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Essays on and by Francisco Varela: An Occasion

Summary:

This essay considers some of the key concepts in the work of Francisco Varela and of some of his commentators. The author draws on a personal experience in the course of the essay that embodies particular cognitive and affective emergences. The account of the “private” experience becomes the link by which the formulation of certain theoretic terms becomes part of the co-evolutionary fabric of intersubjectivity.

Among the writings of Francisco Varela and many of his commentators, the text that most deeply moved me to take part in the broad debate about Francisco is the one presented by Amy Cohen Varela (2002) at the Conference on “The Many-Sided Legacy of Francisco Varela” that took place in Milan, 2002(1).

The fact of having been for many years the companion of Francisco attaches to Amy Cohen’s words an additional value: of an account in that laboratory of experiences and thoughts that resulted in the program of neurophenomenology, from whose intimately cooperative source we can draw on by way of Amy’s words: this is for me an extraordinary opportunity to “visualize” the concepts of embodiment, intersubjectivity, and the co-evolution of cognitive processes, so passionately developed by Varela. I have the fanciful idea that their working as a couple had something to do with the poetic boldness with which Francisco responds to an interviewer who:

at the end reaches the philosophical heart that animates the thought of the scientist: but then, if there was no immediate evolutionary advantage, why did introspective intelligence emerge? Why the emergence of discontinuity in evolution? Why has life, in its infinite crucial branches, each time transcended itself towards new configurations, which were unforeseen and most often improbable?

Because there was, among all these possibilities, the possibility of emerging. It’s a situational effect. It might have happened, as it might not have happened. There is a highly random dimension in the world, linked to the notion of “soft evolution”, or “drift”, noted earlier. It’s as if the ontology of the world were female, an ontology of permissiveness, an ontology of possibility. As long as it’s possible, it’s possible. I don’t need to seek a justification by way of ideal optimality. In the middle of all this, life attempts the possible, life is bricolage.

And so responded Francisco Varela, and we hope that the wave of his thought, building subtle bridges in this female ontology of the world, can still spread out and sow creative storms in our minds(2).

There it is: “Creative storms”! We are so dependent upon a “science of being”, upon a “first philosophy” (as Aristotle defined it before it was called “metaphysics”), that is, upon an ontology that is so unequivocally male in character, that to conceive of a “very female” ontology can only “sow creative storms” where the

Olympic order of causes and their regular determinants reigned. “Inactive” metaphysics of the great monotheistic religions trace back every principle of the cosmos, such as human consciousness, to a god as father, and to his prophets, who are also males. The male ontology, in the religious ratio as in the scientific one, is a ground of the objectivity (the object becomes absolute in so far as it is removed from the subjectivity of the experience that conceived it) to which the human mind clung for millennia in confirming its lack of the instinctive certainties common to all living organisms, especially non-human ones, and thus exposed to the fragility of its own constructs. The ontology that structures philosophical and theological rationality, that permeates scientific thought such as social hierarchies and moral laws, is an emergent peak of the reflective mind whose capacities are almost exclusively of a male type, at least up to the present, while those of a female type are closer to preverbal knowledge, embodied in its maternal, generative nature, and thus closer to the empathic dimension of consciousness, generally characterized as irrational, i.e., lacking rationality. In “Four pillars for the future of cognitive science,” Varela writes:

For this reason experience from a phenomenological point of view is so difficult to articulate, given that a large part of its basis is pre-reflective, affective, non-conceptual, pre-noetic. It is difficult to express it in words precisely because it precedes words. To say that it precedes words does not mean that it is beyond words. To the contrary, it is because it is so grounded that it is not yet resolved in the elements of reason, that we are inclined to think that they are the highest expressions of the mind (emphasis added).

To talk about the difficulty of articulating experience from a phenomenological point of view, Varela uses expressions that could be used to characterize the cognitive co-evolution of the mother/child pair and, in general, any relationship to the nascent state in which the creative, intuitive and empathic component takes precedence over other cognitive components. To take on, as Morin says, the “challenge of complexity” in the area of cognitive science requires a process of conjugation, or rather, of structural coupling, between the modes of objectifying reason and the modes of participatory experience, between conceptual categorizations and the “pre-noeticity” of the emotional contact, pre- or trans-rational (and not irrational(3)) with the world. Following Varela’s “one idea” that Amy Cohen proposes relates to the notion of emptiness, thematized by Francisco as groundlessness, which was for him “one of the essential origins or matrices” of his work.

At this point, something prevented me from continuing to write: emptiness as a virtual space stretched out to Heideggerian “throwness”; groundlessness in terms of the already anticipated crisis of a strong “male” ontology; weak thought according to the authoritative teaching of the philosopher Gianni Vattimo; neoteny as precocious sexual maturity (i.e. prior to physical maturity) (which, in an anthropological sense, also needs to be understood primarily as a conceptive ability of thought and symbols); the lack of a specific Umwelt(4) of the human species, which gives rise to man’s need for a continuous creation of a subject world. These are only some of the topics I’ve dealt with in my career as an analyst and researcher, topics that come together in some way in the “one idea” proposed by Amy Cohen. To take up once again these topics on this occasion seemed to me to be only a sign of self-confirmation: being in the company of people coming from lands very far from my own shows me how topical my work is, and this consoles me of the feeling of solitude I often experience during certain turning points in my thought, particularly when I receive a dubiously inquisitive deferral, as if I appeared more as a quaint juggler than as one who ventures to throw new seeds of thought into the story. I felt, though, that it wasn’t only about the refusal of reassuring confirmations (in the end, what piece of writing does not contain these elements?) but rather that it had to do with the feeling that my thoughts, like my body, no longer had the agility they once had, as if I had to make a special effort to throw them out, and that they remained so entangled inside, creating a sort of swelling, that choosing the right expression or making the right connections became difficult.

The night following this embarrassing difficulty I had a dream whose paradoxical structure seems to me to resemble the paradoxes contained in the poem of Nagarjuna cited by Amy in her paper, and it seems to me appropriate to transcribe it by way of touching upon my own personal “meditation on emptiness”(5)

I was slowly walking among many people, everyone was going in the same direction. It was more a crowd than a group, and at first their faces seemed unknown to me, anonymous. However, when I looked more closely at each, to my great surprise I recognized one person after another: from old school friends to recent

friends and acquaintances, and I felt comforted, as if even the direction in which we were moving, though unknown, were irrelevant or certain. I suddenly felt a sort of heaviness, which made me slow down, and thus caused me to fall further behind my fellow travelers. I felt rising up within me a feeling of uneasiness bordering on anxiety, as if in the “departure” of the living I was seeing my progressive and unavoidable death. This prevented me from giving any weight to the fact that others were coming up from behind, persons completely unknown, at the margins of my field of vision, and whose beautiful silhouettes and decisive gazes I could barely make out.

Upon awakening, and while thinking of the dream as a development of what I had felt the day before in terms of senile thickness, there came to mind the word *ocaso*, which I understand as my long fading, and I think of the fact that in the language of the living the concept of “departure” concerns the permanent disappearance of the one who falls into death, while in the dream I experienced a distancing, a “departure” of my fellow travelers, as an unequivocal sign of my falling into emptiness. The day dies when the sun goes beyond the horizon, my life ends when my references, as much known as loved, disappear from my view. I then realized that it was the horror of this emptiness that blinded me, that did not allow me to fix my gaze on those who were coming up from behind, to develop in thought or action my fleeting sensation of “beautiful silhouettes and decisive gazes”. The horror made me miss the occasion for seizing from the newcomers the promise of my moving forward once again, where the word “occasion” has a somewhat different meaning from *ocaso*, although deriving from the same Latin verb *occidére* (to occur, to happen). In the dream the occasion reaches me, and in not seizing it, it’s as if I lost my own possibility of transcending myself. I’m not speaking of a metaphysical transcendence, but of an embodied transcendence, as Varela would say, embodied in my own existence as a possibility of being beyond my loss, beyond emptiness, nothingness, darkness. It is the same transcendence that Varela’s interviewer refers to, in the passage taken from Telmo Pievani, when he asks, “Why has life, in its infinite crucial branches, each time transcended itself towards new configurations, which were unforeseen and most often improbable?” In my dream my life has not transcended itself: being in the flow of friends I’ve known forever, in the flow of my thoughts that have become “domestic”, or that make my identity “domestic”, meant being in the lived present, in that present that Carmagnola (2001) re-examines following the “comet’s tail” as illustrated by Husserl. If mathematical thought considers the present as a virtual point that connects the half-line of the past with that of the future, phenomenological thought deals with this lived-time as the experience that makes possible the feeling of continuity and personal identity. This present, woven with the thousand threads of memory, is a figure extraordinarily filled by the concept of grounding, and when this present is opaque, the shadows of death reach out.

“Because there was, among all these possibilities, the possibility of emerging. It’s a situational effect. It might have happened, as it might not have happened.” This is Varela’s answer to the interviewer who asked why life succeeded in transcending itself. But when life is a human one, cognition becomes reflexive, which prevents pure chance from being the source of emergence in the modes of transcendence; human cognition is “passionately” bound to the lived experience of the present, understood in Husserlian terms, so much so as to make one feel all the more the flow of possibility (the arrival of unknown companions as the occasion for a future) as a sure sign of the fading of the present: the loss of grounding.

Analytic practice makes us come up against, at each step, this non-seizing of the occasion (on the part of patients, but also how many times on the part of the analyst?) for joining the “newcomers”: the transference is the long “comet’s tail” that, presenting historically “departed” relationships, guarantees the continuity against any leap into darkness, and inhabiting this expanded present can block, at times permanently, the possibility of joining that “newcomer” who is potentially embodied in the analyst (provided he is not enacting his “passion” for his own personal present). Yet is it ever possible to overcome transference? Once and for all? Is it ever possible that the grounding be lost in a stable way, as the Buddhist monk’s mystical proposition would make us think? Perhaps, for those few who choose emptiness as that condition that fulfills the soul without residue, but for most the mystical condition represents an apex (to use Bion’s apt image) of complex ordinary experience, that vertiginous apex that one reaches in virtue of that “negative capacity”, contemplated by Keats and conceptualized by Bion, in terms of being “without memory and without

expectations” (which means without grounding), and by which one stands up to one’s own death and the departure of one’s own past, without shutting one’s eyes.

But how does this capacity emerge? What makes it possible for man to pull himself out of the drift of the “comet’s tail”, to distinguish himself from the crowd of domestic figures, to seize the occasion of a new emergence that makes it possible for his own life to transcend itself. Faced with the branching, not of life in general but of man’s own existence, what decides whether one emerges from the obstacles of one’s own expanded present, or whether one re-immerses oneself with all the more determination, the more the “departure” of the living (who might better be called the living dead) was experienced as a threat?

Varela maintains that “experience from a phenomenological point of view is so difficult to articulate, given that a large part of its basis is pre-reflective, affective, non-conceptual, pre-noetic”. Here, the notion of a “pre-noetic basis” seems to have the same characteristics as the Bionian notion of “proto-mentality”; yet while the prefix “pre” makes one think only of a first emergence of a phenomenon ascribable to the cognitive process, the prefix “proto” refers to the biology of the simplest structure of an organism (e.g. protozoa). The simplest cognitive structure of the human organism is found in sensorial processes, being a phenomenon of sensation constructed, as illustrated by Pievani in the work cited above, from the confluence at the point of contact between the subject and the world, of sensorial afferents (from the periphery to the brain) and efferents (from the brain to the periphery), “where efferent means not the response to the stimulus, but the almost instantaneous activation of the stimulus itself.” On this point Pievani cites a passage from Humphrey (1992):

If the finger “actively” hurts, and if the finger is mine, it would perhaps be valid to suppose that at some level I myself am actively involved in this hurting. Perhaps it doesn’t have to do only with a sensation that I passively receive, maybe I’m actively creating it, or even sending instructions to produce it: as if to feel a sensation were in some way comparable to intentional activity.

And Pievani comments:

We can track down in this evolutionistic inquiry a subsequent radicalization of Varela’s idea regarding the identity between perception and action. [...] The brain is not limited to passively listening to the music of sensations, but directs it like a conductor.

Let’s try at this point to imagine what happens in human cognition when it is condensed to this sensorial level. This level is the first established in the earliest age, when more complex levels are not yet activated, due as much to neurological immaturity as to the relative lack of environmental stimuli. In the nascent period, which is not the same as birth as the biological moment of passing from intra-uterine to extra-uterine life, cognition coincides with its sensorial-perceptual processes, which with great difficulty open the way for the differentiation between self and world, for the construction of gradually more complex images, for the articulation of words and related operative tools such as logical, rational, reflective and self-conscious thought. “Opening the way” does not mean determining the emergence of more complex cognitive processes, but means making this emergence possible, allowing the neotenic predispositions to make use of the occasions so that the mind can enter its own specific development. This neotenic predisposition generates a precognition, which gradually becomes more exact, of being in time and space, and thus in instability and in solitude, which leads to profound and pervasive emotional turmoil. In the absence of a “sufficiently good mother” who knows how to be the necessary occasion for crossing this rugged passage, the child tends to remain within the confines of his sensorial cognition, resisting any conceptual development. This prenoetic condition, instead of being the channel for one’s own becoming, is constituted as the first and fundamental “dominant attractor”(6) which prevents any subsequent process of differentiation. The line of verse from Leopardi, “Man is born with difficulty, and there is risk of death in birth”, poetically summarizes the process of going beyond this primordial grounding (the “Self-non Self” of the Buddhist paradox) to the shadow of a yet unspeakable mortality.

If being-there is a cascade of emergences, we can think that each time that a new choice raises problems, that same condition that characterized the primary process of differentiation is reactivated: the proto-mental condition becomes dominant as a dynamic state of mind which is at once the prenoetic channel from which every cognition can emerge, and the bosom capable of accepting each return to the undifferentiated when differentiation is obscurely experienced as unlivable. This bifurcation does not appear in the common act of sensation: it is probably true that sensation, even for adults, contains in itself an intentional act, but in the flood of sensations in which our life is immersed, we do not usually experience the “choice”. The sensations enter the already consolidated maps of our identity, and either confirm them or warn us of the need to move closer or to flee, almost automatically. Yet, there are times in which the choice forces itself, not at a crossroads opened by practical reason and for which that same reason has the adequate skills to resolve, but facing events whose perception sets in motion an emotional turmoil that mysteriously turns back to the primary process of differentiation. Moments in which one could merely say, according to the Italian expression, “either eat this soup, or jump out of the window” [Take it or leave it], but reason doesn’t know which “soup” or which “window” is in question, nor if this moment originates in an unexpected refusal to eat the (usual) soup, or in an unexpected temptation to fly.

If we take the experience I already mentioned (the difficulty in writing, the dream, and its elaboration), we can perhaps glimpse traces of what I now force myself to clarify and communicate. The encounter with Amy Cohen’s text opens up in me a dual path: that of confirmation (eating and administering the “same old soup”) and that of an exciting opening toward an “I don’t know where” (“jumping out of the window”). In the dream I represent myself as being swallowed up by my own indecision: I don’t follow the comforting company of already known thoughts, nor do I welcome the unsettling beauty of my “wild thoughts” (Bion), and I lose myself in nothingness. This nothingness is the virtual point that links the past that goes and the future that comes, and in losing myself in this, I have the catastrophic experience of no longer belonging to the comet’s tail as lived presence, nor of following, with faith in the future, the harbinger comet(7). This is, I believe, a way of experimenting with the apex which is “without memory and without expectations”; this is an apex/abyss in which there is not a Self without grounding, but instead a Self identical to its own grounding, understood as the undifferentiated Self with respect to time, space, and “things”. It is only in the uncertain light of awakening, and later during the reflections now taking place, that I was able to take up once again the exciting tension that sprang from my feelings from coming into contact with Amy in partnership with Francisco. It is not about an ordinary sensation as a simple (?) interface between me and the world, even if every sensation is also substantiated through the contribution of efferents, but rather concerns a sensation that is capable of triggering in me processes that refer to what I call a “proto-mental universe”(8). We find here the same difference that exists, on the one hand, between my capturing a phenomenon by way of my senses, which leads me to say with Carmagnola “sentio, ergo sum”, and on the other hand, my being a participant to the phenomenon to such an extent that I no longer seem to be distinct from it as an “observer”, and for which I could say, “sumus, ergo sentio”. It is the case in which the “performance” is not “what I watch”, but rather the gaze in a totalizing reciprocity where the I and the Other lose all the defining traits that “objectively” differentiate them. Only in the case in which my I is found at the margins of a We are the efferents from the neuronal centers to the sensorial periphery worthy of the beautiful image proposed by Pievani, for whom “The brain is not limited to passively listening to the music of sensations, but directs it like a conductor”: noises that become sounds that become music that co-evolves with me and of which I am an integral part. In reciprocity without residue there takes place the wonder of radical intersubjectivity as proposed by Varela.

It remains wholly mysterious the reason for which noise becomes music, or a woman’s body becomes “my soul”, or an event becomes Us. One can have recourse to the repertoire of memory, and thus say that at some point there was a sound, a woman, an event in which I experienced the We, and that the current encounter, due to similarity or proximity, reawakens that already lived experience. Everything could therefore enter the comet’s tail of my lived time, but only some very special encounters ignite in me “creative storms”, starting from my flow back into my being my own undifferentiated grounding. The “storm” subverts the normal order of things, brings me back to the chaos in which every “fact”, having eased its barriers to all other facts,

appears to me in the light of the “event”, as if I came up against it for the first time, and thus experience the uncovering of my domestic walls and the need to rename the world. It is in this that revelation(9) consists, understood not as a true message regarding my being-there, regarding the being-there of man or of the world, that reaches me from I-don’t-know-where, but understood as my new veiling of things and of my own identity, with meanings that awaken wonder at myself as the one who goes about inventing them (and not “discovering” them as if the truth were out there attached to things). But this process of revelation is terrible, as witnessed by the use that its Greek term, *apocalipsis*, enjoys in ordinary language.

In the presence of this apocalypse, the soul trembles, and in its hesitation (as happened to me in the dream) transforms the fertile earth of its own grounding into a desert. If one survives in this desertification, one lives from mirages, images deposited in one’s own certain, historic identity, in one’s own “comet’s tail”, and the world corresponds to one’s own idem, empty or nearly so of autos, of the self-organizational genius of the apocalypse. The horror of being once again one’s own grounding, of being one’s own dark womb in which one’s own body/mind grows in the manner of a new embryonic development, disposes the mind to seek a “grounding” outside, in the manner of a certain “male” ontology, or in the manner of an imaginary transference.

I always thought that the proto-mental universe consisted in that dynamic state of mind in which the reorganization processes of cognition, which are necessarily classed with what we ordinarily call creativity, are activated. I raised a radical critique of Bion’s initial conception when in “Experience in groups” he reduces the basic assumptions, which are expressions of proto-mentality, to pure defense mechanisms against the task of work, following in the footsteps of Freud who contrasted the pleasure principle with the reality principle. I adopted the fanciful Bionian expression of “basic assumptions” in order to give them a completely different meaning. In their tripartition I seemed to be able to identify the moments instituted in the human experience of coupling (as a lived experience of a structural coupling under formation), of time (assumption of dependence) and of space (assumption of fight-or-flight or of independence). Coupling is the “pre-noetic” basis of the relationship in the organization of the transpersonal We. Only on this basis can the constructive processes, whose outcome is the institution of the “imaginative” and “symbolic” universes, get under way. The former has its pre-noetic basis in the experience of dependence (basic assumption of dependence) understood as interdependence in relation to the other than Self, though not yet defined as such, which brings with it the dawning sense of precariousness, of mortality, of time as a flow from the past towards a becoming; the latter has its basis in the proto-mental experience of solitude (basic assumption of independence, which is better than fight-or-flight since it presupposes an already defined and separate subject and object), in the construction of space starting from that which is experienced within the radius of the body’s movements, in the subjective (re) naming of the world prior to the articulation of an already codified word. It now seems to me that the proto-mental universe is not only necessarily the dry dock of the cognitive ship which in its fullness (never in an assumed completeness) faces the “creative storms” of one’s own unique voyage, but it can also become a comfortable port in which the ship finds refuge when the storm is experienced as being impossible to cross. I was until now convinced that only the imaginative universe was constructed as the “dominant infantile attractor”, but this universe is distinguishable by its phenomenology of repetition of well structured relational segments, while the proto-mental universe is manifested by way of inventiveness, poeticalness, and the erotic texture of communication. But it acquires that same function of “attractor” when it turns around itself like a game without end and without ends.

It concerns a relational event that could be compared to that of the “eternal fiancés” who live from a promise that can never fulfilled since its fulfillment is felt as the threatening termination of the romance or as the exposure to a mortifying ordinariness. It is this phenomenon that seems to me to be particularly evident in groups that remain in a creative potentiality, without being able to produce those changes for which the group was at one time ideally formed. This must not be seen, in my view, as pathology, defense, or resistance as understood by classic psychoanalytic definitions, but must rather be seen as the condition that lacks the occasion in order for a reflective development of the proto-mental suggestions that incessantly come forward to find the appropriate dormant channels. If this group has a conductor, a leader, a trainee or other similar figures, that person is specifically responsible for his coupling with the group in the same ways

as the “eternal fiancés”. It is not, therefore, only the co-transferral cage that makes the analytic couple interminable, in which one puts out any glimmer of creativity with the dullness of repetitive roles, but also the effervescence of the proto-mental dimension’s outpouring that can hamper the task of constructing or adhering to a project of change. To the statement “I want to, but can’t” of one fixed in the imaginative universe, one could say that there corresponds an “I can, but don’t want to” of one who does not leave his germinal origin.

It’s only now that I make out the situation that gives rise to the difficulty in writing this essay. Regarding the emergence of discontinuity, Varela states: “Because there was, among all these possibilities, the possibility of emerging. It’s a situational effect. It might have happened, as it might not have happened”. Which situation has as an effect on my rethinking the proto-mental experience? Affirming that the proto-mental universe is not only a dry dock, but also a port, could be a small adjustment to a theoretical construct that might not entail the experience of death, of laceration, of the reflux of my groundlessness. Yet all this took place in relation to a situation that has considerable relevance for me, as much on the cognitive level as on the affective one.

For the past two years I have met once a month, for 2 to 3 hours, with a group of thirty or so colleagues. We had initially planned a research program as a group, to take place over ten meetings, regarding group dynamics. It began with my “professorial” presentations on different aspects and moments of the theory of groups, to which my colleagues responded with comments or questions. As we were completing this critical update regarding group analysis, I recounted a dream concerning the group: the dream consisted in my being within the group (not as a professor), only to emerge from it in order to ask a question regarding cellular biology (“How is it possible to get out from the membrane of the cell-group while completely remaining a part of it?”), then returning to take my seat among the others. Beginning with that episode, things changed radically: there were no longer the canonical presentations with composed debate, but irruptions in a completely new communicative manner. Dreams, accounts of strongly emotional events, poetic imagination that at time took the form of short poems, expressions of irritation from some who eventually left the group, expressions of ecstatic involvement by most in an atmosphere of widespread love. I became the paladin of this fluid situation, seeing those who were opposed to it as unable to support this “nascent state”, calling for a return to a programmatic order.

Only now do I seem to be able to make out the game of the “eternal fiancés” for whom the “nascent” must never be “born”, if not at the cost of no longer being one’s own grounding. I think that the intense emotion that the reflection on Varela’s work and those of his commentators caused in me, particularly the work of Amy, relates to my catching sight of the involuntary deception, for which I personally feel responsible, that I risk falling into with this extraordinary group of colleagues, faced with the development of a program like that of neurophenomenology that emerges from emotionally pregnant relationships that are not lost, however, in a totalizing reciprocity of gazes.

I know that my conceptual contribution to the debate, in which I’ve had the privilege of participating, is of modest weight, but I hope that my effort to put forward my own experience, offering myself as a “clinical case” to which others can compare themselves, will be understood. The “co-penetration of experience”, following the apt expression of Francisco, is the basis of every development of consciousness, when it does not stop at the objectification of others’ experiences, however this might be defined, commented upon, or diagnosed. I’d like to close with the same words with which Amy Cohen concluded her essay: “The path he laid down is grounded in a fundamental exigency, that theorization never cease to espouse personal experience: the way he proceeded in his thinking actualizes his ideas themselves by mobilizing and progressively expanding the field of the self. It is this expansive movement that I have tried to evoke here, how he welcomed ‘what burst forth by itself’, how he took pleasure in the unpredictable, and how the experience of the changes brought about by these surprises was not threatening for him, but wonderful.”

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Notes:

- 1) At the University of Milan, Bicocca, April 11-12, 2002.
- 2) Varela & Kempf 2001.
- 3) The term irrational has a negative connotation, as if to say that this cognitive mode is defective, lacking. With pre-rational we can instead indicate the whole of the processes from which all rationality originates, and with trans-rational we can indicate every form of consciousness that goes beyond rationality (ratio from ratus, past participle of reri "to fix, to establish, to reckon")
- 4) A term by which Von Uexkull and Kriszat (1913) mean the exact correspondence between the organism's mechanisms of each living species and the species-specific environment.
- 5) This is the name that the English translator uses as a title for the Buddhist monk's text "Verses from the Center"
- 6) Pievani (2001) quotes a psychoanalyst from Washington DC, Stanley R. Palombo, who introduces this term in a co-evolutionary vision of the analytic relationship, a term which to me seems to indicate a reactivation of this sort of experiential paradigm each time that a possible change is foreseen. It's as if it dealt with prototypes of every transference phenomenon.
- 7) Note that the image of the comet has the same ambiguity I noted in the declensions of *occidère*, either being words that can refer to a past-present or a future-present.
- 8) Napolitani (1991)
- 9) The Latin *revelare* means to pull away the veil, but in my use of *reveal* I attribute to the term the meaning of "veiling once again", in light of the fact that things do not come to human cognition in their bare nature, but are clothed in original or traditionally fixed meanings. In this I see the constitution of the "quasi-object" as understood by Varela and referred to in the paper by Amy.