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The Real Self and the Ideal Self

Florian Irtelli, Federico Durbano and Barbara Marchesi

Abstract

Every human psychic aspect, even the development of the Self, cannot be considered separately from the financial and cultural context in which it is inserted: as a matter of fact the realization of individual freedom is correlated to broader economic and social changes, which influence the individual on self-realization. In the chapter, various theories about this topic and about the ideal self are explored, and it concludes by considering that self expression helps people to satisfy their real emotions and their real self, it also highlights the fact that self-realization and self-expression are among the highest needs on the human needs scale, and they affect human health.

Keywords: ideal self, real self, psychoanalysis, health, culture, society, finance

1. Introduction

Every human psychic aspect cannot be considered separately from the financial and cultural context in which it is embedded. Adopting this perspective, it appears evident that the realization of individual freedom must be closely related to wider economic and social changes, which influence the individual about the realization of his own self, and probably also about his awareness development. Our reflection starts from Fromm's point of view: man is the center of his life, the growth and realization of human individuality is a target which can never be subordinated to other purposes, which are supposed to have greater dignity. As a matter of fact, according to Fromm, the average man is often not really aware about his life and his reality, since most of what he thinks is real is only a sort of illusion: often he is aware of reality only to the necessary level to carry out his activity in his own social context and cultural context to which he belongs, as his survival targets makes such awareness actually necessary [1].

2. The self and the culture

Throughout the humanity history we have witnessed a revolution about the reference values, with respect to the man role in culture and in social development. While Western culture fathers (the Greeks and Jews), believed that the supreme life target was man perfection, modern human beings often look more and more to things perfection, and to the knowledge of methods to produce these perfect objects. The long and complex transition from a "humanistic" society to a "technological" society have repercussions on the personality development (and therefore on the human self development [2]), since it embodies the process through which society transmits its cultural system from one generation to another, creating

values, style of life ideals, social roles, habits and customs, language and expressive behaviors. In this regard, during the twentieth century second half, both in the anthropological field and in the psychological area, particular attention was given to the culture study, realizing how it has a strong influence on people's life, making available different belief systems and values. The questions that man think are therefore affected by his own context: it influences individual experiences, how he perceives reality, how to satisfy fundamental needs, etc. The culture, which in the past was considered an outside objective frame, today is conceived as a sort of individual "internal" dimension, like a part of human self, and as a constitutive basis of individual behaviors: this makes us think on how the limits between "interior spaces" and "exterior spaces" are blurred and mixed. Thus, we can ask ourselves how profound is the culture influence on human being? We know, for example, that the probability that certain emotional experiences became conscious depends from the specific culture context in which they are experienced. According to this point of view, we can therefore affirm that an experience for which a specific language does not have a corresponding word to represent it rarely comes to man's awareness: language embodies a certain disposition towards life, and can therefore be defined as an expression of a certain way of experiencing life [1]. According to this perspective, the psycholinguistic analysis that can be made with respect to verbs and nouns use in various languages is really interesting. The cultural paradigm shift from the self development to the technology development is represented by the growing number of people that today prefer to think in terms of having something, rather than in terms of being and acting: there is actually a preference for the use of nouns, instead a preference for verbs. Language, grammar, and words are indicative of the way and perspective of our life experience, and establish which kind of experiences can have access to our awareness (if there is not a term to indicate an experience in our language is difficult to become aware of this specific aspect). It is often believed a language differs from another only because it uses different words to mean the same thing, erroneously assuming some thought pattern and rules are universal, but this fact is not true because thought is influenced by a cultural system, which can show some conflicting logics with other cultural systems logics; thus, the individual often cannot afford to be aware of thoughts and feelings that are incompatible with his cultural models (according to which he grew up), and he is therefore unconsciously forced to remove them. About this topic, Fromm states that the conscience represents the social man and the contingent limitations imposed by his historical situation and context. In summary, we can note that the psychological functioning is therefore "intrinsically cultural", since persons reason about the world using language and communication systems that acquire in their own culture, which are the product of human generations' cultural experience; furthermore, we must focus that the themes to which individuals think about have a personal meaning within systems of meaning, based precisely on cultural and social practices, which are different according to context. We must point out, moreover, that the cultures are built by the same people who acquire the sense of being individuals from this same culture: the personality (the self) and culture structure each other; as a matter of fact, the proper significant culture customs and psychological processes of each of its members are mutually interacting [2]. In this regard, for example, we can also assert that there are collectivist cultures and individualist cultures, present more frequently respectively in East and West countries: how are they related to the constitution of the Self, and vice versa? The collectivist cultures place emphasis on membership, and on the shared rules that govern the community relationships: the person often define himself as part of the social community, since there is an intense emotional attachment to the largest social group to which he belong (not only to the family, but also to wider society); in this context, the self is often very

focused on cooperation and social control. Therefore, people who refer to a collectivistic perspective more frequently pay attention to others and attribute greater relevance to contextual and external factors to explain a certain individual action; instead, individualistic cultures, often give emphasis on the “ego”, emphasizing the importance of personal autonomy, success and self-sufficiency: the self is often defined as an distinct entity from the social group in which it is contextualized; this perspective encourages to reach personal objectives. In this cultural framework, the personality is more oriented towards autonomy and competition values. People who refer to an individualistic perspective frequently give importance to individual responsibility in the explanation of the behavior causes [2]. Finally we have to state that the idea that Oriental culture and Westerners culture have created a sense of a more interdependent human self (in the former case), and a a sense of more independent self (in the second case), is blurred by the globalization phenomenon. This dynamic has been made possible by technological achievements (especially telematic ones), and has involved the entire planet in many areas: international exchanges have increased at an economic level and, consequently, also political, social and cultural one. This fact has led to a new worldwide phenomena emergence, both in the East and in the West countries: individual and context are not independent, but are interacting with each other in a dynamic way, and they really create each other [2]. The individual considered isolated is therefore a pure abstraction: he is a part of an articulated relationship system not only with the physical environment, but also with the socio-cultural and relational environment that surrounds him: we can therefore also ask, today, how hyper-modern era influences the ideal self and the real self, in various contexts, and vice versa.

3. Self and economy

The communications speed, the reduction of the space–time distance between the various countries has paradoxically caused increasing social disparities, the exploitation of wage labor and the reduction of the local economies autonomy. From an individual level, globalization has also promoted a sort of needs homogeneity, often standardizing the individual tastes to an imposed standard influenced by advertising. Another globalization consequence is the fact that it favors the ideological visions conformity and the lifestyles conformity, determining individual identification with the consumers mass. Paradoxically today in parallel there is also a generalized individualism. Assuming that the specific economic aspect is important for human development, however, it is necessary to explain why, despite the globalization pressures, different populations live in socio-economic conditions which are often very different from each other; even in the same context of the industrialized world, and in the “rich nations”, there are profound social inequalities regarding earnings, and consequently regarding the opportunities that individuals can have: today in many nations, the differences in economic conditions between poor and rich people have widened. At this point we can ask ourselves: which influence do these socio- economic circumstances have on the development of the individual self? In this regard there are some scientific evidences [2], for example, considering a particularly important and complex issue: it have been observed that individuals living in environments characterized by low and medium socio-economic conditions, often experience higher levels of psychological distress, such as depression and anxiety; this result may appear very ambiguous: it is not clear whether the individual personality characteristics indicate that they reside in more disadvantaged neighborhoods, or if it is on, the contrary, the fact that they live in these neighborhoods which can cause psychological malaise: thanks

to scientific research it has emerged that between these aspects there are complex and significant interactions. Some studies have been carried out on this topic [3–6] and of a very important result emphasize that the relations of cause and effect vary precisely according to the personality characteristics. We can ask ourselves is it the personality that exerts an influence on the social class or if it is the social class that influences the personality? It has been observed that social circumstances and self are deeply connected to each other: the children who grow up in disadvantaged families often become more anxious adolescents, and adolescents who have access to a lower education level often become more anxiety-prone adults; the relationship, however, does not seem to be one-to-one: the available data show how anxiety can develop from predisposing social contexts but that the reverse phenomenon is not so evident. In contrast, the data regarding antisocial disorders revealed a different result: the antisocial behavior has a social class effect; as a matter of fact, individuals who exhibit antisocial conduct show more difficulty at school, which in turn create a negative economic condition when they are adults. In general, scientists are able to explain the mutual influences of personality and economic status/social class but only by specifying the exact personality characteristics and studying the people development over time (through longitudinal studies) [2]. From what has been explained up to now, it is evident that the social, economic and cultural context can influence the self development, as well as the personality structuring can in turn determine important consequences in the various socioeconomic contexts.

4. Real self and false self

The individual grows up and evolves influenced by his genetic characteristics and by the events that he has experienced during his life, in various contexts in which he lives; perceptions that the individual harvested from his experiences form his own inner world. When reality reaches awareness (and is psychologically represented), it substantiates the perceptions set that represent individual experiences; we must therefore focus that the human being does not react to reality as it is, but he reacts to his own perception of reality itself: therefore, each person can develop a different perception of a specific situation, and in general of the surrounding world, this process is also based on the concept that a person has of himself. At the development beginning, the child recognizes a part of his own experience as “me”, “I”, “myself”: this is the first part of “self”; therefore emerges the awareness of existing: the set of perceptions relating to oneself, which influence the perception of the surrounding reality. The set of meanings that the child attributes to what he calls “me” or “I” constitutes “the self core”, which continues to develop during human growth. The self is a conceptual, organized and coherent perception configuration of personal characteristics: it is a fundamental personality structure, and it is very complex [7]. In summary, term self refers to the whole person as a reality, including his body and his psychic organization [7]. It may also be observed that one of the first and most important experiences that a child has of the self is the experience of being loved by his parents; as a matter fact, an important variable in the pattern towards self-realization is precisely the need to receive positive consideration by others: this is a particularly strong desire of the infant, who expects that the people who take care of him are ready to love it and accept him. Parents positive consideration can be, however, “unconditioned” or “conditioned”, but what do we mean with these terms? In the first case the child is fully accepted as a person, regardless his behaviors, in the second case, child is welcomed and accepted only if he adapts to the parents expectations: “value conditions” are therefore set. Basically, the child feels to be considered and loved only if he welcomes certain parents’

needs; we also must specify that, according Alfred Adler, the feeling to be inferior is an experience that has its origins in infancy: the children feel inferior, because they are always surrounded by more powerful individuals (adults). The child then is very influenced by adults, and usually try to emulate them because he is motivated by the social environment that drives him to achieve some results [8]. How can we contextualize this situation today? The subjectivity affirmation, a last century conquest which appears to be historically consolidated, is perhaps not really guaranteed today as regards the possibilities of individual development. Today attitudes towards offspring appear to be diverse and complex. According to some authors, children today are often objects of emotional consumption [9, 10], because they can satisfy the parents needs (who can therefore set more often than in the past “value conditions” for the child acceptance: “you have to behave in this way to be loved”); as a matter of fact, it is not infrequent parents pour their unprocessed emotional needs both in the couple relationship and on the offspring, and they express also their existential problems in the relationship with their sons: when you feel you have not been able to give meaning to your life, then you try to reach one by dedicating yourself voraciously to your children [9, 10]. According to other authors, however, today children are also often valued as owner of rights and needs and as the family affectivity fulcrum [10]. We can ask ourselves if perhaps children today are often the protagonists of a family affectivity based not infrequently on emotional consumerism (and therefore, implicitly, on “value conditions”)? Consumer goods meet the desires, and even a child can satisfy many specific aspirations: he metaphorically opens the door to the “joys of parenting,” which nothing else can provide, and many parents expect an emotional satisfaction that justifies this expensive investment [10, 11]. As a matter of fact, often parents have high expectations towards the children: the offspring is therefore invested with vital expectations for parents ‘self-esteem, and the child is therefore often aware of always being judged, and can internalize the continuous judgment his own [12]. Parents can manifest narcissistic needs towards children, and they can create the conditions for the institution of the children inability to distinguish between their real feelings and the efforts to please or to impress others. The ambiguous message of being appreciated, but only in the particular role that they play, can let the children believe that if their real feelings are discovered, they will be rejected and humiliated. Thus, the creation of the “false self” of which Winnicott wrote can therefore be stimulated [13]: only those aspects which are considered acceptable are shown to others, according to what has been learned in the primary infant experiences [14]. When the child experiences a “conditioned” positive consideration in the relationship with his parents, he will therefore tend to behave in a way that neglects his true nature, in order not to lose respect and love. When his experiences are in contrast with the “value conditions” set by the parents, the child will perceive a discrepancy between the real self and external the experience. He will then use his own defense mechanisms, but he will no longer feel really himself, he will find difficult to recognize himself, maybe he will experience a state of inauthenticity, and this leads to an alienation state [1–12, 15].

5. Real self and ideal self

The personality is a representations organization that that everyone own [13], and in this regard we can state there are various self form among which we can mention:

- Real self: the one who reflects the individual true qualities, his aptitudes, inclinations and characteristics.

- Ideal self: that is constituted by the characteristics to which the individual aspires. It is a guide of the self.
- Imperative self: what the individual feels he must be [13, 16], it a guide of the self too.

Evaluate yourself means also to compare with your inner canons (also called the self guides), these comparisons can arouse negative or positive feelings about yourselves; it is also appropriate to specify that while most of the time our thoughts are turned outward, some events can create a state of intensified self-awareness, which confronts you with your inner canons (this may be the case of the comparison with with some social idols, like the perfect rich top model). Focusing the attention on the self makes also obvious discrepancies with respect to the self guides: this happens because the knowledge of the self includes beliefs about you, and also about the comparison with the royalties to which you try to conform to. Self-esteem is therefore influenced not only by what happens outside, but also by what happens “inside us”, that is the comparisons with the ideal self, which includes the traits that help to achieve some aspirations, and the imperative self which instead includes the traits that spur to fulfill one’s obligations. The self guide are useful for the auto-adjustment function: the discrepancy theory says that there is a the difference between the self guide and what people think to be, and this discrepancy can influence the individual emotional state and the well-being, it also influence our self-esteem. Focusing on these topics, we can assert that the ideal self represents the positive outcomes that people try to achieve, therefore their goals for advancement: discrepancies with respect to the ideal self can produce disappointment feelings, sadness and depression. On the contrary, when you actually achieve progress targets the emotion that derives is joy. The imperative self is focused on the negative outcomes that people try to avoid, that are the prevention goals. The deviations from the self imperative stimulate anxiety and restlessness feelings. Achieving the objectives of the imperative self produces instead relief and relaxation feelings [17]. Thinking about our inner canons can make us aware of our self discrepancies, activating an emotional response among those mentioned above, and one’s own canons can also focused by thinking to specific people who represent them, that is, who can embody idols (i.e. a perfect top model). The construction of ideal self and imperative self often refers to idols supported by the propagation dynamics of globalization both in the Western and Oriental Countries. The propagation of certain myths and idols can therefore constitute a real problem when the real self and the ideal and imperative self come into conflict: the person experiences incongruity: an unpleasant experience, which causes a sense of inadequacy, anxiety, malaise and maladjustment [16]. Incongruent experiences with respect to the self, on the other hand, are perceived as threatening and anxious, and often activate some defense mechanisms, such as the distortion of the meaning of the experience, i.e. the manipulation of the experience itself (because this dynamic can make it compatible with the self), or even denial of experience. On the contrary, a smaller the discrepancy between the real self and the ideal self and imperative self can create wellness: the subject is in harmony with himself. The so-called “white psychosis” can have a diffusion in these conditions of discrepancy. They are characterized by confusion, loss of the sense of reality, denial of reality itself, disorganization. These states are also called “private psychoses”, perhaps also to underline the dimension of individual closure that generates them, the inability to open up in a sane way to the world and to the other, maintaining their own authentic individual identity: they therefore reveal themselves conditions that prevent a process of healthy individualization [18]. A cause of psychological malaise can therefore also be living constantly

trying to correspond to the environment expectations, precisely to fill the incongruity between the real self, the ideal self and imperative self. As a matter of fact, the self, in its formation and evolution follows the law of congruence: it constantly aims to seek coherence between its own self-perceptions and between these and external reality [16, 18, 19]: when the self is congruent with experience, the individual is fully functional and healthy. On the contrary, when the incongruity between the self and personal experience is so strong that it does not allow the successful application of the defense mechanisms, the person can develop a psychological state of disorganization, as anticipated.

6. Self-esteem and self-expression

As anticipated, in the independent cultures (Western, especially “Protestant” ones) the positive characteristics of the individual are the ones which are the most important for self-esteem, while for interdependent cultures (Oriental ones) is more considered the affiliation to others [2]. Beyond these differences, in all cultures self esteem performs the function to indicate how the person is behaving in life (in a right way or not). According to Alfred Adler, children and adults with a balanced and healthy personality, universally acquire confidence and self-esteem every time they are aware of being able to reach a goal: in synthesis, the sense of inferiority is resolved when a new challenge is overcome [19]. The self-esteem levels therefore play a crucial role in this process, precisely because they are signals how effectively the individual is acting. An accurate knowledge of own capabilities and preferences is also important because can guide a person through his existence, and d helps him to live in a manner more appropriate regarding his own needs and abilities. Self knowledge also represents as a reference for perceiving other people, and it influences what types of social aspects are more considered. It must also be noted that sometimes we act in such a way as to express our authentic self, other times, as anticipated, we can act because we want to shape others opinions about themselves, in order to gain power, influence or approval [2, 13]: in this consists the difference between self-expression and of self-presentation. When you dedicate yourself to self- expression, you try to convey the concept you have of yourself through your actions. The self-expression and communicates it to other people, and it that can even work as a powerful reaction strategy when we are under stress, and can also beneficially affect out auto-immune system [16]. The self-presentation is however only our attempt to create a good impression, to please other people and to obtain confirmations by others, to increase self-esteem and strengthen out ego. Well-being, on the other hand, goes in another direction. According to Fromm [1] the well-being is different to narcissism. Well-being means becoming what one is really, it means being fully open to joy and sadness. Wellness means being fully awake, it also means being creative and authentic, being able to express our real self [1].

7. Finally becoming yourself

The self-expression helps people to meet their real emotions and their real self: also simple forms of self-expression, for example, talking about feelings caused by threatening events, may help overcome some of the physical and emotional costs of those events [16]. Self-realization and self-expression are indeed among the highest needs on the scale of human needs, and certainly affect human health [20]. The need of self-expression, specifically, is the need to use our talents, abilities and potentials. Self-realization and self-expression can therefore be briefly defined as

the courage to be yourself; in this regard according to Kierkegaard we can achieve harmony and inner peace only through the courage to be ourselves, instead of trying to be like someone else (or want to please someone else); he was convinced that despair vanishes the moment we stop denying who we really are and try to accept and discover our real nature. According to this author, the opposite of despair consists in really wanting to be who one is [14]. Fromm believed in this regard that we can make life better, even if it is painful at times, by giving it meaning by seeking and developing an authentic self. He believes that man's innate existential condition is a state of anxiety, which however can be overcome by finding one's purpose in life: by struggling to become free and unique individuals. As we have seen, however, at the same time we always feel the need to be in relationship with others, and to confront ourselves with a social group; however, it is very important in parallel to discover one's own independent self, one's opinions and one's values, rather than always adhering to pre-established norms, imposed by one's neighbor, or by the reference culture; according to Fromm we become precisely alienated if we try to delegate to others the responsibility of our choices, we could add, if we modulate all our conduct on the basis of self-presentation and the others' satisfaction. The purpose of life, according to this author, is to define ourselves, accepting our personal uniqueness, and discovering our abilities: it is very important to focus on what differentiates us from others. In this way it is possible to free oneself from alienation, confusion and loneliness; we must discover our individuality, understanding our true passions, inclinations and ideas, setting ourselves a creative purpose in life [1, 21]. However, there are several types of personality that can hamper personal and true self-realization, among these are: personality receptive orientation (ie those who live passively and accept the fate in a fatalistic way, those which behave as gregarious complacent); people which have an demanding orientation, that usually use other people like and object; the accumulators also show a pathological orientation: they are constantly looking for a social climb and consider the people they frequent as property. These kind of personalities are far from the development of an authentic self; finally there are those who have a mercantile orientation: those who are obsessed by their own narcissistic image and by their status (and this is the type that most represents modern society). A healthy personality type is the productive one: it is that who show flexibility, creativity, sociability, rationality and mental openness; this kind of people develop a high level of consciousness, willing to change their beliefs in the face of new evidence, and to evolve. Thus, the human health is conceived as a dynamic process of evolution, rather than as an end state, and certainly in this process are the fundamental expression of one's self, a healthy self-esteem and personal development; the value that a person thinks he has, is therefore not only in the result of his individual actions, but in representations that are built over time and evolve in the life process. The Well-being human involves in fact the expression of a v aucton range of potential: intellectual, social, emotional and physical one. In the field of scientific research, therefore, an attempt has been made to identify indices that can be measured in this regard; when examining the characteristics of the Welfare reported in these various theoretical formulations, it is noted that the various authors have spoken of similar features. A certain number of indicators of good psychic development were therefore obtained, subsequently putting them to the scrutiny of empirical experimentation. Thus, the following six dimensions were identified:

1. A true purpose and a sense of direction in life;
2. Personnel development;

3. Good relationships with others;
4. Persona control and effectiveness;
5. Self-acceptance, self-respect, self-esteem;
6. A autonomy [17, 22–24].

This is non-definitive list and will certainly be reviewed or expanded [17, 22–24], but in any case we can say that regardless of the reference culture there are some dimensions which focus on a healthy individualization: the overcoming of the limits of a selfish ego, the conquest of love, objectivity and humility and respect for life, until the end of life is there life itself and man becomes what he is in potential [25]. The malaise can instead be represented by the alienation from ourselves, a malaise creeps into the awareness that life slips from our hands like sand, that we will die without having lived. Today there is also a more and more frequent paradox: while narcissistic individualism as an unlimited self-affirmation increases on a world scale, the idea of a subject who feels he is part of a human and natural totality often disappears. As a matter of fact, being an individual often coincides with the claim of the right to the immediate and mandatory satisfaction of one's desires, where the one who has more economic power, can impose himself on the weaker people. We must also consider in this regard, as Byung-chul Han reminds us, that we live in a society that is becoming increasingly narcissistic, and narcissism is definitely not a form of self-realization or self-love; following this narcissistic attitude today almost nothing has a long shelf life, and everything is disposable, also relationships, and this has harmful consequences [26, 27]. We can therefore ask: what can psychoanalysis can offer to those suffering from sickness of the century (ie. narcissism and alienation)? This is an aid that must be different from the only treatment aimed at the removal of symptom, which can preserve the normal performance of social functions. Because for those who are alienated (ie for those who are far from living fully their real self), the goal cannot be only in the absence of disease, but in the presence of wellness. A first definition of Wellbeing can therefore be the following: wellbeing is being in harmony with the nature of man. However, if we go beyond this formal statement, a question arises: what does it mean to be in harmony with the conditions of human existence? And what are these conditions? The human existence arises a problem. Man is thrown into this world not by his will and so he is torn from it. According to Fromm [1, 25], unlike the animal, man does not have an immediate innate mechanism in his instincts, which allows him to adapt immediately and completely to nature. The questions that life poses are many: how can we overcome the pain, slavery, shame caused by the experience of isolation? How we can find the harmony with ourselves, with our fellow humans, with nature? Man is required to give some answers; he even responds in case of madness, rejecting external reality and living completely enclosed in his selves, to overcome the fear of loneliness. Therefore, the solutions that can be worked out, in response to the existential questions, are basically reducible to two. One is to overcome isolation, to find unity through regression to the state of primordial harmony, existing before the awareness development (ie before birth). The other solution consists in being metaphorically completely born, in strengthening one's awareness, one's reason, one's ability to love to the point of overcoming one's self-centeredness and narcissism and thus reaching a new harmony, a new communion with the world. However, most proceed along the life pattern are far from wellness: attached to their family (in a symbiotic way), or attached to the state, the social rank, to idols, myths, and etc. To be able also to understand the individual patient, and d in general any individual,

it is important therefore to understand what his response than human existence to these question, ie what is the object of all his passions and all his efforts. According to Fromm what are considered psychological problems are often consequences of this fundamental answer: it is very important to know the fundamental answer that the subject has given to the existence problem, in a certain sense his secret and private religion. As a matter of fact, man often tries to compensate for his depression with idolatry, with destructive tendencies, or with the fame desire and the desire for possession. And when any of these solution fails, his fragile sanity crumbles. The cure for potential madness therefore lies in the passage from alienation to the creative perception of the world and harmony with it: a man cannot be truly free if he is a slave to his passions. He can be free only if he has an ideal and a philosophical attitude which makes it possible for him to have a consistent activity in life [1, 25]. By ideal we obviously do not mean an idol. As Zoj a stated [28] modern culture is characterized by the conviction that in each of us there exists a personal psychological dimension, which everyone has the right to explore and to consider a source of knowledge, aiming to broaden it. However, it often happens that this disposition arouses a sense of solitude and incompleteness. The current situation of frequent alienation can therefore be considered as a symptom, not to be healed in order to return to a previous situation, considered healthy, but as a signal and message: the subject produces a symptom, as a sign of a discomfort that has now exploded, so that he himself can change the its situation. The first step, therefore, is to become aware of the current limit condition: the split between self-perception, emotion and thought, which has become the norm and narcissistic closure in one's own needs. The further step is the acceptance of the limit of our human being not as a condemnation, but as a push to increase knowledge and creativity in the essential relationship with others with whom we are linked in a common destiny.

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