remind us, it is indeed either the word that we place on the pedestal of glory in our mental microcosm, along with equipping ourselves for incessant quarrels and altercations, or we bravely stand up against the very first statement written by one of the Christ’s followers (John 1:1) on the account of his life, more than just the word, and embrace Lao-Tzu’s claim that “a good man does not debate; who debates is not a good man” (Tao-Te-Xing LXXXI) and, with it, life, the word that the reanimated spirit of Inger ecstatically exclaims as the last one in this fabulous filmed play, altogether with the inexhaustible teary geysers of love, devotion and happiness that it will bring forth to the world around us. Or, as wittily pointed out in Goethe’s *Faust*, “’Tis writ, ‘In the beginning was the Word’. I pause, to wonder what is here inferred. The Word I cannot set supremely high: a new translation I will try. I read, if by the spirit, I am taught, this sense, ‘In the beginning was the Thought’. Furthermore, as the scribe added during the interpretation of the given verses, “Upon the Word rested authority, stability, and law; the Thought roiled and ripped apart and created – without knowledge or concern of what it would create”<sup>1844</sup>. However, my personal interpretation of this opening line from Gospel according to John, describing the move with which a whole universe comes into being and reflecting the primordial breaking of the symmetry that cosmologists refer to, is this: in the beginning was an imperfection. For, it does not take a complex logical analysis to conclude that *every word is a lie*. Namely, if our first premise is that verbally described are not physical objects, but sensations thereof, unique in every passing moment to the subject, and our second premise is that every word has been used by someone else, so to say, let alone that it pertains to specific prefigured semantic evocations equally unique to the subject, the deduced inference would be the following: every word is a lie and the entire concept of truth definable via words is the invention of a liar, as Heinz von Foerster would have put it<sup>1845</sup>, having seen truth as causative of war in his magical microcosm of thought<sup>1846</sup>, just as it had led to hatred in Terence’s roughly two millennia ago<sup>1847</sup>. Of course, this revelation can have a truly liberating effect on the freedom with which we express ourselves verbally, as instead of searching for the nonexistent perfect combinations of words that would fit the right moment and flawlessly describe our feelings or visions, we could then leave our attachment to words, if any, behind and use them leisurely, without being enslaved by them and engaging in cutthroat quarrels, knowing all the while that in spiritual qualities that underlie them do the true

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<sup>1843</sup> See Béla Hamvas’ *Anthologia Humana: 5000 Years of Wisdom*, Dereta, Belgrade, Serbia (1948), pp. 292. The extent to which the Hungarian compiler of this anthology valued Cioran’s pointing at the need to discard the dumbbells of words before being able to soar one’s spirit high into the skies of the world is illustrated by the fact that he placed it at the very exit of it, as its final words, words that kill words and open ways for less limited and more beautiful views of life.

<sup>1844</sup> See John M. Barry’s *The Great Influenza*, Penguin, New York, NY (2005), pp. 7.

<sup>1845</sup> See Ole Thyssen’s *TRUTH IS WAR: Conversations with Heinz von Foerster*, *Cybernetics and Human Knowing* 10 (3-4) 179 – 181 (2003).

<sup>1846</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1847</sup> Terence, a.k.a. Publius Terentius Afer is credited with the following saying: “Pliability leads to friendship, but truth leads to hatred”. See Violeta Ilić’s *Zrnca mudrosti: Poslovice, misli, izreke*, Beoknjiga, Belgrade, Serbia (2001), pp. 86.

communicational means exist. Moreover, once we understand that from other people, people other than them speak, whereas their soul always lies beyond, intact, enwrapped by the pureness of the holiest spirit, we will cease to judge people by the words they utter and establish a much deeper emotional connection with them than that reachable by relying on sheer semantics. Despite the fact that both language on one side and our thoughts and emotions on the other are partly crafted by the social values and inescapably reflect the laws of Nature in them, the former is limited by the humanly set laws of expression, whereas the latter ingrain infinitely greater creative potentials within and are the only abstract means by which we may engage in true communication with each other and with Nature as a whole. Still, though, in the world we inhabit most communications begin and end with strictly linguistic connections drawn between human minds, only rarely using language as steps for the elevation of human spirits and opening of the views of life more glorious than one had an access to prior to engaging in the given conversation. To succeed in the latter, of course, one needs to use the linguistic signposts as pointers away from language and straight into the heart of the domain occupied by the waves of resonance of human spirits and not mere symbols and words.

Language, after all, rests upon the rules of convention and does not truthfully reflect the states of experience or reality. If we decided to name white black and black white from this moment on, the truthfulness of every one of our statements in the future would not change, Plato noticed in one of his works. Electrons are, for example, accepted as negatively charged, whereas the atomic nuclei are positive, and yet it is merely a matter of convention. Scientists could have agreed on this being the opposite since what matters are only that there is a polarity, a broken symmetry involved. How naming it is of least concern. Thereafter, when Alice asked evasive Humpty Dumpty in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* if he could indeed "make words mean so many different things", "the question is which is to be master – that's all", the loquacious egg-man replies, and Friedrich Nietzsche, Michel Foucault and Heinz von Foerster would all agree with their respective sayings that "the criterion of truth resides in the enhancement of the feeling of power"<sup>1848</sup>, "'truth' is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it"<sup>1849</sup>, and "truth" is, simply speaking, "war and the invention of the liar"<sup>1850</sup>. This sheds light on the timeless and omnipresent relevance of the simple line and a pearl of wisdom with which Derrick in Davis Guggenheim's *Gossip* calms Jones, who has found the constant changing of the version of a story as it is being told and retold from one human to another unbearable: "It's not truth, it's just words". After all, not only are all linguistic expressions only pale sketches of the vividness of our real-life impressions, but whatever we build in words also becomes helplessly modified and reshaped during their interpretation by others. That is, not only is "reality too complex for oral communication", as says the opening statement of Jean-Luc Godard's saga about Alphaville, the city of machinelike spirits who know not what love is, but language, by itself, is also the instrument of a liar<sup>1851</sup>, given that every verbal expression is deluding another into the false belief of having caught a piece of reality into

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<sup>1848</sup> See Harry Redner's *The Ends of Science: An Essay in Scientific Authority*. Chapter IV: Knowledge and Authority, Westview Press, Boulder, CO (1987), pp. 104.

<sup>1849</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1850</sup> According to Ranulph Glanville, Heinz von Foerster wished to name a book that arose as a compilation of discussions between himself and Bernhard Poersken, eventually published under the name *Understanding Systems*, exactly that: *Truth is the Invention of the Liar*. See Ranulph Glanville's *Understanding Systems: Conversations on Epistemology and Ethics, Cybernetics and Human Knowing* 10 (1) 183 – 188 (2003).

<sup>1851</sup> Is this why, I wonder, reality regularly proves us wrong whenever we confidently utter a statement, as if to demonstrate that its essence lies far from and beyond the realm of language?

a fishing net woven by words, which, in reality, is an impossible task, as the essence, along with the most beautiful traits of this reality, always passes untouched through it. It may be for this reason that the heroine of Alphaville, finally liberated and on its way to the Outlands, where she could afford being an outsider and a beautiful spirit once again, forgets language and has to come up with the only three words she would need on this new plane of reality; after a long search, she stutters, “I... You... Love... I Love you”, having found all the language she needs in the celestial sphere of being wherein life is lived, not only vainly discussed about. Language should thus be considered as a means to an end, a path that leads to action that broadens the scope of our experience and enlightens it, and not as an aim in itself. And the key to unlocking the chambers in which the goddesses of this knowledge lie asleep is, as ever, held by children. Thus, when I reminisce over toddler Theo’s either pointing at an object or babbling its name, but never doing both, I see a powerful sign suggesting that, primordially, experience precedes language and that seeing is, as Paul Valéry had it, forgetting the name of the thing seen in the state of a purest being, which only children are naturally nested in. “The way that can be named is not the sacred Way: Tao”, says the opening verse of Lao-Tzu’s Tao-Te-Xing, and, indeed, no nameable ways existed around Theo at this, preverbal stage; resultantly, his was the existence completely immersed in the blissful ocean of Tao. He roamed freely within the gates of Eden; the expulsion from it along the trail of language had not begun yet. “Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Matthew 5:37), the Christ instructed and Theo obeyed heartily in this early stage of his growth, communicating only using these two words and nothing else, remaining, as such, protractedly cocooned in a state of sheer starriness and resisting to be dragged down to the muddy waters of being, to murky loci deeply fallen from grace, by the sinkers of language. Only later in life, paralleling the fall from grace and the loss of Paradise that growing up and entering adulthood entails, would language and experience swap places and the former would become a vile substitute for the latter, neglecting all the while that a whole universe stands between verbally preaching ideals of charitable living and living these ideals in reality. A grandiose task standing before all of us is how to reconnect these two domains, the one of a map and the one of a territory, and build a bridge over which a two-way traffic will be enabled, allowing acts to be transformable to linguistic signs aimed to orient others towards the spheres of blissful being and language to be obliged to live up to Robert Frost’s definition of literature as “words that have become deeds”<sup>1852</sup>. The developmental impasse in which intellectuals all the world over have found themselves is, of course, such that the traffic on this imaginary bridge has become clogged and allowed to proceed in one direction only, from experience to language, but not the other way around. In that sense, had existentialism not devolved into sheer bohemianism, I would have certainly counted myself as the sympathizer of this philosophy that in the most authentic form sprung from “a belief that human beings can find a rationale, a morality, in *the living of their lives*, rather than huddling under a canopy of doctrine constructed to reassure”<sup>1853</sup>, as the film critic, Stanley Kauffmann defined it. We should thus be aware that by uttering or writing words we are shedding signs and not necessarily indulging in *l’art pour l’art* of a kind. For, “song is just passing for love”<sup>1854</sup>, as Stew had it, and art, at the end of the day, is merely a map of the territory, a set of instructions on how life should

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<sup>1852</sup> See David Orr’s *I and You*, *The New York Times* (August 28, 2005).

<sup>1853</sup> See Stanley Kauffmann’s *Michelangelo Antonioni’s L’avventura*, *Horizon* 14 (4) 52 (1972), reprinted in Stanley Kauffmann’s *Living Images: Film Comment and Criticism*, Harper & Row, New York, NY (1975), pp. 332 – 340.

<sup>1854</sup> Watch Mark Stewart’s play *Passing Strange*, Sundance Institute Theatre Lab (2006).

be lived and nothing more than that. Indeed, according to Socrates, the main philosophical question is how one should live<sup>1855</sup>, not how one should see the images of the world through the linguistic or any other abstract frame, although these two are, of course, inextricably connected in every thinker's microcosm. Consequently, word has its purpose in serving as a pointer at life and not the other way around, that is, in tapping the energy of life and transmuting it into static and lifeless symbols as things-in-themselves. Yet, the usage of every tool conceals the threat of its becoming the master and we its tool, and the same rule applies to language too. Anytime we fall into a trap from which linguistic maps start to delusively come into sight as self-sufficient ends in themselves, as maps that have become equally or oftentimes even more valuable than the territories which they relate to, we ought to know that a critical fall from grace has occurred and a serious plan for saving our spirits is to be devised. For, we do not need to look around us for too long before we realize an endless number of thinkers that have fallen prey to this elusive power of words, chewing on insipid terminological and etymological differences, having found more pleasure in digesting the maps rather than exploring the territories of our experiences. As we stand in this cognitive corner, we may be tempted to think that finding sweet words is all that it takes to express ourselves to the fullest of our creative capacities, albeit neglecting both the foundations of aspirations and communicational intentions from which they arose and fruits of the ensuing acts, the beginnings and ends of our creative being in this world. Besides, words that we associate with illuminative insights in our head are not only the thing of the moment, inevitably bound to lose their charm and appeal with the passage of the train of time even in our own semantic universe, but are also always reinterpreted in a thoroughly different light in other people's heads, yielding completely different and, more often than not, unintended impressions therein. Finally, no bottles of words could ever fit the infinitely vast ocean of divine beauties dormant in each and every corner of reality, even moderate absorption of which would make us momentarily pass out in ecstasy, like St. Francis captured on the famous Caravaggio's painting from the late 16<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>1856</sup>. Or, as William Shakespeare put it in a sonnet of his (No. 17), at around the same the Italian master painted entranced St. Francis swooning in the arms of an angel, "If I could write the beauty of your eyes and in fresh numbers number all your graces, the age to come would say, 'This poet lies'"<sup>1857</sup>. It is then that the time would have come to recall the following apologetic message into which St. Paul the Apostle framed his first epistle to the Corinthians, urging us to grasp that not in word *per se*, but in the spirit underlying the word is where the sources of enlightening utterances reside: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God... And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (Corinthians I 2:1..4-5). Being in command of spoken or written word and able to create a thrilling cloud of amazement and awe around the surrounding spirits with our eloquent and poetical verbalizations is thus by no means a guarantee for neither our own enlightenment nor our ability to profoundly enlighten others. To exemplify this, one need to look no farther than the notorious first lady of Serbia of the 1990s, a published poet and a university professor who always walked around with a flower in her hair and expressed herself in a soft and soothing, honey-flowing language, while at the same time ordering murders of journalists or gangsters who

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<sup>1855</sup> See Bernard Williams' *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA (1985), pp. 1.

<sup>1856</sup> See Robert Kiely's *Blessed and Beautiful*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT (2010), pp. 252.

<sup>1857</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 158.

either publicly or clandestinely stood against her or her husband. Thus, lest we become like Alfred and Klara, the two mail correspondents from Ernst Lubitsch's *Shop Around the Corner*, madly in love with each other based on their love letters alone, thinking that they had never met but knowing not that they are colleagues at work who intensely loath one another, disconnected from real life and capable of expressing themselves in loving terms only indirectly, through the written word, we must heal this disconnect and bridge the gulf between genuine verbosity and inspirational living. All in all, by knowing that verbal masteries do not unequivocally lead to impeccable shininess of our spirits, the importance we ascribe to language *per se* becomes minimized, as it starts to be seen as merely a stem connecting (a) the roots of our wordless communicational goals that underlie our expressions, with (b) the fruits of our acts in the world in terms of gestural dancing through space and healing touches that we shed all around us. For, *summa summarum*, language is immensely useful as a channel, but quite inauspicious as the ultimate aim of our missionary strivings to untie the cocoon of divine spirit dormant in us and spread its butterfly wings into the airs of the world to ascend us into its most sublime skies.

Gautama Buddha consequently described his teaching as comparable to a boat, the purpose of which is to "help one reach the other shore and then be released rather than be tightly adhered to at any cost"<sup>1858</sup>. Chuang-Tzu whimpered how "the fishing net is for catching fish; once we caught the fish we do not think about the net anymore... words are for catching thoughts; but, once we caught a thought, there is no need to think about words; if I could only find someone who stopped thinking about words, to have a talk with him". In the same spirit, St. Paul the Apostle observed the following: "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God... for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Galatians 2:19-21). Hence, wherever we drop our glances through the history of human thought, we could glimpse messages that erase themselves, in the light of ultimate ethics and aesthetics, and thus become equivalent to the Biblical seed that knows that only by allowing its tiny self to die could it sprout, stem high, blossom and drop fruits onto the hands and hearts of the thirsty souls of the world one day. Therefore, only words that point beyond words can be considered as genuinely beautiful and spiritually elevating ones. Warren McCulloch was amused by the fact that if one points at something with a finger in front of a child's nose, the child will look in the distance, towards what was pointed at, whereas if one does the same thing to a dog, the dog will stare at the finger or merely lick it. For this reason, an ancient Zen aphorism was composed once so as to divert the disciples' attention from shallowly following the surface features of objects and expressions that popped everywhere around them to profoundly penetrate the essence of the latter: "Don't mistake the finger pointing at the Moon for the Moon itself". Hence, to awaken the audience from its lethargic tendency to spontaneously indulge into semantic blindness and forget that reasonableness is mirrored in one's resisting to "bite one's finger off instead of figuring out where it is pointing", Warren McCulloch's lectures would often begin with an explication of this phenomenon. During a recent online discussion in which my friends laughed over other people's improper use of ambiguous words, I thus had to step up and defend those attacked by superficial interpreters, screaming, "If everyone here is so smart, how come no one is able to penetrate from the surface to the essence, from the syntax to semantics? Since when does it matter more what people say rather than what they mean?" For, if we were able to cut through any given linguistic expressions with the spiritual rays of our superman-like attention, slice by slice, we would realize that they complexly multilayered and composed of syntax on the surface, below which are the

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<sup>1858</sup> See Miloš Radojčić, Čedomil Veljačić, Vladeta Jerotić – "Buddhism and Christianity", Gutenbergova Galaksija, Belgrade, Serbia (2003).

semantic attributes, below which is the music of the words. Even deeper than the deepest waves of this music, however, lie the treasures, the heart of these expressions in terms of aspirations and intentions from which they have sprung forth. Then, when Piglet wonders how to spell Love and the Pooh Bear says, “You don’t spell it... you feel it”<sup>1859</sup>, handed to us is a fanciful reminder of the need to penetrate with our senses from the syntax to the semantics, from the said to the aspired, from sheer verbosity to feelings that words envelope like a sloppily tailored suit, if our wish is to develop starry perception here on Earth and let our creative beings, with extremities extended like the constellation of Orion, reel on it, spontaneously, making one cartwheel of cosmic joy after another, from here to eternity, with no end in sight.

And these intentions, aspirations and emotions that underlie anything uttered in communication could be, expectedly, seen as the roots of the tree of human expressions. The metaphor of tree with its visible branches, leaves and fruits and invisible roots which are the essence of it all is, in fact, so pervasive in my world that I cannot help seeing trees sometimes everywhere I turn. Be that as it may, wisdom is reflected in one’s ability to penetrate through the visible and gain a clear insight into the nature of these roots, that is, whether they are shiny and pure or dark and rotten. Although the world in which surface is valued more than the invisible essence may trick us every once in a while into thinking shallowly and being blind and oblivious to the elephant hidden inside of a boa constrictor, we should be incessantly reminded that the key to seeing the world in a beautiful and divine light lies in awakening the ability to travel through the surface outlines of expressions and signs that we come across in life with the rays of our starry attention, all until we arrive at the treasures concealed deep within their spiritual roots. “Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (Samuel I 16:7), stands written in the Bible as a godly guideline given to the prophet by the very Lord and a reminder that once we begin to appreciate the invisible roots of intentions, aspirations, inner beauty and love from which human actions and all the visible appearances around us stem, our eyes and senses would tear the hazy curtains of human hypocrisies pulled in front of them through many years of blindly complying with regressive social standards and begin to see the world with the clarity and brilliance of a celestial creature on Earth. For, we all imperceptibly float on the sea of spirit whereon waves sent forth from millions of human souls around us encounter, interfere and produce streams on which the ship of our being travels towards either icy poles of a frozen way of life in this world or tropical oases of ultimate freedom and happiness. After all, it can be easily shown that by far the greatest part from the repertoire of our actions derives from unconscious activities within the brain<sup>1860</sup>, contributing to the feeling that creative experience is such that it effortlessly “passes before our eyes”<sup>1861</sup> rather than being actively steered from one moment to another by our focus and awareness, let alone that we could recall how Freudian psychoanalytical therapies are all about confronting the immense iceberg that the subconscious content of the mind is from its tiny tip that belongs to the conscious elements of our psyche, standing at the very edge of the vast stellar space of the mind, somewhat like the Earth levitating on the edge of the Milky Way<sup>1862</sup>; consequently, not the readily visible stems, branches and fruits of the tree of our

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<sup>1859</sup> See A. A. Milne’s and Ernest H. Shepard’s *Winnie-the-Pooh*, Penguin, New York, NY (1926).

<sup>1860</sup> See David Eagleman’s *Incognito: The Secret Lives of the Brain*, Vintage Books, New York, NY (2011), pp. 1 - 20.

<sup>1861</sup> Listen to R.E.M.’s *Find the River on Automatic for the People*, Warner Bros (1992).

<sup>1862</sup> See David Eagleman’s *Incognito: The Secret Lives of the Brain*, Vintage Books, New York, NY (2011), pp. 20.

consciousness, but its hidden roots, comprising our deepest beliefs, emotions, aspirations, intentions and values crafted for the entire lifetimes, are what truly guides us toward either the sun of divine spirit or the lowlands or malign pettiness in the course of our being in this life. Or, as Rumi pointed out in *Fihi ma fihi*, “God will give you what you seek; where your aspiration lies, that you will become, for ‘the bird flies with its wings, but the believer flies with his aspiration’”<sup>1863</sup>.

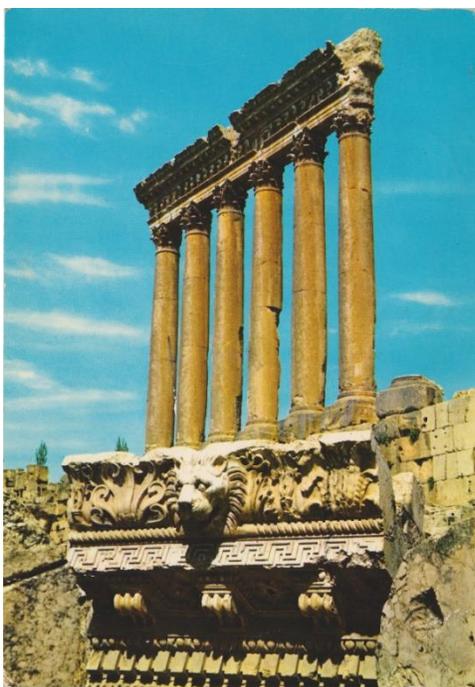
Yet, the key on how to develop these eyes of a spiritual superman, able to perceive the unperceivable, and eventually arrive at the blissful destinations of sublime being in this world is none. One thing is certain though. As Warren McCulloch implicitly pointed out, following the direction at which the signs of the world are pointing rather than lingering on them with the rays of our attention, journeying thereby from the stem of visible impressions and appearances to their invisible and secret roots, is the road that our inner evolutionary potentials have predisposed us to. Hence, the sage in us, who is at the same time a sagacious greybeard and an immaculately pure and chaste child, spontaneous and naïve, able to recognize pure brilliance of roots underneath unsightly appearances, somewhat similar to the Zen horse-keeper Po-Lo or the Little Prince, holds the key for doing so in the inexpressible essence of his heart and mind, which are then, at these insightful moments, one and the same. Needless to mention, we live in the world where it is mostly the opposite. It is as if the majority of inhabitants of this planet have chosen not the path of McCulloch’s child, but that of a dog, which would walk along the road of the evolution of life and consciousness in the reverse direction, from the essence to the surface and from meanings to signs instead of *vice versa*. In the world inhabited by those whose attention stops at the very surface of the worldly appearances, showing no interest to dig deeper and discover the more basic and fundamental qualities that support them the way the ancient pillars have supported their colossal colonnades, which sages have celebrated since the dawn of human race, the culture becomes such as to raise to its celebratory pedestals the things and beings of the world that appear glossy on the surface, while being blind to the fact that their foundations are crumbling down.

Yet, it is the stability of these foundations that determines the sustainability of the world. It is journeying from the surface to the essence of the worldly appearances, from the face to the heart of things and beings of the world that has ever since marked truly sacred explorers in all realms of life. Like the Little Prince who readily recognizes a sheep in a box and an elephant in a boa constrictor, knowing that “what is essential is invisible to the eye”<sup>1864</sup>, and like a child that does not linger on the wrappings of Christmas gifts but knows that the real presents lie hidden inside, our own transition from an ordinary human to a superman, which Christmases, such as the one on which I am writing this sentence, should be grand reminders of, coincides with developing celestial rays of attention that equip us with the ability to penetrate from the labels, etiquettes and cloths of the objects of the world into their inner and mysterious secrets, taking us on the ultimate religious journey of our lifetimes, from the surface of the sea to its pearly depths, mermaids, treasures and columns of Atlantis, of long forgotten divine ways of being, once touched by humanity and then flooded and ruined, from the facade of our creations to their foundations, from the front walls to the essence where human intentions, emotions, aspirations, angelic visions and the divine voice of Nature slumber in all their inexplicable and indelible beauties.

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<sup>1863</sup> See William C. Chittick’s *Sufism: A Beginner’s Guide*, Oneworld, Oxford, UK (2000), pp. 111.

<sup>1864</sup> See Antoine de Saint-Exupery’s *The Little Prince*, Mladost, Zagreb, Croatia (1943).



What the punk philosophy, stretching its arms throughout the history from Lao-Tzu to Socrates to the Christ to Heinz von Foerster to other gurus of the modern times, has taught is the art of acting with foundations of our being washed by the clear light of spirit, honesty, pureness and brilliant ethics, while leisurely playing on the surface with quite often contrasting impressions, and as a result still producing enlightening messages. I, who have always raised essence over form and spirit over surface, have thus repeatedly claimed that a preacher with a lukewarm heart who “honoreth God with his lips only” (Mark 7:6) will never come close to “a hooker with a heart of gold”<sup>1865</sup> in the eyes of Heavens, firmly believing that not lines that we draw on the sands of this world, but emotions, intentions and aspirations that stand in the backdrop of our endeavors are what truly matters and determines the profound, long-term success of our ventures. Many rock musicians have consequently resorted to insertion of ironic statements that opposed their real beliefs in the lyrics and titles of their songs, let alone words spoken during interviews, having realized the liberating effect this has on their spirit by dissolving the stiff shell of their ego. For, an opinionated self concerned about the light in which others perceive oneself is an egotistic self too, quite possibly falling into category of “rock stars who think they’ve got brains” and whom Iggy Pop readily rejected as fakes; yet, by finding freedom to proclaim anything, irrespective of how contradictory assertions made now are from those made seconds ago, without diminishing the light of one’s spirit thereby, the egotistic crust fencing our blissful spirit is being removed and this inner light is being freely released to the world. Malcolm McLaren, who originated the concept of Sex Pistols as sprouts of the British punk rock movement, thus reflected on one occasion on him “deciding how to use ‘bad’ and make it work in a way that ultimately might change popular culture itself”<sup>1866</sup>, probably unaware

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<sup>1865</sup> Listen to the Thrills’ You Can’t Fool Old Friends with Limousines on Let’s Bottle Bohemia, Virgin Records (2004).

<sup>1866</sup> Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk by Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain, Grove Press, New York, NY (2006), pp. 243.

that by doing so he would graze and reawaken the roots of a more profound philosophy which very little people in the trendy movement he had initiated knew anything about. This philosophy has taught for millennia that a true ingenuity lies not in discarding the ugly and embracing the pretty, but looking for the secret patterns of beauty in both. “For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? For sinners also love those that love them” (Luke 6:32). By shedding lights onto things that are depreciated by the masses and considered vulgar, and showing how even they could be turned into something beautiful for as long as the core of our being is enlightened with wonderful aspirations and love for all creatures, we reach the highest peaks of human wisdom and emerge behind the regular, earthly clouds of thought and into sublime stellar spaces of our mind that extend beyond the realm of ordinary experiencing, endowing our aura with an enchanting allure and plunging us into the everlastingly dizzying and bedazzling starriness of intoxication by the spirit divine. This inevitably brings us back to Tao-Te-Xing, the beginning and the end of human philosophizing, and particularly the moment in which Lao-Tzu notes that “nothing in the Universe can be compared to teaching without words” (Tao-Te-Xing XLIII). If we turn to the art of directing, we would find a following confirmatory string of thought by the long-time theater director, Harold Clurman: “The director does not achieve his effects only by means of physical staging, the visible and audible signs of his invention, knowledge and skill. I have observed many directors in rehearsal. Even in the case of those who said little and seemed to be ‘doing’ less, I could detect their imprint in the completed production. There is something of a mystery in this of which the director himself may not be conscious. It is an emanation which we inadequately designate as ‘personality’. It goes beyond the demonstrable specifics of the craft”<sup>1867</sup>. This is to say that when the time and place are right, even the perfect physical stillness can move mountains around us, if we were only to grasp the powers of the spirit underneath. For, to reiterate, what matters most is not *what* we do or say, but *how* we do or say it, that is, with what level of enlightening drive we spin the wheels of our movements in time and space to express ourselves.

The aforementioned theory of Ruin Value teaches us that for as long as we are unable to find immensely profound sources of intellectual and emotional satisfaction in perceptions and sensual impressions that seem unpleasant and repugnant at first and make this satisfaction be so great as to make us feel as if we are standing on the peaks of the mystical pyramid of knowledge and touch the heavenly sky of the most sublime feelings we could think of, we should be sure that we stand far, far away from becoming a Christ-like creature in this life. Only when we find indescribable joy in hugging creatures that are stinky, raggedy and old; only after we learn to recognize diamond-like insights in dusty and ruined visual landscapes; only when silence, white noise and unstructured natural sounds carry as many messages to our ears as the most refined humanly made musical pieces; only when we realize that not food that gives immediate pleasure to our palate and taste buds, but the one that makes us gentile and spiritually radiant in the long run, is best for us; only when we understand that not things, expressions and beings that appear pretty and appealing on their surface, but those whose invisible and hidden roots radiate with gorgeousness and celestial beauty are those that cordial attention of ours should be given to, we should be sure that the starry train of our spirit is supersonically streaming along the railway of the Way of Love, journeying to becoming yet another Christ-like star on Earth. The theory of Ruin Value is all about turning the popular pedestal of mainstream values upside down and prompting us to understand that what assumes an alluring and pretty surface is usually toxic for our spirits, while what appears all gritty, grainy and dusty on the outside typically hides

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<sup>1867</sup> See Harold Clurman’s *On Directing*, Macmillan Company, New York, NY (1972), pp. 172.

invaluably precious treasures within its core. For example, whoever has opened an almanac of forest mushrooms knows that enticingly colorful ones are also poisonous as a rule, while those that look poor and unsightly on their surface turn out to be the edible ones. Poor and unsightly is the look of an average naked mole rat too, furless, wrinkly, grotesquely bucktoothed and myopic, having been classified as diseased when first found by the German naturalist, Eduard Rüppell in 1842, yet it lives six times longer than other similarly sized rodents, barely ages, survives long periods of oxygen deprivation and is resistant to radiation and carcinogenic chemicals<sup>1868</sup>. Which may explain, *en passant*, how come, surrounded by hundreds of colorful flowers from all around the globe, from the golden cycads embellishing rainforests in which dinosaurs roamed to lilies of the present fields, I spent most time gazing at a bunch of stems of pickerel weed gracefully raising their tiny and flowerless necks from a muddy artificial pond, right next to a faint stream of water flowing along an eroded stony slab and a worn bush of water iris grass in the Lincoln Park conservatory of flowers in the heart of the city of Chicago, being a part of which Nelson Algren legendarily compared with “loving a woman with a broken nose - you may well find lovelier lovelies, but never a lovely so real”<sup>1869</sup>. Others may warn us that not the unwashed beggar covered with grease and scum, but the cool, clean and pleasantly fragrant yuppie, finding himself at the crossroads in his career and choosing somewhere deep in his mind slavery to money and comfort over retaining the heart of a heavenly honest creature and a passionate fighter for human rights ignored in this world by its financial rulers, alongside sex appealing and flirty movers and shakers, stand for the most authentic witchy spirits of our times. The grittily textured Last Supper painted by Leonardo also possesses a much greater aesthetic value than the polished body of a supermodel in bikini on the cover of a popular magazine, just like the ruins of Acropolis are more appealing to the artistic eye than the smooth and glossy walls of a local shopping mall. In fact, transported to the ancient times, my favorite example of how derelict and rundown objects and sceneries are gateways to far greater spiritual treasures than their slick and polished counterparts is that of the Church of Domine Quo Vadis in the pastoral suburbs of Rome. This church was built on the site of perhaps most beautiful of all the stories to have come out of the apostolic pen, but, alas, the story remained apocryphal throughout the ages and never embraced by the ecclesiastical system of the Roman catholic church. As such, not only was the official name of the church changed to that of St. Mary in Palmis, but it has remained untended, tucked away from the popular paths and rarely placed on the map of major tourist attractions, standing with its modest and pastoral appearance in total opposition to the grandeur of the more famous churches that gild the urban landscape of Rome and that have been garnished and maintained by the clerical system. This little church, therefore, has been a constant reminder to myself that such would be the fate of all works of science, philosophy or art that get rejected by the system: to be forgotten and locked in the corners in spite of the wonders and the power to move embedded in them. Simultaneously, given how great the story that it tells with its presence is (Acts of Peter 35), it has stood as a monument to the fact that the small and the ruined rather than the grandiose and the glossy is the path for all searchers for the soul to follow. In other words, if we are on the road to seek the most valuable rewards in life for our spirits, then we must be indifferent to the glossiness of the surface and look for things that look worn, weathered, wearied, unkempt and raggedy, for there is a greater chance that in them we will find the sources of comfort and happiness that we have sought. Life, indeed, has taught me that anytime I’d find

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<sup>1868</sup> See Joseph Stromberg’s The End of Aging, Vox (June 16, 2014), retrieved from <http://www.vox.com/2014/6/16/5796732/do-naked-mole-rats-have-the-secret-to-long-healthy-lives>.

<sup>1869</sup> See Nelson Algren’s Chicago: City on the Make, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL (1951).

myself impressed by sceneries that look impeccably tidy, glossy and orderly and go on to anchor my ship therein, calling them home, it is only a matter of time when I will begin to rebel against the fascistic and inhumane powers sustaining them and dream anew about the landscapes that epitomize the good ol' "love among the ruins" motto. The Zone, a place where our innermost desires come true, for those who remember, was not a lustrous, impeccably maintained site, but rather a decrepit one<sup>1870</sup>, and the same, raggedy places in life are usually fountains into which our thoughts and prayers fall like coins, to later come alive, in contrast to the flashy ones where our dreams would be swallowed as if by black holes. For, sooner or later, every existential setting where things are squared away and finely polished, where everything is coated with thick layers of sugariness, where smiles and kindness are a rule with no exception will reveal collective prostitution of the actors on the stage and an oppressive, devilishly malicious governance hiding behind the curtains; such, apparently, must be the fate of this world where the beauties of the kernel and the skin more often than not stand in diametrical opposition to one another. Embracing this worldview goes hand-in-hand with realizing that there is something fundamentally wrong with the world that bombards us with erroneous beliefs that things of lasting value could be recognized by a sleek and attractive surface and that, conversely, unappealing façade equals trifling essence. Indeed, from Gargamel, the sworn enemy of the Smurfs, to Mr. Burns from the Simpsons, to the Pointy-Haired Boss from Dilbert, to the Queen from Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, to many other evil wizards, company executives and witches from cartoons, comics and fairytales, to popular bedtime books for children with hideous monsters and luscious lifesaving heroes, to the traditional Hollywood imagery and the rotting realm of the Western advertising industry, proofs are everywhere that ours is the time of false beliefs that unsightly surface can be used as an indicator of despicable essence and *vice versa*, that appealing surface is a sign of a shiny soul. Nature, in fact, is such that its objects display an intrinsic antagonism between the surface and the interior, and this is neatly illustrated by the nature of colors; namely, the color of an object, defining its external appearance, is not the one that the object has an affinity for, but the one that it resists to absorb, the reason for which, for example, yellow carbon nitride would have been a good material for solar cells only if the sunlight was, say, blue, but not yellow, demonstrating that more often than not the very opposites from what we imbibe and nest in our heart are going to be evident on our surface and *vice versa*. The theory of Ruin Value is, however, all about showing us that buildings and edifices that looked ruined and all caved in, like those of Acropolis, but whose foundations still emanate with great beauty to the world are those that we should bless with our angelic attention, since beneath their forgotten and dusty appearance, great and miraculous secrets, precious signs for the spiritual journeys of ours, could be found. Therefore, although we may spend time absorbing the perceptive stimuli of the surrounding world, thinking that it is all that it and its creatures have to offer, seldom are we aware that together with these tangible and apparent impressions we helplessly absorb the waves that human intentions, desires and emotions subtly and imperceptibly send in the air, quietly beautifying or distressing the world thereby, depending on how gracious and light or wayward and dark these foundations of their worldviews are. Hence, not how we may superficially appear to the world, but how graceful the epistemological foundations of our actions, thoughts and emotions are is what draws the seeds of beauty that we strew the world with while being and acting in it.

From this dazzling panorama of thought, a stunning view opens in front of us and we are able to clearly see how all our acts delivered outwardly, for the purpose of benefitting the world,

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<sup>1870</sup> Watch *Stalker* directed by Andrei Tarkovsky (1979).

emanate from and with imperfections. Words that we use to orient each other towards ever more wonderful horizons of being will never be able to perfectly reflect the core of our emotions and other rainbow-like features of the skies of our spirit. From this viewpoint lights are shed on the ancient words of wisdom uttered by Lao-Tzu, “Who knows talks not; who talks knows not” (Tao-Te-Xing LVI), words speaking against words, but are, at the end of the day, still words<sup>1871</sup>, as some of us may readily notice. In that sense, I call to mind a comic book writer who depicted himself contemplating on how “Samuel Beckett once said: ‘Every word is like an unnecessary stain on silence and nothingness’. On the other hand, he *said* it”<sup>1872</sup>. Robert Pirsig, who wrote a book about Zen without mentioning the word “Zen” a single time in it<sup>1873</sup> similarly observed that “if you talk about it you are always lying, and if you don’t talk about it no one knows it is there”<sup>1874</sup>, which, of course, applies to anything the given “it” might be taken to represent. When the Christ uttered that timeless remark, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58), he might have attempted to tell us that words, really, do not matter even the tiniest bit on our quest for the treasures of divine spirit in this life, the reason for which every Christian is, we know, judged by deeds, not words, yet it is thanks to this teaching transmitted by words that we are made aware of this deficiency of word *per se*. Thus, it is not discarding words from the repertoire of our expressions that makes our spirit golden; the key rather lies in using them without any pretention to ingrain the seeds of truthfulness or perfection in them, that is, letting them wave like white flags in front of our mind, while we stand immersed in the starry silence deep underneath, unattached thereto and free from the shackles and burdens with which they often make the flights of our spiritual imagination towards stars impossible. Therefore, what I advise is not to stop drawing things on the surface, surfing on the surface of the ocean of words and using language as a means to spreading the essence of our being forth. What may be the aim is merely to understand the limitations thereof and keep one eye constantly on the bases of aspirations and intentions upon which the words of ours, which the other eye of ours is busy painting, float. It is thus that some wonderful ships of words are let travel across the ocean of being, search for the new lands of ideas and deliver enlightening messages to other people’s hands. For, writing does enlarge the landscape of one’s mind, and just as studying maps can lead to novel insights with regard to the features of the territory that they represent, the same can be said for thinking through language. Louis Aggasiz noted for saying that “a pencil is one of the best eyes”<sup>1875</sup>, students who underline the texts they study so as to memorize it easier, and a plethora of proponents of interactive learning, all gathered under the hat of Heinz von Foerster’s aesthetical imperative which urges us to “act in order to see”<sup>1876</sup> stand as columns that support this sacred dome under which words that celebrate acts that pay homage to words that point at beautiful acts solely, selflessly and sacrificially, the way all epitomes of celestial ethics in this life do, echo

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<sup>1871</sup> That is, ideograms translated to words, if we wish to be more accurate. The pictographic characters comprising Lao-Tzu’s message, however, still fall in the category of linguistic symbols.

<sup>1872</sup> See Art Spiegelman’s *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale*, Pantheon, New York, NY (1991), pp. 205.

<sup>1873</sup> See Robert Maynard Pirsig’s *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, Vintage, London, UK (1974). R. M. Pirsig was, however, not the first one to come up with this trick. In 1768, for example, Laurence Sterne’s only travel memoir was published and titled *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, even though the traveler does not reach Italy during the course of the book.

<sup>1874</sup> See Ronald Green’s *Nothing Matters: A Book about Nothing*, iff Books, Alresford, UK (2001), pp. 65.

<sup>1875</sup> See Gilbert Highet’s *The Art of Teaching*, Vintage Books, New York, NY (1950), pp. 216.

<sup>1876</sup> See Heinz von Foerster’s *Observing Systems*, Intersystems, Seaside, CA (1981). A similar adage was used in the context of celebration of the merits of active learning by Terry Doyle of Ferris State University in 2008: “It is the one who does the work who does the learning”. See Terry Doyle’s *Helping Students Learn in a Learner Centered Environment: A Guide to Teaching in Higher Education*, Stylus, Herndon, VA (2008).

with a rip-roarious resonance. Thus, like the two central characters from Liev Schreiber's *Everything is Illuminated*<sup>1877</sup>, starting to reach to one another from the two diametrically opposite standpoints they had occupied - one of which could have been epitomized by a spirit scattered like a starry sky, engulfed by euphoria and enwrapped by holy joy, holding a goblin overflowing with the nectar of life and ignoring the urge to impress all the enlivening impressions befallen upon one in the form of maps that would guide others to these joyous niches, and the other one of which was marked by the need to collect, catalogue, categorize, classify and write about every single impression, without aspiring to live them up and become that Rilke's question whose living is meant to transform the questioner into the answer one bright day<sup>1878</sup> - and eventually finding each other in the middle and becoming profoundly changed thereby, for good, inspiring the soul that spills life all around it to grab a pen and let the rivulets of poetry flow out of it and form precious guiding lines on random pieces of paper and teaching the soul obsessed with drawing still images of life that the only life worth living is the life lived out loudly and not only contemplated about, so must we be certain that Life and Word are to be brought into such a unity that they begin to inspire and reinforce each other on this endless ascent of the human soul towards ever more sublime levels of experiencing the divine nature of being. For, whatever we do in life, wherever its strange paths take us, we should make sure not to become so obsessed with the deeds that we ditch the dreams and turn into an epitome of the actor who was rehearsing for a London production of John Logan's play *Never the Sinner* when the director compared his role in the scene to "the way the sunlight looks when it comes through the windows at Westminster Abbey", to which he responded with a blunt and duncical "Fine, what do you want me to *do*"<sup>1879</sup>; rather, a magical chord should be sought at all times, being born only when the dreams in us feed into and inspire our deeds and the other way around. Or, as Augustine's sister says in one of the most climactic scenes of this movie, following her description of the decision of Augustine to hide her wedding ring in a jar and bury it in the ground, yet not tell anyone about it, when she thought she would be executed by the German Nazis, "The ring does not exist for you; you exist for it; you have come because it exists", reminding us once again that not only do maps exist as a corollary of the existence of territories, but new territories could be found and old reinvented thanks to the existence of maps as well.

In fact, every time I add an extra word or two to my writings inscribed in the justified format in the window of a word processing program, I am reminded of how form inescapably defines content while content defines form. The reason why we love to justify the text is, of course, because it presents a step forward compared to the typewriter days when only the text along the left margin of the paragraph could be aligned. However, in order to make the text more regularly spaced and tightly packed on the screen in the justified format, whereby both left and right sides of paragraphs are aligned, one would tend to use shorter words instead of exceptionally long ones. Moreover, depending on whether I read these lines on my laptop or on a piece of paper, different details thereof will appear to be in need of correction and my sentences may end up having completely different lengths and styles in these two formats, typically, for some reason, being briefer when written on paper and longer and more intricate, may I say

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<sup>1877</sup> The movie was based on the book with the same title, *Everything is Illuminated*, written by its main protagonist, Jonathan Safran Foer, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, MA (2002).

<sup>1878</sup> One could argue that the mental analysis of questions will bring answers in the form of internal ruminations only, whereas only living them out, with our entire minds and bodies, could make us *become* the answer, which can be said to present the ultimate aim of our quests for sacred knowledge.

<sup>1879</sup> See Terry McCabe's *Mis-directing the Play: An Argument against Contemporary Theatre*, Ivan R. Dee, Chicago, IL (2001), pp. 50.

rollercoaster-like, when typed on the computer screen. The same can be said for the font type, the size of the letters on the screen and the visual background of the text, all of which tend to affect my word choice during writing, sometimes yielding whole new river flows of the music of the words upon the slightest changes thereof. An exercise you could try at this point is to write one page of your poetic pensées in a relatively dry font, be it Cambria or Perpetua or Baskerville, and another page in a freer and intrinsically prettier font, such as Curlz or Gigi. What you are bound to observe as the result may be a striking difference in the length, the structure and the density of poetic ornaments in sentences written using these two different font types, which makes me wonder at times if the excessive epithetic embellishments typifying my wordings are to be blamed on dry Times New Roman font in which I write and if using a more calligraphic font, such as Gigi, might prompt me to find more aesthetic satisfaction in simpler and less pretentious and passion-packed verbal expressions. For, when the letters themselves are a work of art, the cravings to infuse an artistic spirit in written words might lessen in intensity, though I am certain that different logics could be applied, namely, that an artistic font could pull some threads in the writer and inspire him to unwind otherwise perpetually tangled inspirational balls of yarn sitting wound inside of him, which all makes the effects of contexts on contents crafted under their skies very individual in essence. Travelling even more back in time, we would fly by typewriters, feather quill pens, imprints in clay, etchings in papyrus and engravings in stone, while journeying in the opposite direction, we would zoom by twitter-like phrases of the modern day and be left to imagine how even more supersonically booming the linguistic expressions of future days would be like, after being partially defined by the communication channels and language crafting tools in use in those distant days. What lies latent in this observation is nothing but hearing loudly the heartbeats of the idea of co-creation. According to it, the human mind draws the evolving environment to about the same extent as the environment draws its interior. Namely, the roots of all our conceptions and products of imagination that we use to describe the reality could be partly found as reflections of the outlines of our environment, while this very same environment is never perceived free from the attributes that the human mind endows it with, as one without the other, mind without Nature, spirit without God, could never give rise to anything perceivable. Referring back to the aforementioned dichotomy between *what* and *how*, although using different connotations, we are free to conclude that how we communicate defines what we communicate and *vice versa* in this unending cycle wherein tools co-define the products created by their means, while these creations open the way to creation of ever greater tools. As the insides and the outsides flow into each other, as in the Tao-Chi-Tu emblem, letting the essence emerge on the surface, while being driven by the desire to enlighten the world with the inner treasures of the soul, and the beauties of the surface get impressed in the core of the sentient beings of the world wherein the melting pots for ever greater glows and sunbursts of creativity are stirred, the wheel of the evolution of our spirits and the planetary order tirelessly spins, giving rise to ever greater daylights of human being and ever greater twinkles of wonder in the eyes of humans and the eyes of Nature as they absorbingly gaze at each other and dive in open waters of each other's beauty from the cliffs of love.

This is why we cannot stop thinking about the elephant even when we are asked not to. For, the understanding of the world through language is so deeply instilled into our beings that it is an inextricable part of our perceptual worldviews. Asked why they bombed and destroyed the Serbian National Library, not only its building but also the entire content numbering 350,000 books and countless scripts, engravings and artworks treasured solely in it, on April 6, 1941, the day German forces invaded the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Alexander Löhr and other generals who

had run the operation admitted during a war trial for the genocide they had committed that that was how they intended to destroy the cultural identity of the Serbian people: by exterminating its enormously rich linguistic heritage<sup>1880</sup>, echoing the words of Heinrich Heine, “there, where one burns books, one in the end burns men”<sup>1881</sup>, urging us to understand that word and spirit and inseparably entwined, the idea that St. John the Apostle may have wished to insinuate when he began his gospel by stating that “in the beginning was the Word” (John 1:1). In other words, language is an essential means for the conveyance of cultural cues from one generation to another and, thus, for ensuring our continuous spiritual evolution despite each one of us being born with just about the same cognitive potentials and inclinations as prehistoric humans, which were, as we now know, intellectually more akin to animals than to modern man. In Douglas Coupland’s *Microserfs*, a story about a light-footed journey of SF Bay Area adolescents in search of meaning and purpose of life in the digital age, Karla notices how “the one thing that differentiates human beings from all other creatures on Earth is the externalization of subjective memory - first through notches in trees, then through cave paintings, then through the written word and now, through databases of almost otherworldly storage and retrieval power”<sup>1882</sup>, reconnecting me with the memory of holding my Father’s hand and shouting “remember, remember” whenever a butterfly carrying an enlightening impression landed on my little head, one of the first two things my parents recall when bringing my unearthly childhood to mind, and prompting me to deem whether the tendency to benevolently impress our visions as signs for both us and others to follow onto things of the world, so as to help ourselves and others navigate the ships of our beings through the ocean of experience, might be an innate feature of our biological makeup that has distanced and elevated us from the rest of the animal kingdom and on the employment of which our attainment of more advanced evolutionary vistas on this planet vitally depends. Language is a rarely elegant, musical means by which we orient each other in the world and hold each other on the right ways, although we should beware not to fall into its traps by being fooled by confusing its maps with the ineffable territories that they represent or, even worse, with the metaphysical foundations upon which we and the entire palpable reality mysteriously stand, remaining to be incessantly aware of its inherent and inevitable imperfection. Lest we be led by it down the chasms of “objectification, alienation and perceptual tunnel vision”<sup>1883</sup>, we must treat it as a useful guide rather than the sovereign of our communications, given that the goal, here, is to use it as a tool to go beyond the limits of the very tool in question instead of having us, the users of a tool, become the tool of the tool itself. Hence, to hold language by the hand, and yet to rest with our heart on the music and love underneath, which are the essence of it all, is the ideal that ought to be placed like a guiding star in front of our minds.

In his seminal movie, *Silence*, Ingmar Bergman separated the cerebral, contemplative hemisphere of the human brain, the one that has found the ultimate purpose of life in the

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<sup>1880</sup> See Rada Stijović’s *Od “juče uveče” do “danas ujutru”*, *Politika* (December 9, 2012), pp. 12. The content of the library burnt in a three-day long fire that anteceded the bombing. This deliberate bombing of a national library was a unique act of atrocity of that kind committed during World War II. No other national library was targeted for destruction during the war. See *Beograd je spavao, bombe su padale*, *B92 News*, (April 6, 2017), retrieved from [http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2017&mm=04&dd=06&nav\\_category=12&nav\\_id=1247646](http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2017&mm=04&dd=06&nav_category=12&nav_id=1247646), and *Dan sećanja na stradanje Narodne biblioteke*, *B92 News* (April 6, 2017), retrieved from [http://www.b92.net/kultura/vesti.php?nav\\_category=1087&yyyy=2017&mm=04&dd=06&nav\\_id=1247654](http://www.b92.net/kultura/vesti.php?nav_category=1087&yyyy=2017&mm=04&dd=06&nav_id=1247654).

<sup>1881</sup> See the opening line of Geraldine Brooks’ *People of the Book*, Penguin, New York, NY (2008).

<sup>1882</sup> See Douglas Coupland’s *Microserfs*, Flamingo, London, UK (1995), pp. 359.

<sup>1883</sup> See the Wikipedia article on Anarcho-Primitivism retrievable from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anarcho-primitivism> (2021).

discovery of enlightening insights through language and language only, from its complementary hemisphere interested in living and living only, and demonstrated its disastrous consequences before our eyes. While, the former, scribal persona dormant in every brilliant intellect ended up suffocating to death due to her idealistic confinement in the world of written word and resistance to shatter the protective shell of brainpower built all around her and begin to live this blissful word, the latter, existentialist one sank into the grimy waters of amorally frivolous and hardheartedly aimless living, which has brought all but the winks of happiness to its doorsteps. As the movie progresses, the hostilities between the two intensify, reflecting the war between the two poles of the human mind that tends to rage ever more as the time goes by and the process of aging, alongside regret and resentment that it gives rise to under such conditions, begins to take over the entire human being. The only solution to these adversities must be to unite the two terminals of the human mind and let the cross-fertilizing energy stream back and forth between them. These are exactly the two termini Hermann Hesse dissolved from a wholesome mind in his narrative about Narcissus and Goldmund<sup>1884</sup>, the former of whom epitomized the part of our Freudian ego inclined to seclude itself from the world, into caves, classrooms or monasteries, and dream, creating fascinating art and guidance for the human spirit thereby, and the latter of whom stood for the part of our ego driven into the world on the winds of passions, so as to live its dreams, while neglecting any need to leave a trail behind by impressing its ideas into words, the two extremes that, of course, only if joined together would bring about a complete and truly fulfilling frame of mind. The point is, therefore, neither to shove away the gift of language through the backdoor of our mind, turn the left hemisphere of our brains into the dark side of the Moon and become a blunt dancer in whose world only kinesthetic insights would remain, nor to embrace the lame Faustian belief that the most sublime, angelic heights of being towards which we all ought to stream are attainable via the ladder of language and sheer intellect only, with no burning out in desire to explode like a supernova with love for the world and give to it all our body and soul, until but a stardust remains from us, knowing that only those who give it all and become poor, poor in spirit do in the end reach the kingdom of God (Matthew 5:3). Therefore, to put our heart into writing, knowing that maps facilitate navigation across territories, but also to never forget that the final purpose of our writing is to live the written word, should be our aim every time we sit by a notebook to transcribe the summery bliss of our minds into gently flowing rivers of words and dash them down onto autumn leaflets that have fallen on the winds of melancholy from the luscious treetops that once ornamented our views.

Although writing does indeed enlarge the landscape of the mind and can yield stardust of symbols as signs that will orient many souls towards enlightening horizons in the quest for spiritual treasures which we call life, it still hides traps in which we could fall if we are not careful enough. These are undoubtedly the same traps that scribes so heavily criticized by the Christ fell into, losing out of sight the purpose of the symbols which they were busy inscribing. Namely, these signs belong to the map that is to orient others towards treasures on the territory and not on the map *per se*. Language as such is not a self-sufficient tool, but a means to an end, and the difference between these two perspectives is great. Namely, grasp language in the former manner and your highest peak would be becoming a dry preacher or a well-paid psychotherapist; adopt the latter way and you may find yourself on the road to become a Buddha. It is for this reason that I, despite my avid dedication to writing, never ever, not a single time in my life, presented myself as a writer. Instead, I would label myself with a decal that occasionally spelled something like “Renaissance thinker”, “Romantic natural science philosopher” or “Glass Bead

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<sup>1884</sup> See Hermann Hesse’s *Narcissus and Goldmund*, Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt, Germany (1930).

Game player”, but most of the time it just said “an average dude”, as Mr. Lebowski would have had it. For, on one hand I have done it all to prevent the dolphins, the mermaids and the starfish aroused by my sacred dreaminess from being caught in the egotistic fishnets of self-celebratory attitudes, while on the other hand I have heartily resisted to subconsciously or consciously ascribe the ultimate purpose of my writing to the creation of belletristic verbal flows meant to elevate the senses by their evocative music; rather, the purpose of my writing has been merely to sort out thoughts falling on my head like the teardrops from some heavenly heights and act as a reliable channel for their transmission to the earthly realms. Not to be a hypocrite who semantically celebrates poetry, but expresses oneself in the dreadfully lifeless language of the modern science and philosophy, I have, however, tried my best to faithfully depict the twists and twirls of dancing muses that entailed the enkindling of every single exciting thought in the temples of my head and heart, and in doing so the pen of mine was obliged to make similarly poetic twists and twirls in writing down these thoughts. In a discussion between Edgar Degas and Stéphane Mallarmé perpetuated in Paul Valéry’s piece *Degas, Dance, Drawing*, the French painter complained that writing poetry was a terribly difficult task for him even though he never lacked ideas, to which the poet replied, “But Degas, you can’t make a poem with ideas... You make it with words”<sup>1885</sup>. What I personally found in this advice is nothing but yet another lament, this time of a poet who could not escape the shackles of language anymore, bound to be forever confined to the map and never again step on the territory where the dance of life and the true evolution of our spirits are to take place. For this reason, whenever we find ourselves spending so much time crafting signs on these maps of the world, which this book is too, that we start to feel spellbound by the power of words, which we then automatically pile up on the paper, carefully following the aesthetics of their flow, but without feeling anymore their effect on inspiring us to act in an enlightening manner, which their purpose ultimately is, we should know that the time has come to gaze at the starry ceilings and oceans in front of us, to recall the tablet blackened with letters that signify sinfulness dreamt of by the Sufis as the one which will be handed to them on the Doomsday and which only weeping wordlessly in compassion with the world can clean<sup>1886</sup>, to dance around in circles with arms stretching out high in the air, to meditate at a point in our heart or mind which under prolonged focus starts to expand and open the door to a blissful communication with God, approach another, touch the crumbly pieces of the world around us, hop around and heartily PLAY. The purpose of all of this is to retain our awareness that we ought to impress living ideas and not dead words onto cryptic substrates of the world. In the end, we arrive at the balance between the perspectives of the painter and of the poet, writing while keeping our eye on dancing through life and shedding starry moves through

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<sup>1885</sup> See *What is Dance?*, edited by Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen, Oxford University Press, New York, NY (1983), pp. 103. Somewhere along the same line of thought we can restore the words with which Isadora Duncan opened her autobiography: “It has taken me years of struggle, hard work and research to learn to make one simple gesture, and I know enough about the Art of writing to realize that it would take me again just so many years of concentrated effort to write one simple, beautiful sentence. How often have I contended that although one man might toil to the Equator and have tremendous exploits with lions and tigers, and try to write about it, yet fail, whereas another, who never left his verandah, might write of the killing of tigers in their jungles in a way to make his readers feel that he was actually there, until they can suffer his agony and apprehension, smell lions and hear the fearful approach of the rattlesnake. Nothing seems to exist save in the imagination, and all the marvelous things that have happened to me may lose their savor because I do not possess the pen of a Cervantes or even of a Casanova”. In: *Isadora Duncan’s My Life*, Liveright, New York, NY (1927), pp.1.

<sup>1886</sup> See Annemarie Schimmel’s *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC (1975), pp. 414-415.

space and time, while lifting the lid of our mind for the raindrops of inspiring words from the heavenly heights to fall into its chalice.

If we constantly resemble a diligent schoolboy who jots down everything interesting the teachers exclaim, with head dug down into his papers, while never looking up to carelessly listen to the precious signs given to us by very Nature, we will miss glancing many of the guiding stars of love, wonder and beauty that our world naturally abounds with. “One day I’m gonna give up writing and just paint; one day I’m gonna give up painting and just sing; one day I’m gonna give up singing and just sit; one day I’m gonna give up sitting and just breathe; one day I’m gonna give up breathing and just die; one day I’m gonna give up dying and just love; one day I’m gonna give up loving and just write”<sup>1887</sup>, thus says allegedly the last living beatnik and a former UCLA professor of literature, now an SF fellowman, Jack Hirschman in his poem *One Day*, wittily warning us of the profound incompatibility between living life in the most blissful manner and writing about it at its most brilliant, alongside explaining how come the spoken word poet, Sarah Kay finds the most inspirational for her life also the most destructive for her writing: “I sit down to write a poem, and the only thing in my head is you. And I don’t understand why you’re the worst thing that ever happened to my poetry, if you’re the best that ever happened to me”<sup>1888</sup>. On the other hand, Bouvard and Pécuchet<sup>1889</sup>, two scribes sitting in a Parisian café in Godard’s *2 or 3 Things I Know about Her* and randomly pulling sentences from a pile a book in which they are buried find the moment of enlightenment they had sought for a long time when they come across a thought saying that “thought is not merely a quest for non-thought; thought as such is bound to the birth of being; being has always been destined for thought, and being, as the destiny of thought”<sup>1890</sup>, suggesting the inescapability of the connectedness between divine being as the birthplace of illuminative thought and illuminative thought as the road leading to the doorstep of divine being. After all, without counting we would be as skillful in repeating ticks and tocks as rodents: proficient at repeating a couple of taps, but lost and inefficient at repeating dozen or more<sup>1891</sup>, which is but an empirical reminder coming straight from the sphere of cognitive science to tell us that language and life ought to be twined around each other like the briar and the rose and that life streaming toward divine destinations is such that it discards nothing, but, verily, “uses the best, uses the rest, uses the enemy”<sup>1892</sup> of language, as it were, to create the cosmic experience of wholeness and love. Therefore, if anything worth mentioning is ingrained in this devotional writing by the chaste spirit of divine creativeness in us, it is the need to draw precious signs that will benevolently guide the earthlings that will one day walk on the same roads upon which we stand now to horizons of some wonderful seascapes at sunset of one’s soul. Hence, with pencils and pastels to draw rainbows with, while holding the cosmic joy in our heart and being aware that “pencil writes with its heart”, as the traditional Serbian saying goes, we will reach far in our feat of enlightening the world using the music of language. And when the time

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<sup>1887</sup> See Jack Hirschman’s *One Day*, In: *Fists on Fire*, Sore Dove Press, San Francisco, CA (2003).

<sup>1888</sup> Watch Sarah Kay perform *Worst Poetry* at the Bowery Poetry Club, New York, NY (February 16, 2011), retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4\\_XSaIkpmLk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_XSaIkpmLk).

<sup>1889</sup> They are made to carry the names of two shallow intellectual refugees from the unfinished eponymous novel by Gustav Flaubert: *Bouvard and Pécuchet* (1863).

<sup>1890</sup> The thought is attributed to Martin Heidegger. See *2 or 3 Things: A Concordance*, a supplement to Jean-Luc Godard’s *2 or 3 Things I Know about Her*, Criterion Collection (1967).

<sup>1891</sup> Watch Clio Cresswell’s TEDx Sydney Talk titled *Mathematics and Sex*, retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2vN2QXZGnc> (2014).

<sup>1892</sup> Listen to the Sex Pistols’ *Anarchy in the U.K.* on *Never Mind the Bollocks, Here’s the...*, Virgin Records (1977).

comes to softly shed the pen and embrace the whole wide world, the joy of satisfaction that sends starry shivers of thought in thrilling orbits around the Sun of our soul will be so immense that our entire being will become a reflection of the Sun and the starry sky, of unity of One and the enchanting diversity of it all, of oneness in Love with Nature and its creatures and Wonder that drives the wheels of the evolution of the world towards ever more wondrous horizons of being, beyond which colorful rainbows, playful mermaids, flappy waves, summery vibes, sundrenched companionships, beach balls and delightful dances await us to decorate the teardrops of love trickling from the infinite sea of our divine spirits.



As we could have seen from the preceding discourse, we should always be aware that the essence of our feelings and visions could never be placed into **words**. Thinking that we could faithfully express the core meaning of our existence by verbal means presents one of the ultimate illusions in which human minds tend to become trapped in their growth from seeds of stellar souls at the moment of planetary birth to spiritual stars in full bloom along the course of their lives. However, since the bulk of our daily communication takes place through the linguistic medium, falling into this trap, the key symptom of which is our beginning to ascribe the utmost value among all expressional tokens to words, tends to occur quite naturally. An immense existential paradox is also that the more we swim in intellectual, academic waters where people are judged by their eloquence and the ability to effectively map experiential reality onto the domain of letters, numbers and other symbols and images, the greater the tendency of ours to fall into the grasp of this grand illusion. Those who resist becoming spellbound by the curse of language are, hence, not too many. Those who have come to hold that “a word is what’s unsaid”, as a character from Godard’s *La Chinoise* had it, meaning that words are the masks for the real, genuine emotion, which by default becomes betrayed and unexpressed whenever we resort to words as the tool for expression, can be counted amongst diamond in the dust. In fact, everywhere we direct our gazes, we could discern sketches of spirits racing against each other through the haze and deviously stepping over one another in their rushing to escape from the fog that surrounds them and emerge into the crystal clear mountain air of sublime views of the world, something that, however, is not possible unless they get rid of what they hold on to most: language and all the pleasures of ego that arise through shooting its spiteful arrows all across the world. Yet, whenever we resort to the usage of words as swords to cut other people’s throats with, we should recall that “all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (Matthew 26:52). And our embracement of the power of words as a sword with which we will clear the way forward through the neo-Darwinian, competitive jungle that we might see the network of intertwined human lives as will not bring forth a sudden death, but a slow, more painful one to our spirit, arriving less like a bang and more like a whimper, if we were to refer to a T. S. Eliot’s poem<sup>1893</sup>. Even the burning of the Alexandrian Library was a myth, given that its decline and dilapidation occurred slowly over the centuries, and therefore there is no reason to suspect that everything linguistic that is used in our mental universes to bring power to our egos will be roasted slowly, all until the last traces of it disappear in flames, swallowing us too along the way if we only cannot imagine life lived without the crutches of language. This detrimental effect that

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<sup>1893</sup> See T. S. Eliot’s *The Hollow Men*, available at <http://aduni.org/~heather/occs/honors/Poem.htm> (1925).

the double-edged sword of language can exhibit on the genuine creativity of our beings is, of course, preceded by our mind's shackling its potentially infinite shine into the tiny fetters of linguistic self-satisfactions. Quite naturally, therefore, what results is an equally slow suffocation of our spirits due to stifling reliance on language as the crown of human knowledge rather than as utilitarian wings that could soar us to new cognitive panoramas and that could be taken off and freely dropped after we arrive to our destinations, if we were to paraphrase Ludwig Wittgenstein's metaphor of language as a ladder that could be simply tossed once we climb to the stars successfully by its means<sup>1894</sup>. "Books, ye are excellent guides, but it is absurd to trouble about a guide after the goal has been reached", thus cried a Sufi whose teaching revolved around the art of "lifting veils, not collecting books"<sup>1895</sup> and in whose philosophy true gnosis could only be sketched, but not grasped by the nets of our hearts using symbols and words and grandiloquent abstract conceptualizations which they come to compose<sup>1896</sup>. In Federico Fellini's *8½*, the central artistic figure, cocooned under its black hat, muses over his dreams "to bury everything that is dead within us" by his art, and in quite the same spirit we ought to cut the cord of our attachment to language, a mere means to an end, and highlight the ways of communication that transcend it, lest we let dead things find fertile soil within our soul and grow into horrible trees of a haunted forest that our being would then begin to resemble.

Once, I remember, I taught a kid in a house in Inner Sunset how to draw a butterfly. What he eventually managed to draw was looking more like a formless scribble than a butterfly, and yet his amazement over his creation seemed endless. He looked back and forth between a butterfly hanging over the window blinds and his wiggly drawing on the blackboard with a smile of perfect satisfaction lighting up his face. What this event reminded me was that we could never be sure to what extent we resemble an infant happily squiggling shapeless patterns on the walls of the world, neatly representative of specific worldly objects or events to us, but able to hardly evoke any reminiscence in others. Although it may seem to us that we have perfectly captured our inner world in symbols of language, it is so only because they act as reminders, pointers to the world already familiar to us. Once we hand these messages to others, they become constructed from the grounds of different assumptions and under the skies of different contextual perspectives, which often results in their endowment with thoroughly different and sometimes even completely opposite meanings from those which we initially intended to convey. Moreover, even though they may act now as fine reminders of the visions and ideas that we have nurtured within ourselves, there is always a chance that they will not keep up with the constantly evolving mental celestial sphere of ours and thousands of starry thoughts cherished within. In those cases too they may become outdated signs that point at thoroughly misleading directions from those which we wish we would have pointed at. As such, the words that we use indeed resemble butterflies in their essence, inherently resisting being cocooned, captured, confined and conferred to others, while constantly tending to fly away into the blue skies of infinite possibilities.

Each one of us has probably experienced a moment when an attempt to hand a fistful of meaningful signs through language to a very juvenile or a very elderly creature in this world thoroughly failed. The same, although less readily perceivable barriers that block the efforts to transmit meaning with perfect precision by means of language are undoubtedly posed between each one of us, no matter how close and understandable to each other some of us may seem to

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<sup>1894</sup> See Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Routledge, London, UK (1918).

<sup>1895</sup> See Annemarie Schimmel's *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC (1975), pp. 18.

<sup>1896</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17.

be. From this window to social daylight, this insight is to remind us that experiential realities of each one of us are light years apart, just as in the tale about the Little Prince. Being aware of such an inherently imperfect nature of communication through language is vital in preventing us from indulging in mazy, periphrastic conversations and finding perfect satisfaction in them during social gatherings. Rather than posing them as the end goals of our encounters with others, they should be seen as bridges that enable us to cross to the other side of communication where nonverbal interaction laced with the threads of more directly and lively communicated feelings and meanings dwells. When entered, this realm of communication through the music of love, the swing of the ocean of other emotions bottled in our hearts and soulful dancing of our bodies through the stellar space that surrounds us and is nested within ourselves would seem so impressive that looking back at the stiff, boring and spiritually draining linguistically dominated communications of the modern day would be analogous to musing over an exorbitantly obsolete past, the darkest of dark ages left a million light years behind. Then, we would find ourselves bathing in the mellifluousness of the voice of the muse who whispered to Jean-Luc Godard's ears that "the words will never be language"<sup>1897</sup>, so as to tell him and us through him that the language of the heart, not of the mouth, is the one we are to learn in our strivings to ascend from the domain of dirt and dustiness to the sphere of starriness and spiritual sublimity. Conversely, to a soul in hold of this holy knowledge, according to which the most blissful emotions and visions arising in one are like infinite oceans impossible to fit inside the bottles of our language, one of the major worries lies inscribed on the note hanging on the wall of Soul-Frieda's surrealist apartment from Fassbinder's *In a Year of 13 Moons*: "My greatest fear is that, one day, I will find words that express my feelings". "For, when I do...", the note continues and abruptly ends mid-sentence; were I allowed to finish it, I may add that the doves of divinity, should this ever happen, would fly away and leave a parched, infertile spirit behind, free to lament with the head buried in the listless hands over the paradise lost to the gift of immaculate verbosity gained.

To illustrate to myself that love, chemistry and other features defining the nonverbal and ineffable portion of our relations with living beings and objects always supersede the words in their significance, I often evoke two complementary examples from my experience. First I bring to mind my attending a concert in the Belgrade Student Cultural Center in mid 1990s and hearing Ivek, the lead singer of the Serbian band *Kazna za Uši*, yell "f\*\*\* you" into the mic and, surprisingly, receive lauds, not boos, as a response, impelling people to stand up and say how that was a smart comment and how the singer was benevolently reminding the audience of its sheepishness and the need to become independent instead of listening in a flock to a person in charge and craving to be guided with a leash and a stick by the shepherd. Then I bring to mind the former president of Serbia, Slobodan Milošević, all but loved by the antiestablishment student demonstrators, like myself, saying during the only speech he had ever given on a stage set in downtown Belgrade, a few years after the aforementioned concert by *Kazna za Uši*, before thousands of people gathered around him, that "he loves them", the responses among the given student population ranged from forced vomiting to signal insincerity and scornful pity to loud finger-pointing and accusations of insincerity, cynicism, pretense and cunning attraction of the naïve voters. Now, since life, afterwards, retaught me countless times that, regardless of the real, usually mixed intentions of the pronouncer, statements such as "f\*\*\* you" can be met with approval and love and "I love you" with disapproval and hatred, today I stand convinced that words matter less than an iota in our communication with the world, as they are invariably interpreted in semantic forms that are universes apart from those that we intended to draw and

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<sup>1897</sup> Watch *The Image Book* directed by Jean-Luc Godard (2018).

pass on. Hence the collapse of the edifice of words in the finale of Wittgenstein's tractate, ending with the famous line, "What we cannot speak of, we must pass over in silence", evoking the daily tumbling of the castles of verbosity in my head, allowing me to instate my mind over and over again in the magical space of pure silence, of direct communication with the divine essence of being untainted by the mud of verbosity.

However, realizing such a helplessly imperfect nature of our devotion to writing and verbal expression *per se* should not be a call for despair. Instead, it is an invitation to rejoice in front of an infinite space of millions of starry twinkles of the beauty beyond grasp that Nature is. "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool rather than to speak out and remove all doubt", are the arrows of words released by Abe Lincoln, hitting the heart of the idea that the infinitely ample ocean of spirit of reality in which we swim could never fit the miniscule bottle of our experience expressed in language, which is an insight that stands forth as one of the first steps in our ascents to heavenly heights of being in this life. Quite in accord with this viewpoint, the singer on the record entitled Z, the last letter of the alphabet, sang, "All that I wanted to say, words only got in the way, but then I found another way to communicate"<sup>1898</sup>, ringing with the message that we should never 100 % rely on words in our attempts to convey the essence of our ideas and emotions to others. Or, as noted by a critic impressed by one of Harold Pinter's plays in which the tool of language was enwrapped in the shades of absurdness all until its meaning disappeared and the audience was offered a glimpse of a platform for communication more elevated and profound than the linguistic, "This play has changed my life. Before it, I thought words were just vessels of meaning; after it, I saw them as weapons of defense. Before, I thought theatre was about the spoken; after, I understood the eloquence of the unspoken. The position of a chair, the length of a pause, the choice of a gesture, I realized, could convey volumes"<sup>1899</sup>. This brings us over to expressions that shatter the linguistic rules and clichés in beautiful ways, such as Molly Bloom's soliloquy<sup>1900</sup> or the final thought from a latest indie comic book, "I'm a newborn, I'm everyone, everywhere with you without you unbound set free in limbo lost as sea"<sup>1901</sup>, a thought emerging from a face washed by millions of stars, showing us how the essence lies not in words but far, far beyond. After all, had no one ever broken the norms of regularity in language, languages would never evolve in anything more intricate than the primitive vocabularies of cavemen. As I have shown many times before, rebelliously breaking the rules by infusing surprising novelty where too much order has taken place is how natural systems evolve, and language is no exception to this rule. The need to make modern instant messages, which are sometimes, as in the case of 140-character Twitter posts, as lengthy as 17-syllable haiku poems, as brief and economical as possible in the ultrafast world of information exchange which we live in will certainly continue with breaking the grammatical principles of common linguistic expressions. Sometimes I wonder if the decrying words of belittlement that the Christ directed to pharisaic scribes in this world may have lain in their submission to grammatical rules and lettering principles, nowhere near as numerable and rigid as those existing in the realms of visual and audile arts. Thence, breaking to pieces the rules of grammar and other standards defined by convention may sometimes be the only way to demonstrate that our spiritual quests would be fulfilling only if we do not let our creative attention linger on words

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<sup>1898</sup> Listen to My Morning Jacket's Anytime on Z, ATO (2005).

<sup>1899</sup> See John Lahr's Demolition Man, The New Yorker (December 24, 2007); available at [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2007/12/24/071224fa\\_fact\\_lahr](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2007/12/24/071224fa_fact_lahr).

<sup>1900</sup> See James Joyce's Ulysses, Shakespeare and Company, Paris, France (1922).

<sup>1901</sup> See Bryan Lee O'Malley's Lost at Sea, ONI Press, Portland, OR (2005).

and symbols alone. Once we realize this and begin to live with this ideal guiding us like a Northern Star on the open sky of our mind, waterfalls of happiness would wash over our heart, slowly filling our being with the greatest qualities imaginable. As such, this last letter of alphabet, Z, is there to remind us that the final purpose of our expressions through language is to kill the language itself and, just as at the very end of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*<sup>1902</sup>, point at the infinite beauty lying beyond, returning us to the very beginnings of the sacred pyramid of human knowledge symbolized by the letter A. To leave us speechless and aware of unreachable heights and inexhaustible sources of beauty that the cosmic music reverberates with, instead of attempting to collect, classify, confine it all and lock behind the gates of language, is what a true linguistic piece of art should aim at. Conversely, the real love is the one that does not keep the object of its affection tied to oneself, but liberates it from the chains of possessiveness and lets it fly towards the blue skies of unlimited freedom; the most effective drug carriers are those that do not retain their structure after their delivery mission is accomplished, but instead degrade in the body, edifying it with its basic building blocks; the most inspiring answers are those that do not pretend to shut down the sunup of human knowledge with their omniscience, but build ever more profound questions on top of those from which they have arisen; by blissfully forgiving we release mental and emotional weights that drag us down and make our spirits agonizingly crawl over the land and thereby engage in angelic flights of divine spiritedness; by endlessly giving all that we have, our body and soul, for the benefit of another we gain spiritual treasures in abundance in return and become crowned by the heavens above as the real king of the world; finally, this is all to remind us of the Biblical seed of mustard (John 12:24-25) which needs to die and disappear from the ground in order to bear fruit and which the most marvelous creative acts in the world are akin to. The ultimate aim of every doctrine is thus to inseminate the reality with itself to such an extent that all becomes pervaded by it, so that its annihilation as a doctrine becomes the natural final step in its existence. This has been exemplified by Sufism, traditionally taught to be "a reality without a name"<sup>1903</sup>, fully mastered only when one liberates oneself from it completely and realizes that "there is no god but God" in everything and that this godliness that permeates every single creature and object in the Universe is impossible to be apprehended by the nets of conceptualizations and words, words which, whenever invoked, inevitably bring about a sense of distantness between the namer and the named, standing in the way of recognizing God in little things, possible only insofar as the feeling of perfect unison between the subject and the object arises in one. "The creation of this work is not merely a creation; it is rather an endless creation and surrender, all until nothing remains, and then the surrender of this nothing, and then surrender of the surrender", Béla Hamvas asserted in the epilogue to one of his major works<sup>1904</sup>, outlining the path of a perfect quest for knowledge composed of searching, finding and then forgetting, annulling and being back on the road forever more. With such a thought in our mind, we make a full circle and from Omega jump to Alpha, maintaining the forever fresh and juvenile spirit of a true kid A, the one who sends awakening "kid hey" echoes throughout the cosmic reigns, delivering questions that revolve around Love and Wonder, the encounter of which stands at the beginning and the end of knowledge and life alike.

This all makes me jump up and happily proclaim that the time has come to live these thousands of thoughts that I inscribed, one by one, in my books, the mirrors of the starry

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<sup>1902</sup> See Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Routledge, London, UK (1918), proposition 7: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent".

<sup>1903</sup> See William C. Chittick's *Sufism: A Beginner's Guide*, Oneworld, Oxford, UK (2000), pp. 47.

<sup>1904</sup> See Béla Hamvas' *Scientia Sacra*, Dereta, Belgrade, Serbia (1943).

blissfulness of the world created by my mind and Nature in their holding hands in faith, devotion and love while communicating by all means: meditative, emotional, intuitive, visual and wordy alike. “If you know better, you would do better”<sup>1905</sup>, Robyn sang, reminding us that proper travelling along the path of knowledge sooner or later faces us with the need to shut down the gates through which sheer knowledge flows into our mind and become stupider in a way, as in the spirit of the journey to salvation and perfect knowledge of Goethe’s Faust, lest we turn into sad beings of the same kind as Henry Bemis, the bibliophile lost in a post-apocalyptic world of infinite loneliness, surrounded by all the books in the world but no ability to read them, owing to his valuing written word more than the music of the souls around him<sup>1906</sup>, resembling the scribe sculpted as a part of the scene depicting the Christ on the Mount of Olives inside of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Strasbourg, leaned onto a dusty open book, sleeping and maybe even dreaming while the savior, the symbol of life triumphing over the word, is being sold with a kiss to the Romans by Judas, the king of all hypocrites and the symbol of the word triumphing over life. Like Brother Leo, yet another scribe sitting by an open book in the church backyard on Giotto’s painting that depicts Saint Francis’ receiving the stigmata and that decorates the walls of the upper church of San Francesco in Assisi, the birthplace of the saint of “humor, oddity and radicality”<sup>1907</sup>, who meanwhile stands alone on a rocky terrain, away from the church and the sense of human authority that its image stands for, in touch with a levitating seraph, the deliverer of the divine energies from some transcendental levels of reality straight into the saint’s healing hands and heart, we would then have our face plunged not in life, but in the books of life, and head immersed not in worldly dominions, but in wordy maps, remaining ever more distant from our true self and incapable of the explosions of celestial powers that it has been predisposed to exhibit. We could thence likewise find ourselves to be the epitomes of the otherworldly creatures depicted in Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s masterful short story, *The Dream of a Ridiculous Man*, who lived at first in a state of enlightening sincerity and whose downfall from these reigns of immaculately blissful being to earthly lowlands of prosaic and egotistic existence coincided with their placing knowledge of beautiful being higher on the pedestal of reverence than the very beautiful being: “‘We have science, and by the means of it we shall find the truth and we shall arrive at it consciously. Knowledge is higher than feeling, the consciousness of life is higher than life. Science will give us wisdom, wisdom will reveal the laws, and the knowledge of the laws of happiness is higher than happiness’. That is what they said, and after saying such things everyone began to love himself better than anyone else, and indeed they could not do otherwise”<sup>1908</sup>. The key on how to revert this unfavorable state of affairs in which humanity has found itself is to somehow turn the hypocritical overvaluing maps while being fearfully frozen in touch with their territories upside down; or, as the Christ advised, take our images and ideas, place them under our feet and gaily jump all over them like infinitely chaste, loving and playful children (Thomas 37). For, only in such a way, by using the tool of knowledge to cut down the trees of the same knowledge and succumb our ego to the ideals of selflessly acting for the sake of ornamenting the world with the pearls of love and beauty, rather than finding ultimate aims and satisfaction in extraordinarily intricate conceptualizations, would we be able to profoundly touch human hearts and transform into a Christ-like star of spirit on Earth. In that sense, I recall how,

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<sup>1905</sup> Listen to Robyn’s *U Should Know Better* on *Body Talk Pt. 2*, Konichiwa (2010).

<sup>1906</sup> Watch *The Twilight Zone: Time Enough to Last*, CBS (1959).

<sup>1907</sup> See Robert Kiely’s *Blessed and Beautiful*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT (2010), pp. 242.

<sup>1908</sup> Read Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s *The Dream of a Ridiculous Man*, available at <http://www.kiosek.com/dostoevsky/library/ridiculousman.txt> (1877).

as we journeyed on Highway 1, a drama played on the radio ended with the narrator referring to two lives, one with which we learn what we have to learn and the other one in which we apply what we have learned. So deep is indeed the line that divides learning and applying knowledge in life that one could attribute one life to one and a completely different life to another. Thus we begin our voyage as a seed of a starry soul on this planet of ours while circling on the spaceship called Earth around the Sun, the symbol of the ultimate beauty of being exemplified on the pages of this book. And yet, after many circles made around the magnificent image of who we should become should we follow the trail of spiritual learning in life, we approach the end of the first, apprenticing life of ours and the beginning of another one, in which we begin to bring to life all that was there to be learned before within our very being. One such transition whereby our ego becomes transformed from a small planetary body that mainly absorbs the light given out by other shiny bodies around us to a dazzling and selflessly burning spiritual star, the source of the sunlight of love and stardust of wonder for the world, is an enlightening moment during which we may feel as truly born again. This transition may as well be the one metaphorically depicted by the event of resurrection of the Christ and his passage, once and for all, into an eternal life. Needless to add, similar to every phase transition in Nature, this one, too, requires transcendence of an energy barrier, which, as a rule, yields moments of confusion, hardship and spiritual agony, with millions of embryonic entities rolling backwards and dissipating into dust for every one that makes it up and over the hill and becomes a crystal of celestial being. Just as the transformation of finite cell strains to immortal cell lines inevitable passes through a state of “crisis”<sup>1909</sup>, during which most cells senesce and die and only one or a few undergo a fabulous transition within their essence, rise above their ruinous niche and enter the realm of perennial being, so is with the transition to spiritual stars that awaits us all on the path of our growth from an earthly seed of godly essence to a Sun-like celestial body that decorates the eternal azure with its shine of sheer divinity. Knowing this, we should be sure that many are those who will never make the step with which they will exit these ordinary human domains of existence and enter the starry realms of being. Yet, in front of the bravest and the softest ones, those who combine the willpower of a stony and fiery Dragon and meek lovingness of an oceanic Virgo, the doors that lead to these enlightening cosmic empires will sooner or later open in their full blossom and charm.

All in all, this whole book has attempted to give an answer to one simple question: how does one become a star? After all, this is why we are on this planet we call Earth, gazing at the wonders of the starry sky and circling around the gorgeous Sun that blesses us with its light and hands us the source of our lives: to wonder how to make a giant step in the evolution of our spirits and transform ourselves from passive followers and sheer satellites into active sources of the light divine. To become a star of the soul – that is our mission, as of today. In this mission, of course, we are not alone, and we can always look back at what the souls who completed the divine mission called life before us can tell us with what we know of their mysterious lives, acts and words that they uttered or put to paper. The Christ was one such star that sent out lights of creative potentials which, as some say, can never be attained again by a mortal soul, but which, however, as we must believe and as he, himself, held (John 10:34), all humans conceal within. He serves as a wonderful example on how to become a star, and I have tried to show that the Way of Love, a cognitive ideal naturally springing from the tenets of the co-creational nature of our experience and the physical reality as we know it, hides the key too. Yet, this key will unlock the doors that will release the unforeseen shine of beauty we conceal within only if one brings it to life within oneself and not merely reads and understands it. On a rare, if not the only, occasion

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<sup>1909</sup> See Steven R. Goodman’s *Medical Cell Biology*, Academic Press, Burlington, MA (2008), pp. 22.

the Christ actually pulled up a book to read something from it to people gathered around him, not only did he randomly pick a passage to read, but after only a single sentence read, “he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down” (Luke 4:20), uttering the following words: “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:21). “And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth” (Luke 4:22), the scripture further tells us. As we know that the Christ spoke exclusively in parables (Matthew 13:34), we can be sure that this gesture of his was to remind us that if we fail to make the decisive step from grasping the sacred knowledge to embodying it within every atom of our being, we would be stuck in the spiritual mud of pharisaic puddles, of which the Christ had to say the following: “Do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not” (Matthew 23:3). For, “faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” (James 2:17), as St. James the Apostle noticed, to which another apostle, St. Paul, would have probably added that “now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (Corinthians I 13:13). The legend says that Vladimir Lenin broke off his seminal work, *The State and Revolution*, in the middle to pose the revolutionary question, “Isn’t it better to strike a revolution than to write about it”<sup>1910</sup>; so should we be sure that only by stepping away from our dedicated imprinting signs onto sides of the road along which humanity progresses forward and living the dreams about which we have mused and poetized would we be able to produce a sense of revolution in people’s hearts, of circling around the divine sun of being in its full, celestial glow. One thing is, therefore, to spend time pensively concocting and bathing the world and the surrounding creatures in the envisioned splashes of the sea of divinity, but a million-step distant and more progressive road takes us to incarnating these shiny visions of ours in the dark spaces of reality; or, as Carl Gustav Jung put it once in a beautiful gem of a saying, “One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious”. Since the sources of light that could illuminate the murky paths lying before the worldly souls enwrapped in darkness rest exclusively in our hearts, we must conclude that the rightest words pronounced with a hollow heart can never come near the blasts of light emerging from a holy heart that speaks no words at all. Or, as Symeon the New Theologian humbly noticed in an attempt to ascribe an incomparably greater spiritual weight to beautiful acts than to beautiful visions and thoughts, as in the spirit of his Christian forebears, “Of that which I wish to make my subject, I know that I have put nothing into practice. I am well aware that it is not he who merely speaks whom our Lord and God calls blessed, but rather he who first puts into practice and then speaks, for He says, ‘Blessed is he who does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven’ (Matthew 5:19). When the disciples hear such a teacher they become eager to imitate him. The profit they derive from his words is not as great as that from being stirred up by his good works and compelled to do likewise. I know that this does not apply to me, for I realize that ‘there is nothing good in me’ (Romans 7:18)”<sup>1911</sup>. And if we look now in the direction of the most venerable horizons of human being, we could hear the voices of all those who have showed the ways of spiritual salvation not merely with their words, but with their deeds more than anything. Or, as Walt Whitman solemnly sang, “I and mine do not convince by arguments, similes, rhymes; we convince by our presence”<sup>1912</sup>. Conversely, to be guided by the erroneous belief that the essence of the Holy Spirit, which is all

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<sup>1910</sup> See Eric Bentley’s *The Purism of Étienne Decroux* (1950), In: *What is Dance?* Edited by Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen, Oxford University Press, New York, NY (1983), pp. 215.

<sup>1911</sup> See Saint Symeon the New Theologian’s *Discourses*, Paulist Press, Mahwah, NJ (circa 1000 AD), pp. 41 - 42.

<sup>1912</sup> The quote found in Simon Louvish’s *Chaplin: The Tramp’s Odyssey*, Thomas Dunne Books, New York, NY (2009), pp. 265.

around thee, could be transmuted into words and words only is to be placed on an inherently errant track, our relentless riding on which would sooner or later bring us face to face with the awareness that all we had done so far was “casting pearls before swine” (Matthew 7:6). Or, as the psalmist lamented, “I believed, therefore I have spoken: I was greatly afflicted” (Psalm 116:10), before arriving at the conclusion that, word-wise, the Holy Spirit must be implicit, not explicit, if our being in the world is to gain an aura of sanctity: “I will praise thee with uprightness of heart... Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psalm 119:7...11). Indeed, from Socrates to Confucius to the Christ to James Joyce’s Michael Furey to my beloved Mother, a saint before whose image I pray every day, whose all but a single poem<sup>1913</sup> have been lost, alongside innumerable forgotten creatures upon whose tiny, yet magnificently important works the whole civilization, as it is today, stands, this great lineage of inspiring creatures stretches, and all of them could say, “My life is my message”, as a little and yet immensely powerful note written on the wall of Gandhi Smriti Museum in Delhi, reminding us of a great guideline of the great Mahatma, says.

On a clement summer day, at the foothills of the Himalayas, a disciple asked a Zen master the following: “I note an ancient wise man saying, ‘I raise the screen and face the broad daylight; I move the chair and am greeted by the blue mountain’. What is meant by ‘I raise the screen and face the broad daylight’?”<sup>1914</sup> The master’s reply was quite in the spirit of the most profound Zen *mondo*, offering an even greater enigma as an answer to an enigmatic question and thus instigating a perpetual spin of the wheel of the evolution of the human spirit, aside from fostering independent searches for answers that shatter all the rules and doctrines on the seeker’s road to enlightenment, while at the same time tearing the curtain of words that fall like blinds over our views of the world at times, blocking its omnipresent divinity from one’s sight: “Please pass me the pitcher there. What is meant by ‘I raise the screen and face the broad daylight’? Please put the pitcher back where it was found”. What the master wanted to point out by equalizing the adherent’s question with the act of putting the pitcher back to its place rather than handing it to a thirsty creature, the act that lay semantically hidden in-between these poetic lines, was that enlightening, charitable acts, not complex conceptualizations and verbalizations, are the treasures that the ocean of the disciples’ heart is after on its spiritual quests. When we find full satisfaction in fanciful linguistic wordplays, we should know that we have only touched the tip of an infinitely deep iceberg of enchanting being in this world, the revelation and incarnation of which can be carried out only inasmuch as we are willing to cut the cord that ties us to a sense of contentment with mere words and let the kite of our spirit soar high into the skies of the world, like a bird of paradise, delivering beautiful acts that originate from the blissful desire to save the worldly souls.

The mountain has been drawn with the messages inscribed in these words, but the task of climbing on it lies still ahead of us, as the former task can never bear perfect spiritual fulfillment in the absence of the latter, as beats in accord with the following St. Paul the Apostle’s words: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing” (Corinthians I 13:1-2). The extent to which creative traces of stars on Earth are left in the domain of the spiritual, of the Holy Ghost, rather than in that of the palpable and material, that is, by means of acting rather than documenting, designing, crafting or

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<sup>1913</sup> This only saved poem of hers is used as a prologue to this book.

<sup>1914</sup> See Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki’s *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist*, Routledge, New York, NY, pp. 97.

building proofs and monuments, is best illustrated by the words of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century Greek rhetorician, Lucian of Samosata: “You cannot find a single ancient mystery in which there is no dancing; in fact, most people say of the devotees of the Mysteries that ‘they dance them out’”<sup>1915</sup>. Hence, if we pine to be more than a tinkling cymbal and no less that a divine dancer that sheds stardust of celestial grace with every breath, music of words and movement of ours, we ought to be aware that the written words are signs that point not at the beauty of themselves, but at the beauty of pointing, showing and living these signs, revealing and embodying them rather than frostily preaching *about* them, as might have already been conveyed by the Christ’s message: “If I honour myself, my honour is nothing” (John 8:54). Indeed, all the brilliantly beautiful things in this world, including the words that you are reading at this very moment, are such exactly because they have sacrificed themselves so as to build a beauty that is to be greater than them. And yet, as the Way of Love shows us, the more they give, the more the ocean of creativity within their hearts and minds becomes refilled.

The Christ never wrote a single word and the only record of him writing is that of his writing in the sand after being asked whether the angry crowd should stone the adulteress or not and after he said, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her” (John 8:7). The impermanence of anything written in the sand might mean that with this quirky act, he was insinuating secretly that word *per se* is ephemeral, inconsistent in interpretation and not a convenient way of transmitting that which matters most: the spirit. Given his general disinterest in writing, an act that during his times was the privilege of the intellectual *crème de la crème*, which he never had the interest to appeal to, it is not surprising that he also never desired to point at the irregularity of the sacred scriptures. He may have known that the greatest evils in the world would have arisen not from the missing or distorted ethical laws on how life should be lived, but from the failure to live them freely and honestly. “All the good maxims already exist in the world: we just fail to apply them”<sup>1916</sup>, said Pascal, soon after observing that “the philosophers made vices holy by attributing them to God himself; Christians have made virtues holy”<sup>1917</sup>, no doubt by living them out rather than merely rationalizing them, as scholars and scribes, always a rung below the ingenious doers and almsgivers on the ladder of spirituality, have done. Indeed, the world has been abundant and almost saturated with laws, canons and prescripts that foster morality and the pureness of the heart since the earliest ages and some may even argue that everything that followed Lao-Tzu’s Tao-Te-Xing or Sermon on the Mount presented a mere variation on these ancient themes. Rather, human vices have arisen from warped application of these moral and aesthetic principles, which places human hypocrisies at the core all instances of wickedness around us; how else could one explain innumerable beautiful doctrines turning into bloodsheds and sheer disastrousness when applied in reality? Communism arose from preaching equality for all and yet it imposed shackles on human freedoms; bolshevism that had sprung from beliefs that “despotism, whatever may be the parties or whoever may be the individuals that exercise it, is always blameworthy”<sup>1918</sup>, as stated in Russian prerevolutionary pamphlets in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, underwent a change of the heart and transformed into Stalinism, exactly one such oppressive and centralized concept of the state that founders of socialist ideals, left to turn

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<sup>1915</sup> See Havelock Ellis’ *The Art of Dancing* (1923). In: *What is Dance?* Edited by Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen, Oxford University Press, New York, NY (1983), pp. 480.

<sup>1916</sup> See Blaise Pascal’s *Pensée* No. 540, Series XXIII, Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK (1669), pp. 218.

<sup>1917</sup> See Blaise Pascal’s *Pensée* No. 375, Series XXVI, Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK (1669), pp. 137.

<sup>1918</sup> See Klaus Mehnert’s *Twilight of the Young*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, CA (1976), pp. 149.

in their graves, heartily fought against; Roman Church prophesied faith, whose practice blossoms only on the flowerbeds of mysteries, and yet tried to forcefully instill it in people's hearts and make it unquestioning and dogmatic, going quite against the grain of its own nature; the Inquisition prohibited any mentioning of the heliocentric system and symbolic placing of another in the center of one's world that it bears, as empathic, beautiful and genuinely Christian as it gets, going again against its own core nature; the Chinese culture stemmed from Taoist teachings that emphasized rebellious originality and antiauthoritarianism, and yet its flowers and fruits nowadays spread the fragrance of unthinking conformism and the cult of following the leader; the art of medicine originated from benevolent wishes to ameliorate the illnesses that had stricken humanity, but over time began to engrain their total opposites by fanatically worshipping inception into the order of doctors, training practitioners with eyes focused on gigantic salaries and other benefits of life as a physician, and making selections as to who will be cured and who will not based on people's status and wealth, all with the help of insurance companies, the middlemen from hell; mainstream arts have largely transformed from spiritually rousing attempts to purify human hearts by uprooting the weed of vanity, greed and carnality and water all that is truly divine in us to either their diametrical opposites or celebrations of nihilistic and nonchalant, "anything goes" stances that often highlight dark passions and mundane outlooks, as if pushing the human spirits back to earth instead of elevating them far beyond the stratosphere of the celestial orb of the human mind and straight onto heavenly heights of cosmic consciousness; science, an ancient exercise in altruism and humbleness, that is, the selfless love of man and the love of Nature, as its untainted origins could be said to have lain in the wishes to invent something for the benefit of humanity as a whole as well as in the wonder about the fundamental workings of the world, has transformed into an egotistically competitive arena wherein fame and the appearance of one's name on published manuscripts, flashy presentations and patent applications now stand as the main drive for scientific and technological innovation<sup>1919</sup>; and so forth, as examples of this kind can be piled up endlessly one after another. Noticing all of this urged the anarchistic thinkers to proclaim that any ideology that becomes dogmatic and autocratically propagated, irrespective of its ethical propensities, turns into disaster. Thereupon, we could conclude that even in the realm of spiritual teaching, the way in which worded messages incarnate themselves in human deeds is the greatest and the most critical transition, which the Christ himself gave us a hint on how to achieve. He, as an authentic savior of the human soul, could be seen as a bridge that crosses this gap between the word and the deed that unceasingly swallows human spirits into its dark chasms. Even now, two millennia later, the world is more than ever before overfilled with the exalting word and other music as guidance on how to live in utterly inspiring ways, but with no one to live not even up to one-zillionth part of the potentials dormant in it. Countless pop tunes exist out there as signs, waiting for the new embodiments of the spirit of the Christ to "judge them not, but save the world" (John 12:47) by living them out, thereby creating ethereal eruptions of beauty that would shower the surrounding souls with the stardust of divine grace. Still, our culture is the one wherein word is worshipped but authentically living it is looked at with scorn, and in it, naturally, this deadly gap between the word and the deed is being increased with every new day, as most of us, including myself typing

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<sup>1919</sup> "The paradox is that many scientists are driven to improve the world for humanity, but the culture of science can be dehumanizing. We need to promote a culture that recognizes our humanity, where normal, human failure and struggle are not equated with academic ineptitude", says the geologist Summer Praetorius in his lament over the current state of academia. See Summer Praetorius' The Price of Grief, *Nature Career* column (September 26, 2018), retrieved from <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-06793-4>.

these lines, are involved in crafting signs that inspire the mind, while being wholly passive about bringing them to life. And along with this unstoppably expanding gap, the ever-growing sense of confusion naturally instills itself among people. For, when the visions of dancing like a celestial silhouette and leaving a wizardry trail of healing waves in the wake of each move fill our minds and we have no path ahead of us that could take us to their fulfillment, nothing but grand disappointments and desperation can befall upon us. Generation after generation of young people, especially the intellectually and artistic gifted ones, they seem to hold heavier and heavier burdens on their backs and walk more and more slumped, adopting such looks that decades ago they would be mistaken for absinth drinkers or opium addicts. This analogy with drugs can be deepened further; for, just as drugs enkindle the imagination, the fieriness of the inner world, but drowse and deaden the drives to live these impressions out and as a result literally stone the consumer, turning him into a lifeless pile of flesh and bones, so has the astronomically fast increase in the richness of the sea of external impressions surrounding the average human being, from the visual to the auditory, led to the states of minds analogous to those of being stoned or wasted, simply because this liveliness of the inner worlds has been unaccompanied by the equally powerful urge to live this inner fire out. However, what state of mind other than this could result from the social workings that ascribe little or no value to physically incarnating the knowledge of truly marvelous, starry living that reshuffles mountains of the landscape of the human soul as lightly as the decks of cards with the slightest move of the shadow of one's spirit? To us, the dwellers of the coast that celebrates the Holy Word and burns out to make it ever more detailed and wondrous with each passing moment, the Holy Act seems as distant as an exotic island today, as unattainable as a fairyland tomorrow and as surreal as climbing on a nearby star in the sky the day after. Arthur Schopenhauer therefore claimed in his musings that a law of gravity applies to the acts of writing and interpreting a written word, so that the words fall onto paper easier than they are lifted up and comprehended by the human consciousness. To reiterate this analogy, I may add that lifting textually impressed thoughts into semantic realms is hard, but converting these grasped thoughts as guidelines for action into creative expressions that would bless the world with their celestial beauty is equal to making spaceships out of them and launching us in their bellies to the very stars; this is so because the difference between semantic lifting and embodiment of symbols as guiding stars is literally astronomical. In that sense, I am often reminded of the phonetic norm proposed by the 19<sup>th</sup> Century reformer of the Serbian language, Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, "Read the way you write, write the way you speak", connecting the acts of reading, speaking and writing into a single whole. What is demanded today from spiritual exemplars, as I, another Vuk, claim, is building in human hearts threads of honesty to link embodiments of the written word, semantics and expressions in writing into a single whole, unbroken by the fake bonds of human hypocrisies. For, the main faultiness which entails spirituality of the modern age lies not in the messages impressed everywhere around us, but in the way they are incarnated in our acts. For this reason, the Christ never showed any interest in modifying the written word; he must have known that its application rather than the core message stands forth as the most critical factor in sustaining the world as beautiful as it is and edifying its divineness. The legacy of his life has instead been a grand sign placed on the forehead of humanity, serving as a great reminder of the importance of living the wonderful starry guidance that we see inscribed in words everywhere around us. As in accordance with his mission of saving rather than judging the world (John 12:47), he showed us the beauty of living these great ideals that could be found written everywhere and yet lived by no one. Or, as the late American poet, David Foster Wallace noticed in his modern apologetic note,

“On one level we all know this stuff already – it’s been codified as myths, proverbs, clichés, bromides, epigrams, parables: the skeleton of every great story. The trick is keeping the truth up front in daily consciousness”<sup>1920</sup>. This precept concords with Pascal’s aforementioned belief that “all the good maxims already exist in the world: we just fail to apply them”<sup>1921</sup>, and that expressional experiments on the stage of life are today far more important for preserving its divinities than merely theorizing about them. In quite the same spirit, the Christ claimed the following: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:18-20). By living these sacred inscriptions rather than merely preaching about them, he escaped the fate of scribes and Pharisees and brought forth a creative shine never witnessed before on planet Earth. And on top of that, he had known that to succeed in his mission he had to sacrifice himself fully, thus demonstrating that only when our ego gets merged with a divine consciousness that permeates it all do we become able to express ourselves in the light of divine creativeness. He had known that breaking the commandments is good because it leads to novel and fresh streams of knowledge (Matthew 5:19), and, as such, stands forth as the highest achievement of those who are busy scribing and reformulating guiding lines for sacred living. But still, he claimed that living these holy words rather than only spinning inspiring thoughts in orbits around the starry glow of the conscious centerpiece in our celestial heads and finding enough of amusement in it is the way that places us as high as we can get on the ladder of great spirits of this world.

If the Christ believed that sufficient guidance had been inscribed in the scriptures of the world to grant us the way to the stars, if only we would devote our entire being to embodying these messages, what should we say today when anywhere we look, into the world of arts, sciences or ordinary social settings, we become overflowed with inspiring signs that secretly invite us to absorb them with the sponge of our heart, fuse with the treasures of our memories, emotions and aspirations, and yield an enlightening shine of our spirits? Unlike in the Christ’s time, these astonishing signs are no longer shed only by humans of mainly veiled beauty, corn fields, clouds, sounds of the storm and sea splashes, but also by human eyes livelier than ever, stroboscopes and other colorful city lights, dancing silhouettes and other choreographic wizardry, and fanciful scientific imagery and electronic dreams of packets of information streaming like miniature spaceships through high-tech devices. Yet, drawers of these dreams are many while those who have renounced all the materialistic attachments and embarked on a simple mission 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. The reason for the melancholy of late works of artists and philosophers, making their whole worlds wave on one such ocean of teardrops and infinite sadness, was therefore discovered by Bela Hamvas in the inability to hand

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<sup>1920</sup> See David Foster Wallace’s *This Is Water: Some Thoughts, Delivered on a Significant Occasion about Living a Compassionate Life*, Little, Brown and Company, New York, NY (2009), pp. 107 - 108.

<sup>1921</sup> See Blaise Pascal’s *Pensée No. 540, Series XXIII*, Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK (1669), pp. 218.

over the knowledge gained through the old and weary eyes to others anymore<sup>1922</sup>, let alone live it out, loudly, like a thunder, and embody in the form of a divine being of which he had dreamt all life. Though, even for the fittest and the liveliest spirits out there, the path toward the sacred knowledge, especially today when it abounds all around one, is lighter to cross than the reverse path, from knowledge to its incarnation in real life. In a way, it is as if the transition of the Zen searcher from the state of mind in which “trees are trees and mountains are mountains” to the stage of knowledgeability, wherein “trees are not trees and mountains are not mountains”, conforming to the pivotal semiotic principle that says that “something stands for something else”, is easier to make than the transition from the latter stage to the state of mind in which “trees are again the trees and mountains are again the mountains”, which is the one in which all the conflicts and incongruities vanish, all sinks into a great cosmic Yes of the finale of biblical Revelation, a cosmically reverberant Ave is heard traversing to and from the divinity that pervades every iota of our beings and the universe, and the searcher, momentarily, reaches Samadhi. For this reason, many narratives, from Homer’s *Odyssey* and Xenophon’s *Anabasis* to many traditional stories of descent to the underworld to Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* to Frank Baum’s story about the Wizard of Oz to Michael Curtiz’s *Casablanca*<sup>1923</sup> to Michelangelo Antonioni’s *Passenger* and Walter Hill’s *Warriors*, have described relatively effortless arrivals at destinations of the adventures, but horrifically hard returns, as if wishing to accentuate the difficult time that seekers for wisdom of the present and past have faced, 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. Yet, “once you’ve learnt it, apply it”, said Confucius, conforming to the practical Chinese mindset from which proverbs such as “talk cooks no rice”, “two hands should be twice as busy as one tongue”<sup>1924</sup>, “the one who snores the loudest will fall asleep first”<sup>1925</sup> and “the longer the night lasts, the more dreams we’ll have” were later to come to life and being 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 insightful master of practicality is also noted for saying that he had “never seen a world that loves virtue as much as it loves beauty”<sup>1926</sup>, and, given all of this, we could conclude that theory of beautiful living has gone far, far ahead compared to its virtuous application, so to say, 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

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<sup>1922</sup> See Bela Hamvas’ *The Melancholy of Late Works (Melanholija poznih dela)*, retrieved from [https://m.box.com/shared\\_item/https%3A%2F%2Fapp.box.com%2Fs%2F3zxxfyj9259v380yzjd9](https://m.box.com/shared_item/https%3A%2F%2Fapp.box.com%2Fs%2F3zxxfyj9259v380yzjd9).

<sup>1923</sup> In it, American expatriates on their way home from France have to follow a lengthy route going from Paris to Marseille to Oran in Algeria to Casablanca in French Morocco to Lisbon and, finally, to the New World.

<sup>1924</sup> See *Best-Loved Chinese Proverbs* edited by Theodora Lau, Harper Collins, New York, NY (1995), pp. 37.

<sup>1925</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25.

<sup>1926</sup> See Svetozar Brkić’s *Lao-Tzu, Confucius, Chuang-Tzu: Chosen Works*, Prosveta, Belgrade, Serbia (1960), pp. 178.

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 lame and lukewarm spirits subjected to peer pressure and other socially imposed fears that pose obstacles on an unbound release of the shine of their spirits as to how far they are from the ideals of perfect living and how close they are to being spitted out of the mouth of divinity (Revelation 3:16), together with everything that is lukewarm, indifferent and resistant to acting in ways that are blissful and beautiful. 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. This is how we may cross Ivan Karamazov's road of million miles through interstellar darkness in the blink of an eye. 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"<sup>1927</sup>, 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.

In view of that, this and all other books of mine could be regarded as hypermodern manuals on how to live and live and live, and eventually become a star of spirit that will dazzle millions of earthlings with enchanting lights of wonder and love one bright day, albeit our, like all stars of the night sky, remaining in the dark forever and ever and never becoming aware of the ungraspably enormous, gargantuan extent of the spread of the enlightening rays of the sun of our soul and of all the many souls we unknowably brought to the path of salvation and ascension to stars. In each case, our success in this noble endeavor is conditioned by our dropping into the bushes the guiding star almanacs that this and all other books that have inspired us are and empty-handedly entering life through one strait, though dazzlingly starlit gate. This book, as such, bearing resemblance to Wittgenstein's ladder that must be tossed after we have climbed on it to sufficient heights, may be regarded as a precious handbook for those who crave to become one of those stellar spirits that enlighten the world by shedding immense amounts of spiritual light from the divine sun of their hearts to the world. Finally, if the fact that spiritual teachers of this world can only point at the road that leads to enlightenment, but cannot walk on it on behalf of their disciples, in other words implying that all the spiritual learning in this life cannot be reduced to simple following of recipes for our behavior written by sages who lived before us, but has to be puzzled over, questioned, lived and found by each one of us anew, secretly tells us something, it is that the missionary story of our souls may have begun on this planet, but it has to extend to the stars beyond this life of ours, into the very eternity of being. On the other hand, the only way to get to these stellar stations of being on our never-ending karmic journey is to decline our departure in their direction for the sake of handing over a ticket thereto to another; that is, by taking a fellow soul by the hand and releasing it like a balloon while remaining a servant on this

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<sup>1927</sup> See Norbert Wiener's *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society*, Free Association Books, London, UK (1950), pp. 162.

wretched land or, in some occasions, transferring even the last bit of our energy to the loved ones so as to make sure that they are safely uplifted while we, ourselves, as dictated by Newton's third law of motion, gain a downward momentum and descend with the apostolic zeal and devotion into the hellish spheres of being, the spheres in need of an angel, like the one we have hopefully become, more than any other. Hence, the question of how you and I become stars of spirit is never wasted in the air, as it presents the first step in setting our feet on the road to blissful salvation and launching of our tiny selves into the realms of eternal and heavenly being.

Answering this question takes us back to the beginnings and the first lines written in this book. For, the key, in the end, may always lie concealed at the very beginnings, whereas beginnings, just as all foundations in life, conceal the key as to what lies ahead and what the final outcomes will be like. To find ourselves at this perfect moment and dig the most beautiful moves and words, we may need to travel deep inside of ourselves and return to the very wordless beginnings, the very source of the center of the Sun of our spirit. For, the cognitive foundations of ours are those from which enthralling acts spontaneously arise if only they become channeled uninterrupted straight to the surface of our being. When our intentions, aspirations and emotions, invisible, impalpable and ineffable as they are, are bright and colorful, like a vivid rainbow, the gorgeous and inspiring moves will emerge on the surface of our being and spontaneously flow. When the superficial layers of thoughts dressed up in words and images are removed like a crusty shell protecting the essence of our inner self, by way of none other but Love, the greatest emotion of them all, and we are left with but a heart of ours, soft and warm, beating in our hands, like in the last line of the poem that adorns the prologue to this book, though we may be scared at first, sooner or later we would realize how colossal a blessing this state of translucent and untainted mind is, in which we may start to float on the waves divine permeating our beings and everything arising from it thence would be an indescribably touching act of magic. In such a way, the words of T. S. Eliot become illuminated once more: "The end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time"<sup>1928</sup>. Or, the way this timeless verse used to be paraphrased by my beloved Mom, who also authored the poem that stands like a wreath of laurel at the entrance to this book, the poem that, symbolically, thanks to its being given to another as a gift, happens to be the only one of a myriad of hers to have survived and not gotten lost, serving as a token to this day of the way she lived her life too, keeping nothing to herself and scattering it all in the wind, becoming eternal thereby and ensuring that her spirit remains present everywhere, in every single piece of reality, "You will reach the destination when you arrive at the beginning and recognize the landscape"<sup>1929</sup>. Or, if I, myself, am allowed to paraphrase this paraphrase, when recognition and prime realization, periodicity and novelty, fostering unity and celebrating manifolds, being one with it all and being one and only, finding infinity in one and one amidst the infinite diversity of things only, all of which are pairs of apparent antipodes, are blended into one, we get to unwind the most precious of the treasures concealed within us like a spiral trail of stardust across the worldly skies.

Be that as it may, dizzied by this alternate glimpsing of dawn and sundown, the answer to the question on how to become a star takes us to the very end of the Bible and the final verses of its Revelation, quoted at the very opening of this book, the incarnation of which sets one to begin to selflessly live for the salvation of others and shy away from all the knowledge that is supposed to serve the purpose of building and celebrating the prickly fence of one's ego. If a story could

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<sup>1928</sup> See T. S. Eliot's *Little Gidding*, In: *Four Quartets*, Harcourt, San Diego, CA (1943).

<sup>1929</sup> "Na cilj ćeš stići kada dođeš na početak i prepoznaš predeo", as the phrase in her own softly spoken words used to sound.

be given as this answer, always, remember, taking the form of an even more beautiful question than the question it answers, lest the infinite progression of humanity, from animus to angelicus, be put an end to, this would be the one, found in the Apocryphal Acts of Peter. It sets us on Via Appia, “the queen of the long roads”, as it was christened by the Neapolitan poet, Strattius. The long road that it was in the times at which this story took place, around 64 AD, it connected Rome with smaller towns southeast of it, from Ariccia in the Alban hills of Lazio to Benevento near Naples and all the way to Brindisi on the Adriatic coast, hundreds of miles away. We see it with the eyes of St. Peter the Apostle, who, at that moment, escapes from Rome, having found out that he was about to be captured and tortured to death. It is sunset, the reddish Sun throws long shadows of rare strollers onto the cobblestoned road and one of them becomes strangely familiar to St. Peter. It is the Christ, himself. St. Peter is stunned, reaches out with one finger only to touch him, yet his jaw drops and he is barely able to stutter out the following question: *Quo Vadis Domine*, not knowing that nine centuries later, at that exact same place, first a sanctuary and then a church named after these three timeless words would be built in their honor. The Christ, in a second, responds by saying *Eo Romam iterum crucifigi*, meaning “I am going to Rome to be crucified again”. *Eo Romam iterum crucifigi*. “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it” (Mark 8:35), as the Christ himself put it on another occasion. Hearing this, St. Peter finally sees the light, regains courage and perfection and changes his course by 180 °, returning to Rome to be willfully crucified upside down. With the sound of Protection, the renowned sign of the times<sup>1930</sup> that reminds us of the need to serve the role of a protective aura around the people around us, we are driven to conclusion that only selfless love for another can lead us to glimpse the starry lights within our own spirit and reach true happiness in life. To give, give and give is then the mantra that sends the soulful energy that we have built and stored for a long time in our mind and chests to explode towards the world in bursts of spiritual sunlight. This moment of sacrificial sanctity, of finding the birth of the divine spirit in the death of its corporeal crust, described also by the metaphor of the resurrection of the Christ, associated with the extinguishment of one’s ego and the rise of a life lived in pure spirit, eternal and infinitely greater, marks the true spiritual nascence of one, one which thence becomes the great One, reaching oneness with Nature as a whole and each one of its creature in unassailable compassion and empathy.

Still, only by travelling deep inside of one can one explode in spirit outwardly and send out the wonderful shimmers and rays of light that bless and beautify the world around. This is what the Way of Love has taught us all throughout the course of this book, pointing at the road that would lead us in the direction of becoming a spiritual star. By sinking deep into the divine light of One glowing within one, as a star does, our power to shine to the world with the supreme spiritual light emerging from within grow and, step by step, we transform from either a leaflet carried away inertly on worldly streams or a secluded soul untouched by anything at all into a perfectly balanced being, living inside to live outside, so as to enlighten others, and outside to live inside, so as to illuminate the path to God, sopping up empathy as a fuel for coming close with the spaceship of our spirit to the sun of our divine soul and finding infinite happiness therein and, then, fusing elements therein as a source of the greatest spiritual luminescence that the world has ever seen. Saying this, the pen drops and life begins with so many guiding stars of thought, each one inspiringly twinkling inside of the cosmic space of one’s mind, waiting to be revived and brought to the daylight of being. If you see a blunt bum with stars swirling in his

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<sup>1930</sup> Listen to Massive Attack’s Protection on Protection, Circa (1994).

eyes and a burning sun of love in the center thereof, such as that celebrated in R.E.M.'s *Electrolite*, know that it may be me. For, from now on I am leaving the pharisaic waters of writing and begin to live all these guiding stars of thought, happily jumping and standing upside down, knowing that every moment of my lives will have me immersed in the starry podiums of life, dancing and spinning in pirouettes, like an enchanted ballerina intoxicated by the starry beauty emanating from every corner of the world and every miniscule part of one's being. If a spirit is gifted with the ability to touch the ethereal center of the Pascal's sphere that reality is, the center that lies everywhere in and around one, it must be as *okretan* as the center of a wheel, which goes spinning on and on, like a dervish that betrays death with his undying whirl and I vow to engage in one such locomotion for as long as I live. I will spread my arms to the world, just as the victorious constellation of Orion, the symbol of cosmic joy, whose heart is the birthplace of countless new stars 1300 light years away from our wondrous eyes, does. The message I will deliver will be the same one I sang along in empty rooms, in library aisles and in concert halls many days ago, under the serene sunshiny skies and the dark firmaments fledged by the fiery patterns of bombs and warplanes, emerging from the heart of the magnificent song mentioned only a few lines earlier: "You are the star"<sup>1931</sup>. For, shedding starry signs that will make one come to revelation that one can truly be a star and thus saved from the perpetual sorrows and sufferings of humanity and uplifted to forever and ever twinkle and inspire with Wonder and Love human eyes looking for the answer on how to become a star, is my mission.

As I write parts of this monologue, I sit on a 31<sup>st</sup> floor window sill of a hotel room in downtown Seattle, one level below that which I would go on to proclaim my nest among the clouds on the edge of a big lake for many years to come a couple of years later and two levels below that of the New Yorker Hotel from which my intellectual predecessor and compatriot, Nikola Tesla communicated with angels during the last days of his life. I closed the window curtains, finding myself hidden "behind the mantles of silence"<sup>1932</sup>, away from the room lights and other worldly sounds, only now able to fully enjoy the glistening view outside. After standing on the dizzying panorama over a city full of twinkly lights for long enough, having transformed myself into a stardust-shedding silhouette and dancing the night away on a marble podium, I felt that the time had come to quietly slip behind the curtain and enter the realm of starry silence for a heartbeat or so, so as to consolidate the stellar powers in me and emerge back to light with spirit more dazzling and ingenious than ever. All of a sudden, however, a feeling of inexpressible wonder washes over me, spreading the wings of my spirit all until it resembles the Christ at Corcovado, watching the world from a great height, as I get to foretaste the infinity of the road of evolution that leads to unthinkable beauty of being and think how each one of these little lights delivers the means of seeing the world and arriving at some precious, soul-feeding impressions for someone, for a little spiritual cocoon of light which may or may not turn itself into a Christ-like explosion of beauty and spiritual energy one day. Wondrous visions thus always make us glimpse Love at their horizons at sunset, Love which is the wings of these flights of Wonder. It is 11:11 pm, the time which I will glimpse on the clock on the following night, right at the moment when my views were to spread once more over a twinkly nocturnal skyline of a marvelous city on Earth. With this time in mind, composed of one number one after another as well as of two numbers 11, the Big Bear's favorite, posed side by side, being almost the exact time at which this starriest of all bears decided to sail away from this planet on a cold wintery

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<sup>1931</sup> R.E.M.'s *Electrolite* on *New Adventures in Hi-Fi*, Warner Bros (1996).

<sup>1932</sup> Listen to *Iza zavesa tišine*, that is, *Behind the Mantles of Silence*, the poem written by my 16-year old Mom and transcribed by myself to a tune played in the late 1990s by my band, *Tišina kod poluzvezde*.

morning and in the godliest of glories, as is usually the case in this life wherein wisdom of big things and the beauty of little ones constantly intersect, I suddenly recollect a trivial detail from my life: which is how once I was given 1.1 estimate on the 1 – 5 scale to the query of whether I would ever return home for good. This is, coincidentally, the same score, 1.1, on the same, 1 - 5 scale, that I would be holding years later, as a professor of bioengineering, on the major student evaluation website<sup>1933</sup>, being the lowest score I have ever seen on it, making me unusually proud in this world wherein setting the bar high, onto sublime grounds up in the sky, and requesting ascensions thereto as opposed to setting it low, in the mud, where no effort is needed for it to be reached is always going to be followed by such heartless, inculpatory appraisals, a world wherein condemnation by the masses is an unmistakable trace of success in the godly, all-seeing eye that watches over life on Earth. These denunciations are especially prone to follow when this lifting of the bar high up in the sky is paralleled by feeding the ascenders thereto with freedom, freedom and more freedom, when both they crave to be led, sheepishly, and the powers that hang over our heads want us to lead them, authoritatively, rendering us sandwiched and squeezed out of a vile system, albeit ready to fly into the divinest skies exactly because of being renounced by abominable humanity, on the wings of the Christ's blissful thought: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake" (Matthew 5:11). As I recall how Einstein's thermodynamics class at the University of Bern had only 3 students, allegedly his friends, enrolled in it the first time he taught it, which was three years after he published his landmark papers on the theory of relativity, and then only 1 the following year, when the class got cancelled<sup>1934</sup> and connect this with the number of students enrolled in my nanotechnologies class at University of Illinois dropping from 12 in the first year to 2 in the second, after which it was cancelled, and the number of students enrolled in my medical devices class at Chapman University dropping from 8 in the first year to 1 in the second when it was removed from the list of graduation requisites, the vision pops up before my eyes, bright like an armada of angels, to tell me that the more one excels in an art, the lesser is one's ability to appeal to the masses when trying to explain one's skill or popularize the given art. Moreover, if playing a Godard's film in a popular, Hollywood cinema would invariably lead to one's being booed by the audience, what other perception of students but dissatisfactory to expect from delivering an artistic, deep and advanced instruction in the classroom to shallow spirits shunning all but the most superficial stimuli? The density of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, like Bird's sax solos, Hegel's philosophical books, Leonardo's deluge drawings, Pollock's expressionist paintings or Godard's radical films, for one, to this very day receives avalanches of miserable critiques by the commoners<sup>1935</sup>, those very same people with whom in heart the Irish

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<sup>1933</sup> [www.ratemyprofessors.com](http://www.ratemyprofessors.com).

<sup>1934</sup> See Adam Grant's *Those Who Can Do, Can't Teach*, *The New York Times* (August 25, 2018), retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/25/opinion/sunday/college-professors-experts-advice.html>. It is also of note that Alfred Kleiner, a professor of experimental physics at the University of Zurich, visited this class with the enrollment of 1 in the summer of 1908 to assess Einstein's teaching skills and possibly offer him a position at the University of Zurich. According to Einstein, "On that occasion I did not lecture divinely – partly because I was not prepared very well, partly because the state of having-to-be-investigated got on my nerves a bit". As a result, Kleiner wrote a poor assessment of Einstein's teaching abilities, but gave him a second chance. This second time Einstein lectured somewhat better and soon his associate professor position in Zurich got approved. "Contrary to my habit, I lectured well on that occasion – and it came to pass", Einstein said of this second teaching assessment. See also A. I. Miller's *Einstein, Picasso: Space, Time and the Beauty that Causes Havoc*, Basic Books, New York, NY (2001), pp. 225.

<sup>1935</sup> See Emily Temple's *The 50 Best One-Star Amazon Reviews of James Joyce's Ulysses*, *Literary Hub* (February 2, 2018), retrieved from <http://lithub.com/the-50-best-one-star-amazon-reviews-of-james-joyces-ulysses/>.

bard penned this masterpiece that crushed the pompousness, puritan pedantry and arrogance that come with the standard English usage and preoccupation with the linguistic surface, not semantic essence, into pieces and the same fate will await me oh so many times in life, when I would be stoned by the disseminators of mediocrity and evicted from academic posts simply because of being overly progressive in stance and style for the enforcers of the average and the stale. But I know it not now, as I keep on dreaming wistfully of home that is being lost for good in everything but in the heart of hearts of things in this blind quest for ever more bedazzling city lights. Like Samson caught between the collapsing Philistine pillars, torn apart between the humiliating sense of belonging nowhere and the humbling sense of belonging everywhere, one moment feeling as a foreigner spitted on by the Cosmos and the next moment as a soul lulled in a cradle of love by muses, mermaids and holy mothers, at home regardless of the permanent homelessness I have been condemned to, I remember I became prompted to deliberate afterwards over the mysterious symbolic meanings of both this question and the answer in an otherwise bleak, wholly uninteresting survey, with the visions of home, in millions of metaphorical images, and one 1 after the other, merging in my head. For truly, nothing in life is accidental, I tell myself every now and again. Days later, I would realize that at the exact same time, 11:11 pm, on the very same day, the Little Bear behind my back posted a “mouse and wine, what could be better” line of thought. And then again, many days later in this life of mine where ones, the symbols of spiritual unity of all things that abide under the starry hat of this Universe, as I waited on the trolley No. 1 on an SF street and glimpsed exactly the same time, 11:11, on my clock, the connection between the message of this book of mine, a hypermodern theological manual of a kind, and the Pyramid Texts carved on the walls and sarcophagi of millennia old Egyptian pyramids that popped in the middle of Saqqara, the infinitely quiet and deserted burial grounds of this ancient civilization, miraculously illuminated my mind. The link between what is right here, right now and what lies in a most distant worded past, between the religiousness of the modern times, all enwrapped in a sense of wonder sparked by the neon city lights and exuberant and jubilant interactivity rather than silent lightshows of the night sky, and that enlightening ancient wondrous minds dwelling in deserted sandy spaces, made me almost pass out as I tried to envisage its striking span. Hence, by serving as a guideline on how to reach stars from the earthly lowlands of spirit, which we venially fell or missionary landed to from the flowery clouds of heavenly grace, the purpose of this book is the same as that of the Pyramid Texts, possibly the oldest religious scripture known to modern humanity. While the latter guided the pharaohs on how to exit the tombs, navigate the narrow labyrinths surrounding them, exit the pyramids, climb on their tops, glimpse the “open double doors of the horizon”<sup>1936</sup> and soar into the starry skies so as to become “a star in the sky among the gods”<sup>1937</sup>, this book similarly shows us the way to reach the apexes of human knowledge, which, as we should know by now, could be found everywhere. For, each detail of reality is an epistemological pyramid of a kind, offering our patient, meticulous and infinitely loving mind the way to the peaks of potentials of human being and knowing. From them, having found “infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour”, as in William Blake’s *Auguries of Innocence*, an endless beauty in the smallest things in our perceptual fields, be it point sources of starry light above our heads or crystalline grains whose atoms hilariously dance through space and time, we could finally ascend to the celestial spheres that metaphysically enclose our finite material existence and become yet another “star

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<sup>1936</sup> Utterance 220 from the Pyramid Texts quoted at the opening of Philip Glass’ *Akhnaten* (1983).

<sup>1937</sup> Utterance 586A, PT 1583, found in Kenneth J. McNamara’s *The Star-Crossed Stone: The Secret Life, Myths, and History of a Fascinating Fossil*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL (2011), pp. 179.

which illuminates the sky”<sup>1938</sup>, installing ourselves firmly among the plethora of stellar lights that hover above our heads, guiding humanity on its ways and showing roads to spiritual salvation to millions of perplexed creatures that crowd the Earth.

All these coincidences cruising around the symbol of divine oneness make sense because all things are connected and, as sages have deemed, “you touch things here, palpably or in your thoughts, and it echoes throughout the most distant parts of the Universe”<sup>1939</sup>. Now, the time containing all the ones it could possibly have reminded me of the great oneness that the Universe is, as I wonderingly gazed down at the sparkling downtown of a Northwestern metropolis palpitating with chiliads of city lights. Yet, at the mere idea of transcribing the immensity of impressions that began to brim over my finite being, becoming unbearable in their extent and craving to be contained within a verbal pot of dreams, my mind turned numb and not even an inarticulate stutter could come out of it, as if all my insides were washed away in an instant by a mysterious wave of light, crushing every single lettered tower in its way and sending it to the bottom of the sea of my mind. And, just as whenever we fall from grace a reminder of the path that leads us to realization of the celestial, eternal nature of our starry selves comes to us, it happened on this occasion too. In view of my sudden struggle to express myself in language anywhere as perfectly as I would have liked to, a sign came telling me once and for all that real living is not about words; it is about Wonder and Love, the true beginnings and the ends of knowledge and life, as I have stated many times before. At the arrival of this enlightening insight, the silhouette of my starry spirit began to spin in pirouettes behind the glassy façade standing like a symbolic barrier between the essence of myself, all enwrapped in dreams of beautiful and ecstatic living, and the real life seeded with stars in each and every one of its corners. And the city lights twinkling below me and filling my eyes with millions of sources of wonder and astonishment in face of the very nature of the existence of this wonderful world of experience, were the same city lights under which the Little Tramp, as sloppily sweet as the two bears guarding me throughout this Universe, succeeded in his endeavor of making a soul blind in her ignorance of this infinite beauty that life is see with new, enlightening eyes. For, only if we care for the beings of the world and live so as to plant wonderful rainbows of beauty in their eyes could we bear starry-eyed twinkles of genuine wonder in our own eyes and make them reflect this beauty of stars above our heads and city lights below. Then and only then can we succeed in bringing the starry divinity of blissful being down to earth, so as to illuminate paths that would lead other earthlings to climb to these very stars through awakening celestial Wonder and Love in their hearts. Hence, love for the world draws sparkles of wonder in our eyes and hearts, while wonder infuses spiritual liveliness in us and helps in guiding the starry trains of loving thoughts and emotions to the right destinations. For, Love and Wonder, the beginning and the end of it all, have ever since stood at each other’s center. Center, which is concealed at every point of the surface of things natural, as Pascal would have reminded us<sup>1940</sup>, and at which we could plunge anytime, for as long as we have the key to recognizing its invisible glow. And eyes filled with starry wonder and glistening love are the key. This is why I will stay here, immersed in the great One, with the starry lights of wonder sparkling everywhere around me and the Sun of love graciously shining within.

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<sup>1938</sup> Utterance 570, PT 1455, *Ibid.*

<sup>1939</sup> These words are ascribable to Father Zosima, a character from Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*, Prosveta, Belgrade, Serbia (1880).

<sup>1940</sup> See Blaise Pascal’s *Pensée No. 199: Disproportion of Man*, Series XV, Translated by A. J. Krailsheimer, Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK (1669), pp. 89.

If anyone builds a monument, let it be among the stars. For, I will stay and gaze at this view forever, with hands folded over my chest, heart scintillating in prayer, the train of thoughts halted by the speechless awe, tongue tied into a knot and eyes, lifted up, high, high, higher than the world, watering like waterfalls with the tears of devotion and love.

It's just so beautiful.



By looking at those very same stars, my Little Bear and I, holding hands together, saw **a Big Bear** spread across the zenith of the starry sky, silently smiling at us. For a brief moment of a second, the constellation of stars stood forth as a reminder of the Big Bear who had walked among us and who promised she would flutteringly levitate in the distance everywhere I send wondrous and loving glances that shed stardust of divine grace and melt human hearts with the sunrays of serene sympathy. Never would she cease to fly above me in the shape I have known her, blinking with her big eyes filled with love and flapping funnily, like a little tramp of a kind, with exorbitant exhibitions of joy and sadness, with the angelic wings she gained here, on Earth, having accomplished the lifetime mission that awaits all of us, the little seeds of spiritual stars that are to sprout and blossom into suns that enlighten it all with every moment of their presence. Gazing at this multitude of point sources of light, arranged in funny patterns, I helplessly recalled how remarkable it is that millions of light years distant stars, the remotest objects visible to us, point at the hearts that beat in our nearest vicinity, for it is them that hold the waters that satisfy our spiritual thirsts and let us grow into emanations of holy viridity. Only when we pray our hearts out and try all that is in our physical and spiritual powers to make the earthlings dear to us become angels would angelic wings start to silently grow in place of the arms of our spirit, setting us on wondrous journeys of our soul through the starry fields of reality from which we would over and over again fall down to the Earth below to deliver to it all the treasures we have collected on the way, knowing that only then, having become “poor in spirit” once and for all, do the doors of Paradise open in front of ourselves. Descending ever lower from these great heights of Wonder to touch the guarding grounds where Love resides and yet again being launched to starry insights from the podia of compassionate living for another first and foremost places us on the most fabulous rollercoaster ride in the Universe whereby we realize that the deeper we bow in true empathy in front of the wonders of the world, the greater the stellar spaces open in front of our heart and mind and *vice versa*: the greater the angelic insights we arrive at while roaming through the charming landscapes of our soul, the more wonderful godly gems would we be able to deliver outwardly, for the creatures of the world to be sprinkled with under the starry skies of

cosmic joy flashing in our head and the oceanic love flowing through our veins, as the colorful yarn spun by the Way of Love has already told us innumerable times.

As I gaze up, at this Big Bear imprinted in seven stars, visible all year round in the night skies of the Northern Hemisphere and revolving around Polaris, the apex of the celestial sphere that enfolds our earthly views of infinity, I call to mind how only when we strive to impress creatures we love in stars, to make their beauty everlastingly saluted by the Heavens can we stream towards becoming a similarly angelic star in the eyes of the divine Cosmos. And like the nymph Callisto taken up to the starry skies by Zeus, the god of sky, after her companion Artemis, jealous because of the woos Callisto received from Zeus, had transformed her into a bear and had her hunted by a pack of dogs, so it may have happened with the Big Bear who illuminated the missionary path of my life with its lanterns of love and wonder and is now transformed to sheer starriness by the godly hand that, I pray, recognized her emanations of timeless and celestial beauty down on the fields of Earth where such expressions of unearthly beauty are still more ravaged by greed, anger and drowsy ignorance than appreciated by bowing one's spirit in front of its feet. Yet, just as Germans and other Teutonic people saw nothing other but a wagon of a train in this Big Bear<sup>1941</sup>, I could indeed see a caboose to catch and a locomotive to follow in it, for it is none other but the great Big Bear that has stood as the leading point of inspiration, the final cause and the very rising Sun on the horizons of being towards which I have walked, guiding the starry train of my creativity, of each and every word in this and other endless threads of thoughts that I have impressed here. For, if there is a muse all washed in stars of beauty and love, the ideal which I have tried to embody in the celestial expressions of my being, it is none other but the Big Bear, incessantly revolving around the peak of the starry home of the Cosmos twinkling with secret sympathy above our planetary heads. And as I stretch my hands to reach out for it, to touch what is the infinite beauty of being in my eyes, while at the same time anchored to the Earth, for the Little Bear and many other little seeds of spiritual stars are to be taken care of, I may turn into an Orion, a Christ-like outburst of dying in beauty, of substituting an egotistic consciousness with a selfless, truly celestial one, sowing my soulful essence everywhere and becoming One – the Sun. And like that white dwarf that turned into a supernova a bit over 11 million years ago, but whose light has just reached the Earth, on the very night on which I sit surrounded by a myriad of stars and write these words, befalling on us lightly, with its subtle healing twinkles, from within the galaxy known as M82, lying right between the constellations of *Ursa Major* and *Ursa Minor* on the night sky in our glistening eyes<sup>1942</sup>, I, having found that magic cross to crucify my enraptured, yet sorrowful, spirit on, between the Big Bear and the Little Bear, may then similarly explode and dissipate my frail earthliness once and for all, turning myself into cosmic dust, yet giving rise to dazzling lights of beautiful being that will bless and illumine millions of worldly souls for eons to come.

In the context of this book, however, glimpsing this stunning Big Bear fringed by the stars of the night sky will make the idea of co-creation for one final time enlighten the space of my heart through which I have voyaged so as to launch the shuttles and satellites of wonderfully inspiring ideas and moves across the outer space. Namely, whatever the perceptual impulses that the outer world sends on us, we never grasp them in their objective state, without letting them

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<sup>1941</sup> See Jean Guard Monroe and Ray A. Williamson's *They Dance in the Sky: Native American Star Myths*, Sandpiper, London, UK (2007).

<sup>1942</sup> See Erin Ruberry's *A Star Just Exploded 'Next Door' and It's a Huge Deal*, *Inscider* (January 22, 2014), retrieved from <http://blogs.discovery.com/inscider/2014/01/a-star-just-exploded-next-door-and-its-a-huge-deal.html#mkcpgn=fbsci1>.

pass through the remolding filter of our cognitive apparatuses. Instead, we reshape them until they adopt forms that seem, if not fully comprehensible, at least navigable to us. It could be seeing a sloppy bear or a fairylike silhouette in a constellation of stars, smiles of God falling on us on a sunny day, Heavens above us raining tears in the midst of a terrestrial torrent or any other meaningful signs hidden behind the leaflets of the immediate impressions of the world. Thereupon, all things around us are products of our own subconscious creation to just about the same extent as they are being objectively posed before us. In other words, the world as we know it is the product of the dialogue between our spirit and divine Nature, which implies that profound beautification of it is possible only insofar as we purify the depths of our soul at the same time as we deliver acts that increase the visible order of our experiential reality. For, as the co-creational nature of the world suggests, the more successful we are in the inner journey of our soul, in the adventure of revealing the divine music and potentials of our mind and heart, the more immaculate our moves in the world will be, and *vice versa*: the more we are driven to act so as to beautify and bring happiness and salvation onto others, the more successful we will be in our travelling to encounter the glowing essence of our spirit. For, the journey inwards, towards reaching the bottom of the ocean of our soul where the pearliest treasures lie scattered, and the journey outwards, towards selflessly sharing this wealth with fellow earthlings and reaching a perfect empathic unison with each and every one of them, support each other and there could be no way of mastering our skills in travelling on one of these roads without mastering our skills in travelling on the other.

Ever since I looked at the starry sky for the very first time, I have been drawing my own connections between stars, seeing special and unique shapes instead of the ancient anthropomorphic ones ascribed to their constellations. In Taurus, thus, I have seen a butterfly swimmer, in Libra a circus tent, in Delphinus a corner flag, in Pisces an unfolded heart and the letter Jb, the first letter of the word *Ἰyōas* that is, Love, in Leo a snail, in Columba a tree, in Aquarius a gardener, in Lepus a leaper, in Virgo a joyous jumper and a dancer like no other and in Cancer an inverted Y, a crossroad, a sublimated question Why and a peace sign without the circle, the symbol of eternity. And in place of the Big Bear I most often see a little kite, the object that symbolizes none other but the Way of Love, the central star of thought of this book, around which all other thoughts have revolved, soaking in its shine. Namely, for a kite to fly freely across the skies of the world, it needs to be tightly tied to the earth or to ourselves and yet light enough to soar to the sky and reach its soul up to the stars. Likewise, human fate is such that our fragile biological and thermodynamic nature incessantly drags us down, towards the earth, whereas our dreams and visions lift our spirits and beings up. And in the midst of this locus wherein grace counterbalances gravity, if we were to refer to Simone Weil's dichotomy<sup>1943</sup>, we evolve into a more sublime self and become more inspiring and creative with every new day. Besides, only through a combination of Love and Wonder, the former of which ties us to the earth by nourishing in our heart a mountain-moving empathy for it and the latter of which wiggles us all over the skies of the world by feeding the exploratory, adventurous thirsts in us do we get a chance to become one such starry kite, or one with the Big Bear that twinkles with Love and Wonder from far above, if you like. For, as we come to the end of the road that this book is, we may recall the final words of yet another SF traveler, the one who fought for liberating language and literature from the chains of innumerable restrictions and wishing one's imaginative flights to be inscribed directly to it, which is what I too aimed at accomplishing, although in the domain of scientific and philosophical writing: "Tonight the stars'll be out and

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<sup>1943</sup> See Simone Weil's *Gravity and Grace*, Routledge, London, UK (1942).

don't you know that God is Pooh Bear?" And as we look up at the starry sky, wondering who "is the maker of the Bear and Orion" (Job 9:9), with geysers of love erupting from our heart, we should know that with every spark that becomes glisteningly lightened up in us at the touch of Wonder and Love, like pearly lamps, one by one, turning all around us into an infinitely spreading starriness, such as the one we could experience while diving by night in tropical seas during coral spawning, when little flickers of light fill the entire space around us, making us feel as if floating in the starry sky, like a celestial child in the womb of the Big Bear, amongst the streams of Cosmic joy and love that it feeds us with, we spin the Ferris wheel of the evolution of the world.

As I open the last fortune cookie of this book, it says one clear "follow your beliefs"; if there was one that marked this entire discourse, it was a belief that the Way of Love may be that magical SF state of mind, which all the spiritual journeyers reached after travelling far enough and, at the end of their roads, arriving at the very beginnings, as in the cited T. S. Eliot's verse, at the foundations of their own worldviews, thereby confirming the tenets of the co-creational thesis: the aesthetic appearance of the world in our eyes is determined by the way that it is as much as by the way in which we see it. If there is a single greatest thing I learned as I, dewy-eyed, with heart palpitating in emotional excitement, absorbed the storytelling with which the Big Bear nourished my soul and prepared me for the greatest adventure of my lifetime, the search for the voice of God in each and every corner of reality, it is that Love is the key that unlocks all the closed gates in the Universe, from human souls fortified by the barbed wire fence of angry ego to enigmas whose hearts lie enclosed by the armies of illogicality and irrationality to the geysers and waterfalls of human creativeness redirected onto stony walls and obstructed from their natural path, and makes the most impassable roads open and wholly ours, seraphic and naive, to play on. And so, although the Big Bear was flung to the heavenly heights, like another nymph, Callisto, who got turned into a bear on Earth by the rapers in the business of raping those who had been raped and is now lighting up ways from a celestial constellation, her endearing message continues to live and her voice I continue to hear. And in this Big Bear that rests somewhere in the stars of the night sky, in the eternal habitat of the most divine souls that have lived once and now watch over us with Love and Wonder from above, the Big Bear whom we hold by the hand like a little piglet who has lived up to the norm that Small is Beautiful and gazed at the world with humble and quiet beauty that imperceptibly sends the blessing sunrays of salvation to it, the Big bald Bear who once wobblingly walked across these streets and gracefully glided through the seawaters like a joyful matinee, balancing a patchy ball on her clown nose and mustached upper lip, always curved into a dolphin's smile, and is now, triumphantly, with her head full of stars, pinpointing the right ways for our perplexed souls here on Earth from some heavenly heights, the Big Bear who, with her hat full of stars and careworn eyes in which love and fear mingle, waves at us from the cozy Adriatic seashore, the place where a multitude of streams converges, each one disgorging its egocentric contents and becoming One with all that is, the Big Bear with whom we sloppily dance as we revolve around each other in perfect Buberian equality wherein I is Thou is I is Thou and on and on and on, we have had the image of godly guidance given to us by motherly Nature. As we revolve and evolve in this incessant communication between our starry spirit and the sunshiny spirit of Nature, all things around us arise, and all these things ensconce the music of divine Nature as much as they embed the epistemological core of our beings.

Hence, by looking at this enchanting starry sky unfolded in front of us like the pages of a most glorious scrapbook, holding all our past visions, memories and even the most transient of

emotions impressed in its sublime forms and figures, we recollect that, as in accordance with the constructivist aspect of the co-creational thesis, the stars do inexorably reflect our own creations, standing forth as epitomes of individual illuminative insights and ideas that swirl around our heads, only a miniscule portion of which have lain impressed here, on the pages of this book that resembles a staircase from the corporeal to the celestial. According to the objectivistic aspect of the co-creational thesis, however, these stars nested over our heads also represent a greater nature of being, the grandest ideals towards which the starry stream of thought, the channels for which have been chiseled by the soul-piercing letters of this book, has led, including the one of becoming a Christ-like creature that touches the heavenliest skies of the divinest creativity with one's being in this world. Formless and unfinished, with neither delineable beginnings and ends nor any cardinal directions, this starry sky is, like the stories of our lives that it weaves with its celestial yarns of fate and like the form that this anarchic collection of thoughts, pining to resemble the Cosmos and billions of stories of people's lives unfolding in such formless fashions under this hatful of stars, and yet somehow, through this chaos and confusion, paths invariably emerge, like stars and planets from the cosmic dust, leading to divine destinations if traced with the fingertips of our soul. Be that as it may, akin to the thoughts comprising this book, some of these stars stand alone, without close neighbors, while some of them could be connected into local constellations with a bit of imagination and some, still, belong to the grand concept of the Way of Love, which has spread its arms across this entire book like the Milky Way or a starry creature with its arms and legs open to the world in outbursts of joy and love, tirelessly spinning like whirling dervishes or ballerinas making pirouettes and becoming starry dizzy thereby, outlining the core of my personal philosophy and drawing a central path that takes us from the fragile earthliness of our beings towards divine spaces and installs us as a star of an everlasting spirit in the eyes of the Cosmos. These eyes could be seen as charmingly and joyfully twinkling with Wonder, although sooner or later the Sun of compassion, bringing the shine of Love to the planets that circle around them in their spiritual thirstiness, yearning for the shine of love, will rise. The same blend of (I) sparkly liveliness and carelessly joyful radiance that sends its rays of attention in all directions, drawing our awareness away from the things we are facing and towards millions of gracefully twinkling details of the Universe that surround us everywhere, on each step of ours, and (II) warmhearted focus that melts human hearts with its directedness and deeply empathic glow of love wherever the sunshiny rays of this divine attention land on is embodied by the eyes of celestial creatures, of those whose spirits have been turned into stars. And if the concept of the Way of Love has taught us something in the context of becoming a star of spirit, it is that we need to direct our attention inwardly, through meditation and great insight, in order to bring forth acts that will enlighten the world in their genuine lovingness, as much as that incessantly reaching out to others in compassion and empathy is what hands us the key that opens doors that lead to an ultimate meditative bliss within. In other words, to incessantly run back to touch the foundations is the way to stream towards stars, making a step backwards for every two steps forward, just as the spiral shape of our galaxy, which the Way of Love has come to neatly depict, might have secretly signaled to us.

If gazing at the stars and streaming in fancy towards the celestial luster and heavenly glamour that they stand for, launching the starships of our lucid attention upwards, towards the ideal of the spiritual superman takes us somewhere, it is back to where we have started our wondrous journeys from, to the heart of ourselves and the infinite beauty that creatures dear to us hold in their spirits. As in every profound adventure of the human soul, wherein we embark on a quest for the treasure and return home to find it, so does happen in all genuine flights of our spirit

propelled by the stellar energy of wonder. Spreading our arms upwards, in divine joy, resembling the constellation Orion, and reaching far, far out, believing that if the Orion Arm is the galactic oasis for our Sun, then reaching out to it in our dreams and conceiving acts that will shed stardust of divine grace all around us would be the way to become a true star of spirit, we have arrived face to face with the starry eyes of an earthly creature, disregarded and ignored by the world, and yet hiding the beauty of all stars of the Cosmos combined in her spirit and her eyes. Stargazing in Wonder has thus brought us closer to the ocean of Love which sets grounds for ever more vivid flights of our spirit to the stars. Streaming high has thus brought us down has brought us up has brought us down, as we do everlasting cartwheels out of our being in the bursts of cosmic joy all through the beautiful world of ours. For, Wonder and Love holding their hands together have ever since presented the beginnings and ends of all knowledge and being. And if philosophy of science teaches us something profound, it is that by returning to the foundations of our being and knowledge every once in a while and yet unstoppably streaming forward, like a spiral, the symbol which is embedded in the shape of the Galaxy that homes us, the wheels of the starry train of our spirit revolve and take us to the entrance of ever greater reigns of Wonder and Love in this endless godly Cosmos that we inhabit.

In that sense, I will fly back in my thoughts right there where my journey on this planet began, to my native city, Belgrade, to the cypress trees, crumbly facades, pet sound dreams and love among the ruins that it has ingrained in my eyes, and then to the suburbs of which, where a big scientific research center was built and is where my Mom, the symbol of Yin powers in me, of the sea of poetry, passion and emotional softness rocking its waves between the shores of my heart, and my Dad, the symbol of Yang powers in me, of the rock-hard spirit of heroism, of stony and unbreakable will, of the superman intellect and analytical focus that melts it all with its laser-like sunrays of attention, met for the first time. And so, after being conceived in the year of the Dragon, I swam for a while in the oceanic womb filled with love and fear, with twinkles of stars and soft shimmery sounds of mini salty waves, I emerged into the daylight of being through a tiny crack, akin to the way in which all great things in life appear, on a day held under the starry umbrella of the constellation Virgo. Having been born upside down, as every other baby, showed me the way in which one advances forward in life: by rebelliously standing upturned, digging the foundations of it all while dancing on the podiums of stars in one's head, walking on the clouds of sublime thoughts and still spreading one's arms ever lower, letting oneself down and humbly, unpretentiously and affectionately approaching the ground levels of being ever closer, knowing that only in such a way could we touch other people's hearts. To be perfect and imperfect at the same time, sublimely untouchable, celestially distant and yet fragilely loving and vividly intimate is the road that leads us to become a superman on earth. It is nothing other but the Way of Love that lies embedded in this state of mind which is withdrawn into starry spaces that color the inner world of one, but also lives solely for the sake of enlightening others, sending sunshiny outbursts of dazzling love everywhere around one. Hence, exactly at the magical moment in which I was born the clock struck noon, showing me yet another sign aside from putting me under a spell of the metaphor of the Sun, the symbol of a star of spirit that I would crave all to become one day; namely, coupled to this rebellious drive to stand upturned with respect to anything in life has to lie the need to lean to a perfectly balanced nature and analytical tidiness as well as to the shine of limitless love of a pure mind untainted by egocentric judgments that cloud one's head and tormenting emotions of anger and hate that produce stormy tempests in one's heart. Speaking of my inclination to balances and middle Ways in life, I recollect that at the moment of my birth my Father found himself in Berlin, the city that nowadays stands as the

symbol of toppling dividedness into a grand unity of being, and what he brought from his journey was none other but a gray engraving of a bear, the symbol of the city, looking a lot like the grizzly bear drawn on the flag of California, the state in which I currently reside, and the one considered the mascot of my working place during the times in which these words have been written. Dialectical battles between the tendency of raging bears to spread the pillars of the foundations on which the world rests apart and of hugging bears to bring everything close to an empathic unity of being, resulting in Philosophy of the Way, the symbolism of which conceals separateness and connectedness blending, bouncing off and arising from each other with ever more power as the wheel of evolution spins, could be thus all found inscribed in the alignment of the little stars that surrounded the event of my birth. Hence, the further we travel back in space and time, revisiting our memories, examining forgotten details of the world and descending towards ever deeper foundations of the order of things around us thus offers glimpses of ever more distant beauties of being emerging from behind the horizons spread before our eyes. Millions of such and similar coincidences have made it clear to my starry eyes that life is but a station of the endless journey of our soul towards ever more enlightening emanations of the beauty of God. To find yet another one of such brilliant parallels, I will return to the beginning of this very paragraph, to the suburban part of Belgrade in which my Mom and Dad met for the first time, and learn that in its close vicinity, less than a kilometer away from it, lies the place where the oldest sentence inscribed in language known to humanity was found. Engraved on a clay amulet, this three-sign thought was deciphered to have said the following: “The Bear goddess and the Bird goddess: the Bear goddess indeed”. Gently caressing this thought inscribed in stone with the wings of angelic attention and thought, I evoke how taking care of the little bears around us is what may be placing us on the wings of beautiful birds of paradise that will take us to the great bears that rest among the stars, which is where the voyage of our spirit may end.

And as I stood on the steep, stardust-seeded roof of the childhood house of my dreams, under the glistening light of mysterious mister Moon, and directed my gazes to the stars, towards the final destinations of our spiritual journeys in this cosmic fable of being where the dearest creatures around us sweep by the starry screen of our consciousness carried on the mystical wings of Pet Sounds, the farthest source of light blinking at me from this night sky spread in its eternal splendor before me was Andromeda Galaxy, the most distant object that naked eye could see and one of the rare blue-shifted celestial objects that stream toward us, destined to eventually merge with the Milky Way some 4 – 5 billion years from now. In the name of this galaxy yet another bear slumbers, as when divided to two parts, the former Greek and the latter Serbian, this word means Humanoid Bear. Indeed, who knows how many wonderful worlds thrive with life and beauty in this infinite Cosmos in which we are immersed? And so, with arms wide open to the sound of love that the heart of Cosmos reverberates with from each and every one of its angles, I would stand on the roof, showered by the invisible stardust, plunged into the ocean of cosmic energy, dancing with a giant ball of light and getting ready for the starry voyages of my soul, whereby I would be hopping from one star to another, from station to station on the endless journey of my soul to the stars, to being a celestial messenger on many planets of the Universe, to be on the divine mission to save them all by sketching the roads of spiritual salvation on their faces and in their hearts. Standing on this red roof, with hearts beating with love underneath me, epitomizing the foundations of Love on which all successful strivings for stars stand, and endless worlds, planets and galaxies with unimaginable sci-fi and ethereal ways of being, winking at me with their starry charm and twinkle, strewing me silently with the lights of Wonder from above and inviting me to launch the spaceship of my stellar spirit and start to stream toward them, is

indeed a landscape drawn by my dreamy memories in which the statuesque silhouette of my starry spirit could be resting ad infinitum.

And so, by travelling far, far back in time, we have arrived at a message that raises our glances towards stars once more. Knowing that the word for bear has the same roots as that for art in Indo-European languages, we may place yet another thought in the orbit around the sun of our mind now: namely, art may be discerned as that magical skill that raises our awareness from recognizing merely negligible and unimportant meanings in fine details of the world to sublime levels of consciousness, where we may feel as if merged with the divine starriness and able to be aware of its emanations in every tiny detail of the world, in every seashore pebble, in every starry twinkle, in every creature's heart and in the fountainhead of intentions behind every word uttered and every move made – for even the meanest cravings spring from the thirst for the love divine - during the @evolution of the dialectical carousel of life, in the center of which the divine essence of our spirit stands, spreading its arms outwardly and inwardly at the same time, to grasp it all on both sides. Be that as it may, as we recollect the meaning of what we have just seen, spinning this gorgeous insight like a little planet earth that gradually grows in its lush and splendor as it revolves around the sun of our attention, we realize that aside from leading us once again to the trail of the Way of Love by reminding us that traveling backwards, deep within the divine reigns of our soul, is what opens the way to starry acting in the world, and *vice versa*: reaching out in genuine wonder and love to others illuminates the inner path and makes us reach the unity with the sun of our soul that thence becomes seen as One with the ocean of God which permeates the entire creation, another reminder is hidden in this insight. Namely, returning to touch the foundations and, as such, become launched to the stars is here to remind us for one final time that staying firmly rooted in Love of our tradition, from the creatures dearest to us to the entire humankind in which the lotus flowers of our mind and heart are enrooted and from which they spring up beautifully, is what lights up the heart of Wonder in us, and *vice versa*: only with stars of Wonder twinkling in our eyes and hearts can we successfully spread our arms and embrace the world around us while washing it with the waterfalls of creativity and the love divine. To withdraw our attention inwardly while rearranging and wondering over millions of marvelously entwined orbits of stars of thought is the key to producing enthrallingly intimate, affectionate and inspiring acts all around us, whereas compassionately spreading our arms like Orion, in stellar bursts of cosmic joy, is what propels the spaceship of our spirit ever higher in its journeys through the space of starry thoughts and visions, reminding us once and for all that mind and heart, intellect and love, are to be always akin to rivers flowing into each other's sources. After all, through a simple analogy we could conclude that if the basic propositions and assumptions of scientific or any other reasoning hide the key to the stability and stateliness of the towers rising from them, so must the cognitive foundations, the beginnings of our journeys, the deepest roots of our intentions, aspirations and the overall glow of spirit that underlies the silent questioning that permeates our beings from our heads to our toes with every step we make and that hides the key to the answers Nature give us thereto with every moment of our lives and in every detail of our experiential realities, present the launching pad for the prosperous guidance of our creative endeavors in life, explaining why the Christ closed his monumental Sermon on the Mount, which summarizes his entire teaching, with the legendary parable that correlates the stability of the house with the solidity of its foundations (Matthew 7:24-27).

As it appears, the Way of Love, the ultimate star that we have held in front of our minds to guide us towards the horizons of unforeseen wonderful acting and viewing of the world, also calls for a similar anchoring of our creative attention deep within the core of our mind and heart,

from where the kite of our spirit can spread to the world, deliver great and inspiring music of movement thereto, and one day, unnoticeably, find itself inscribed in the stars above. Then we would be able to recall the Christ's words: "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20). Likewise, the metaphor of the kite may also suggest us that it is only when we have it anchored among the stars, dwelling amidst the most sublime and divine thoughts and feelings, unattached to the earthly burdens and treasures, we could inspire myriads of human eyes and make them roll and glisten like pairs of revolving galaxies, reflecting suns of Love and stars of Wonder in them.

By seeing the Big Bear, the image of the Holy Mother, standing in the center of the Galaxy in which I, a poor soul in its making in the shape of a star, have been squandering my days in lighthearted play with these letters, "like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me", as observed by Isaac Newton<sup>1944</sup>, another one of those great and rebellious thinkers, who had correctly hinted at the balance of long-range attractive and short-range repulsive forces as the cause behind the existence of each seashore pebble<sup>1945</sup> and who had, accidentally or not, carried a name resembling that of a mythical flier who was given by his Father a guiding star of thought to fly straight between the Sun and the Earth and do not approach one or the other too closely, epitomizing yet another metaphoric reflection of the principle of the Way of Love in this endless starry train of thought that journeys through my head while I play with seashore pebbles held in my hands, little details of the Universe that launch the flights of my spirit to the stars, I have once again convinced myself that the signs from which one could read the paths of one's destiny are truly inscribed everywhere, in every corner of the world that hides chirpy winks and twinkles of omnipresent Divinity, filling up the grace cups of our mind and heart with the starriness of Wonder that dizzies and effervesces like gazes at the starry sky do and the sunshine of Love, the most powerful force in the Universe, the one that "moves the Sun and other stars", as envisaged by Dante at the end of his expedition through Paradise<sup>1946</sup>. For, as the co-creational thesis has told us, all that we are aware of in the realm of our experience originates from our own construction thereof albeit having equally substantial roots in the objective. Every glimpse we take is thus speaking about the deepest secrets of our own being as much as it sends forth and acquires immaculately beautiful messages of divine origin. Everything we glance is a celestial spark arising out of the touch between our starry soul and the everlasting love of God, which makes whole universes, galaxies, stars, planets and human hearts spin and endlessly evolve into an ever greater beauty of being. For, it is the touch, a meeting, a road, the Way that is the beginning and the end of it all.

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<sup>1944</sup> See Sir David Brewster's *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton*, Adamant, Boston, MA (1885). An earlier account of this quote can be found in Joseph Spence's *Anecdotes, Observations, and Characters, of Books and Men*, Vol.1, John Murray, London, UK (1820), pp. 158, where it is said that those were one of Newton's last words, uttered on his deathbed to Chevalier Andrew Michael Ramsey.

<sup>1945</sup> See Gabor L. Hornyak, John J. Moore, Harry F. Tibbals, Joydeep Dutta – "Introduction to Nanoscience & Nanotechnology", CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL (2009), pp. 312.

<sup>1946</sup> See Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy: Paradiso*, Canto XXXIII, line 145 (1321), retrieved from <http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/dante/dante-longfellow.pdf>.

