Original Research Article

A New Image of the World or Philosophical Fragments. Part II. Parallel Worlds, Levels of Understanding, Nietzsche's Masks, Plato's Cave Again and Other Topics

Juan Sebastián Gómez-Jeria[1*] iD

[1]Free Researcher, Glowing Neurons Group, CP 8270739, Santiago, Chile

Abstract

I present several ideas to stimulate the readers' curiosity so that they seek, find, and modify their inner world. I present an analysis of the relationships between the Ladder model of Plato's Cave, Schopenhauer Representations and Nietzsche's master and slaves. The impossibility of knowing how similar my normal state of consciousness is to the state of consciousness of other human primates is disputed. The existence of different levels of understanding is abundantly exemplified. The generation and destruction of the Demons within us is analyzed in detail. Their destruction is a necessary step in progressing into the higher states of consciousness of the human mode. I reaffirm my ideas that the history of human primates is created by the actions of some individuals and never of the masses. I comment on the role of 'fear' in the development of the first cosmogonies.
Keywords: Plato's Cave, Nietzsche, Symbols, *Homo erectus*, Karl Jaspers, Schopenhauer, *Australopithecus*, Fear, Social Parasites, Socrates, Truth, Archaic Greece, Masks, Mycenae, Encryption.

1. INTRODUCTION

When Monsieur Ducon threw himself from the top of the Eiffel Tower
And as he fell he learned to fly; that's a miracle (adapted by JSG-J).

I beseech you, my brothers, remain faithful to the earth and do not
believe those who speak to you of extraterrestrial hopes! They are mixers
of poisons whether they know it or not (Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra).

Karl Jaspers once said: . . . *'When I ask a question, the answer comes to me from passages in the text, which come to life through my question, while the questionless reader glides through the text. But those answers are real only when I can justify what I understand to be the 'intentional meaning' of the text. When the texts of the dead do not respond with meaning, they remain mute'*. And I would say that some texts do not respond because they are, consciously or unconsciously, written for that reader who is in a defined place within Plato's Cave (in the model used by me that text will be 'apprehended' in its fullness only by that reader just mentioned and all those who are on a 'higher' step). Certainly there are texts that don't say anything to anyone.

Bertrand Russell said something like that *'the root cause of the problem in today's modern world is that the stupid are conceited while the intelligent are full of doubts'*. Certainly, the intelligent prefer to leave the management of the world to the stupid because, every time they have tried to lead the world, everything has always ended in great catastrophes (Plato, Pythagoras). And it is necessary to emphasize that it is only the intelligent who are full of doubts. The rest either can't have them or are the batch of conceited fanatics who proclaim one or more statements (scientific, political, religious, philosophical, etc.) as being 'unique' and 'true'. And woe to the one who opposes it! When some areas of scientific research are populated by human primates who are incapable of asking questions about the World, they are condemned to mediocrity that guarantees position and salary, but not internal growth. When these

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researchers become aware of what they were and are, it is time to go home.

Kruger and Dunning say that people tend to have overly favorable opinions of their abilities in many social and intellectual domains. This overestimation occurs, in part, because people who are not qualified in these domains suffer a double burden: many stupid people make bad decisions out of ignorance and are also unable to realize that they are making bad decisions based on their own lack of competence.

'He who thus considers things in their first growth and origin, whether it be a state or anything else, will obtain the clearest vision of them', says Aristotle in his Politics. As for the historical-evolutionary developments that led to the current situation of *Homo sapiens* on Earth, Aristotle's suggestion should serve as a guiding principle. However, there are some fundamental problems that hinder the implementation of this approach. One is related to the fact that some statements of dubious veracity have become the *communis opinio* of all specialists in the field only because either no fact seems to contradict them, or no one questions them. The other is, from a strictly scientific point of view, quite disturbing. It consists of a conscious and silent refusal to raise all possible scientific questions that arise naturally from research, to propose all possible tentative scientific answers to them, and to suggest some way of testing their truth or falsity. ***This occurs within the scientific field and its explanation lies in the political or religious background of its proponents that ends up prevailing over scientific truth.*** Paleoanthropologists are the best example of opportunistic and/or biased interpretations.

Here we present and discuss some ideas and problems about communication between human primates. There are also some reflections on symbols, symbolisms and other topics that could be of interest (at least I am interested in them). These thoughts have a different temporal origin (from years 1980 onwards) (J.S. Gómez-Jeria, 2024b).

The reader is only asked to understand or to verify that 'there are many worlds, but they all exist *within* one'. I thought about replacing 'worlds' with 'layers' or 'levels', but I did not do it because these two concepts are generally associated with ordering from bottom to top, from simple to complex, etc. Perhaps 'parallel' worlds could be useful. Unhappily, one cannot be limited to the 'products' of a single and isolated stage to develop ideas about the World. Because of this we must go into the multitude.

On the other hand, we must understand that there are several explanations for why we do not have access to some of these worlds. I think that this happens because people have a different biological structure and composition. But it is necessary for me to make some assumptions about myself and about the World. *I will define* (there is no other way to do it for the moment) my 'normal' inner state as a human primate as the one in which I spend most of the day (or all day). I am going to assume, and this is only a mere assumption, that a large percentage of the world is in a state similar to mine (I have valid doubts about this). At the moment there is no possible way to prove this assumption as I doubt that the 'normal' states of, say, a serial killer or a paranoid schizophrenic are similar to mine. *I also remember a bulimic psychopath into whose hands I fell shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic: her mental state must have been worthy of being scientifically dissected.*

This 'large percentage of the world' also has the same or similar way of processing information received from the outside through the usual channels (the senses). It is understood that this way of receiving and processing 'external' information is the result of an evolutionary process that allowed us to adapt and survive. In any case, it is one thing to receive raw information and process it, and quite another to interpret it. And the latter is reflected in the different cultural products that appear approximately 50,000 years ago (there are apparently some much older products such as the Bruniquel Cave dated to approximately 176,000 years ago, a hand stencil from the Cave of Maltravieso dated to 64,000 years ago) (J.S. Gómez-Jeria, 2017a). Also cultural products appear also (cave art that is at least 45,500 years old in Leang Tedongnge, stencils of right hands in Pettakere Cave in Maros, one dated to 39,900 years ago) *And this evolutionary process is also reflected actually in the behaviors of, for example, some genocidal ethnic groups.*

Schopenhauer establishes a fundamental distinction between 'Representation' and the 'thing-in-itself'. Representation refers to the way we perceive the world through our senses *and* our reason (or unreason). Representation is a construction of the brain that is based on the information we receive through our senses. Our brain processes this information and organizes it into a coherent form that we call 'reality'. However, this reality is only an appearance or a Representation of the thing itself. The thing itself, on the other hand, refers to the true, objective reality that underlies our perception of the world. Schopenhauer's theory of representation has several important implications. On the one hand, it suggests that our perception of the world is always subjective and that we cannot know objective reality directly. On the other hand, it implies that reality is fundamentally different from our perception of it. I wonder how to know definitively if on a given day my Representation of this moment coincides or not with the 'true and objective reality'.

There is a question one might ask: is the World nothing more than the world of Representation(s)? Being faithful to Mother Earth, who 'produced me as I am', I consider that this question belongs to the class of questions that have no answer but that allow many to write about the subject and live from it. And why do I

say this? Because it is not possible to find the alleged 'true nature of the World'. Let us say this: I have a Representation of the world that is variable and changes day by day. This is my daily 'World as Representation'. These daily Representations of the World are the complete material that appears in the field of consciousness. A memory. A long, long time ago we contemplated the stars in a group, on a night by the sea. Suddenly someone said, 'Why do we spend time looking up if there are only stars'. It was after a subsequent conversation with the author of that comment that my doubts about 'inner equality' (i.e., how different or similar the Representations can be) began.

I must say that I have neither theoretical ambitions nor preacher interests. That is because there are many ways, apparently different, to say what I will say below. But as progress is made, new and diverse ways of saying it are found. It is always good to know that I am like a frog trying to get out of the bottom of the pit. The World is a great question that each of us must solve. This is not only the result of the passion for knowledge that the Greeks left to some, but of a vital urgency that not everyone seems to have. I am sorry that in some sections I have had to repeat myself several times but that is due to the need for the reader to meditate on them. Let us remember that the task of squeezing a large body of facts into a more or less rigid system can be a painful one. And the pain is even greater when from that rigid system reality begins to escape through its joints. Anyway, a field often has to be developed before it is ready for a systematic and rigorous organization. Here you will not find *ad verecundiam* statements or the use of *magister dixit* or *Roma locuta, causa finita* cliches.

A last word. It is really incredible what can be obtained after the conscious correction of an incorrect choice made when there was not the slightest possibility of discernment.

Figure 1: The Labyrinth

2. Basics
2.1. First, a story that was perhaps possible. More than 3.3 million years ago, a group of australopithecines walked across a vast plain in Africa. The group moved in search of food, always attentive to the possible dangers that lurked in the environment. Some were focused on gathering fruit or searching for insects, while others remained vigilant against any threat. A young Australopithecus was walking near a stream. His eyes fell on a stone that looked different from the others. It had rough edges and a shape that caught his eye. He took it in his hands and, without any clear purpose, began to slam it against another larger rock nearby. The first blow did not produce much effect, but as it continued to strike, the stone began to break. After several impacts, some edges were sharpened. As he continued exploring, the young Australopithecus perceived an unusual smell that led him to the carcass of an animal. Perhaps a small prey that had died or been abandoned by another predator. Around the corpse, insects moved under the skin. Without conscious intention, his movements led him to use the sharp stone to strike the animal's skin. As he did so, the tool made it easy to access the insects and soft meat underneath. Other members of the group, watching from close quarters, were also drawn to the activity. One of them, the most curious, approached, took the stone and slammed it against another rock, creating more sharp fragments. Thus, spontaneously, a behavior began that, over time, would have a profound impact on their way of life. I wrote these lines to remind the reader that in the end we have not done so badly manufacturing tools (Harmand *et al*., 2015; Ponce de León *et al*., 2021; Schurig, 2021; Skinner *et al*., 2015). The most important thing, apart from the very fact that led to the creation of tools, is that initially it is a single fact involving only a single individual: there were and are no collective 'illuminations'. *The story of collective illuminations is used by the one-eyed to dominate the blind.*

Figure 2: One of the first tool makers

2.2. Fear
Fear: It is a basic and natural emotion that arises as a response to a perception of real or imaginary danger. Fear triggers a number of physiological and psychological responses, including increased heart rate,

sweating, muscle tension, and feelings of alertness. Its function is to prepare the body to face or avoid the perceived threat. In general, fear serves to alert to real dangers, facilitate fight-or-flight responses to protect the individual, help assess risk situations, motivate caution and prudence, and contributes to learning and adaptation to threats (Adolphs, 2013; LeDoux, 2012; Nesse, 1990, 1994; Peléšková *et al*., 2024).

Anxiety: It is an emotion characterized by feelings of worry, nervousness and apprehension about future situations or uncertain events. Unlike fear, which is usually associated with a specific threat, anxiety can be more diffuse and undefined. Anxiety can manifest itself both physically (symptoms such as palpitations, shortness of breath, muscle tension) and cognitively (recurring thoughts, difficulty concentrating) and can interfere with a person's daily functioning.

These emotions have deep evolutionary roots and have been fundamental to the survival of species over time, including human primates. Although they can sometimes be uncomfortable or unpleasant, they serve adaptive functions in certain circumstances. Chimpanzees can experience anxiety in complex social contexts, such as competition for resources or establishing social hierarchies. Thinking about australopithecines, it is possible that there have been anxious episodes during competition for access to food consumption, relative position in some natural refuge, significant environmental changes, competition for status, conflict resolution, the formation of alliances and the need to maintain vigilance and security against predators. Although some of these anxiety-producing factors are not proven in this case, they do exist in higher primates, including *Homo sapiens*. Those in more vulnerable positions within the group will be more susceptible to being subjected to anxiety-generating conditions.

The discovery and domestication of fire was a gradual process that involved overcoming primal fears, but it also generated new anxieties of trying to control this powerful force. At first, fire must have caused great fear in our ancestors. It was an unknown, dangerous, and unpredictable phenomenon that could burn and destroy (Huang, Li, & Gao, 2022; Keeley & Pausas, 2022; MacDonald, Scherjon, van Veen, Vaesen, & Roebroeks, 2021). The instinctive fear of fire was justified as a survival mechanism. The oldest archaeological evidence of the controlled use of fire by humans dates back approximately 1 million years, during the Lower Paleolithic, and is associated with remains of *Homo erectus*. It is believed that initially the fire was preserved and transported, but there was no ability to light it. Then, between 400,000 and 300,000 years ago, there is evidence of campfires built and the use of fire as a source of light and heat by archaic humans.

As they observed the potential benefits of fire (light, warmth, protection), an anxiety arose to try to control and harness it. There was a desire to dominate it but also a concern about the risks involved. With practice and experimentation, our ancestors were gradually able to handle and contain fire safely. As they gained knowledge and skills, the initial fear dissipated and replaced by a sense of control. However, the handling of the fire also brought new anxieties. For example, the fear that the fire would be extinguished and having to be relit. Or the concern to protect it from rain or wind. Specific rituals and tasks arose to keep the fire burning.

Over time, fire became a comforting and familiar element in their lives. Its light and warmth created a safe space that chased away fears of the dark and nocturnal predators. Beyond the practical, fire acquired a cultural and spiritual value. Mystical qualities were attributed to it, and it became part of rituals and celebrations, which helped to mitigate existential anxieties.

2.3 Over the course of evolution, individuals capable of rapidly recognizing and responding to threats were more likely to survive and reproduce, thereby transmitting their traits to subsequent generations. *This process favored the development of more complex and efficient nervous systems for threat detection, contributing to better adaptation to the environment. However, fear can also be maladaptive in situations where no real threat is present, as in the case of phobias, suggesting that the fear response system has not always evolved to be perfectly adaptive*. Fear has also influenced human cultural evolution by promoting behaviors of cooperation and social cohesion, as group survival partially depended on the collective ability to face dangers. *Furthermore, fear of the unknown and of the different may have driven the creation of social norms and the preservation of group identities, contributing to the formation of more complex cultures.*

2.4 Between 40,000 and 30,000 years ago, during the Upper Paleolithic, a significant proliferation of cultural artifacts reflects the emergence of symbolic thought and advanced cognitive capacities in many *Homo sapiens*. There is an increase in creativity, encompassing tools, art, rituals, and social structures. However, not all *Homo sapiens* exhibited this level of cognitive and cultural complexity. This uneven distribution suggests that symbolic thought and higher-order consciousness were not yet universal traits across the species (J.S. Gómez-Jeria, 2017b).

Let us provide some concrete examples for greater conceptual clarity. We have the Altamira Cave and its pictorial and artistic cycles. There are probably several individuals who participated in that wonderful creation, but not all. We have Li Bai, Kalidasa, Rumi, Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Dante, etc., but we know that they are exceptional. Those sparks in the darkness of the

human primate are still exceptions and not the rule. And this undoubtedly has biological bases.

Figure 3: Bisons modeled from the clay from the walls of Trois Frères Cave (about14,000 years). We can only imagine the native talent its creator or creators were gifted with

Also, some of them likely developed the ability to attribute meaning to natural phenomena. Their growing capacity to infer causality and seek explanations for the world around them could have led to the conceptualization of unseen forces or entities as agents behind events like lightning, thunder, or storms. All the proposed explanations are grounded in cognitive capacities and neurobiological mechanisms already present in many *Homo sapiens* of that era.

2.5 Natural events such as lightning or thunderstorms could therefore have been interpreted as purposeful acts of unseen agents.

The capacity for Theory of Mind, which allows individuals to infer mental states and intentions in others, was developed in some Homo sapiens of this epoch. This neural capacity, mediated by networks such as the medial prefrontal cortex and temporoparietal junction, likely extended beyond observable beings to encompass natural forces, leading to the anthropomorphization of environmental phenomena. In the absence of empirical explanations for meteorological or geological events, *Homo sapiens* of this era might have naturally gravitated towards supernatural causation as a logical extrapolation of their causal reasoning framework. The amygdala and limbic system, which govern emotional responses and memory consolidation, would have played a pivotal role in reinforcing associations between awe-inspiring natural events (e.g., volcanic eruptions, tornados, tsunamis, meteorites, comets, droughts) and supernatural interpretations. The heightened emotional salience of such events likely ensured their preservation and transmission within oral traditions. The exceptional neuroplasticity of *Homo sapiens*, underpinned the transmission and elaboration of complex ideas, including proto-religious beliefs. These ideas, once introduced, could be perpetuated and refined through collective storytelling, thereby embedding supernatural explanations within the cultural fabric. This is the probable birth of the first primitive cosmogonies.

It must be emphasized that the different natural environments through which the different groups of human primates traveled were decisive in determining the nature and structure of those first cosmogonies.

3. Cosmogony and fear.
3.1 Let us go back to the issue of 'levels of evolution'. To argue that not all contemporary *Homo sapiens* are at the same 'evolutionary level', one may draw upon the observation made earlier that, between 30,000 and 40,000 years ago, not all *Homo sapiens* exhibited the same degree of cognitive and cultural complexity (In some caves there are pictorial representations from the Paleolithic period that suggest that the author did not have good 'artistic' abilities). This historical context can serve as a foundation for asserting that human evolution is not homogeneous, even in modern times. This disparity in cultural and cognitive development suggests that not all populations or individuals had reached the same level of intellectual and social evolution.

While all *Homo sapiens* share an apparently common genetic heritage, the selective pressures acting upon different groups and individuals throughout history (and continuing to do so today) have resulted in variations in cognitive and cultural development. For instance, in prehistoric times, certain populations or individuals may have been exposed to environmental and social conditions that favored the development of more advanced cognitive and cultural capacities, while others remained in situations where survival depended on more basic skills. This suggests that their evolutionary trajectories have not been identical, being shaped by distinct cultural and environmental influences over time.

The concept of non-homogeneous evolution among contemporary *Homo sapiens* can also be supported by an understanding of how epigenetic factors and environmental conditions continue to shape human development. Taking the example of 30,000 to 40,000 years ago, human populations from that era likely exhibited differential gene expression due to the specific conditions of their environments. Today, social, educational, and technological pressures still mold cognitive and cultural development, leading to the possibility that some individuals or groups are more 'advanced' in terms of intellectual capacities due to greater access to knowledge, while others remain disadvantaged by social or economic constraints. This reflects the ongoing, context-dependent nature of human evolution.

During the Upper Paleolithic, groups or individuals with the possibility of developing complex social structures, art, and ritual began to become heir to more sophisticated cognitive abilities. Similarly, today, differences in access to education and technology can result in some individuals or groups developing more advanced cognitive capabilities, while others lag behind due to limited social or economic resources. These

disparities in access to learning and environmental stimuli can lead to differing levels of cognitive complexity across populations and/or individuals.

From a philosophical standpoint, it can be argued that human evolution is not only biological but also cultural, social, and cognitive. If, 30,000 to 40,000 years ago, there were already significant differences in the levels of cognitive and cultural complexity among human groups or individuals, it is reasonable to extrapolate that such differences persist today. Evolution is not a static process but involves continuous interaction between biological, cultural, and environmental factors. Thus, while all *Homo sapiens* share a more or less common biological foundation, the different cultural, social, and educational contexts in which humans are embedded have led to variations in the development of cognitive and cultural capacities, suggesting that not all contemporary *Homo sapiens* are equally 'evolved'. I think this fact is the key to certain interpretations that I will comment on below. Sorry to insist on this matter.

3.2. The emergence of specialized roles is appreciable with the appearance of shamans.

Fear played a pivotal role in the emergence of shamans and the development of their beliefs, acting as a unifying and organizing force in early human communities. Primitive environments were full of uncertainty: natural phenomena such as storms, eclipses, volcanic eruptions or diseases had no rational explanations at the time, and communities sought answers to mitigate the anxiety that these events generated. In this context, shamans emerged as key figures capable of interpreting the unknown, giving meaning to what was otherwise incomprehensible and terrifying. Early human communities faced a hostile and unpredictable environment. Not understanding natural cycles or disasters generated a deep fear in them. *Shamans took center stage in interpreting these phenomena as expressions of supernatural forces, offering rituals and practices that promised to influence those forces to protect the community.*

Shamans in the Paleolithic era can be understood as individuals possessing a distinctive level of cognitive evolution compared to the rest of their communities. This difference was in their ability to perceive the world in ways that diverged from the ordinary experience. Such a differential perception likely allowed them to interact with what their societies considered the spiritual and the transcendental. The spiritual pertains to experiences that involve a sense of connection to something beyond the physical and material realms. *In early humans, these experiences were likely associated with altered states of consciousness, during which individuals could perceive patterns and meanings that eluded the rational understanding of the community. Shamans may have experienced the spiritual not as an external phenomenon, but as an internal symbolic framework that allowed them to interpret the*

world in a unique way. These experiences might have been induced through practices such as meditation, ritual, or the consumption of psychoactive substances. On the other hand, the transcendental refers to that which lies beyond the observable, what cannot be perceived by the ordinary senses. Scientifically, the transcendental encompasses the human capacity to conceive abstract ideas and construct mental representations of realities that lack direct correspondence with the physical world, such as the notions of immortality or invisible forces governing fate. Shamans served as intermediaries between these abstract concepts and the community. Their ability to 'see' the transcendental did not imply access to an objective mystical reality, but rather the ability to interpret certain phenomena and imbue them with profound meaning that transcended ordinary experience. *In a context where fear of the unknown and the unpredictable was pervasive, the shamanic figure offered not only understanding but also solace, as their rituals and visions provided a symbolic framework for confronting death, illness, and the existential challenges of life.* Their capacity to connect the spiritual (experiences of connection to the divine or invisible forces) and the transcendental (abstract concepts concerning life, death, and the cosmos) enabled them to occupy a critical role as spiritual guides, healers, and ritual leaders within early human societies/groups.
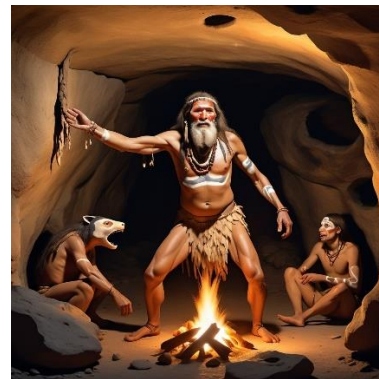
Figure 4: Representation of a possible paleolithic shaman

3.3. The transition from Paleolithic shamans to early cosmogonies somewhere on Earth can be understood as a gradual process in which immediate experiences, embodied in shamanic rituals and practices, evolved into more structured narratives about the origin and order of the universe. This development can be explained by a combination of cultural, social, and cognitive factors. We have already said that the shamans of the Paleolithic, through rituals, trance, and symbolism, interpreted natural phenomena and offered spiritual explanations for hunting, disease, or the cycles of life. *The first cosmogonies would have arisen in a context where shamanic narratives were consolidated and expanded due to several factors.* Some members of the late Paleolithic communities developed advanced cognitive abilities allowing the conceptualization of abstract ideas. This may have made it easier for them to construct more

complex narratives about the origin of the world and existence.

Their visions and experiences, often based on contact with animal 'spirits' or natural forces, may have been the first attempts to make sense of the world. These initial narratives were likely fragmentary and situated, focused on solving immediate community problems. These initial explanations were expressed through stories and practices that connected human experiences with natural processes. Through their practices, they constructed narratives that related the creation of the cosmos to elements such as solar cycles, rain, animals, and seasons, all essential to the survival of their communities. In these early explanations, the universe was often described as a living, animated space, where each natural phenomenon had its own intentionality or spirit. These narratives were fluid and deeply symbolic, directly linked to the daily experience of human groups, especially their practices of hunting, gathering, and observing the cycles of nature.

These representations of the world acquired an increasing complexity, their content being determined by the ecological environment and the biology of those who build them little by little. As human societies evolved and became more complex, fear continued to play a central role in the development of collective beliefs and the emergence of primitive cosmogonies can be understood as a response to the collective fear of the unknown but structured in a broader and more systematic way than the individual practices of shamans. *The shaman, while still playing a central role, began to be integrated into a broader hierarchy that included priests or other religious leaders who managed these more complex myths.*

Figure 5: A paleolithic shaman? Picture of a half-animal half-human in a Paleolithic cave painting in Dordogne, France

Let us think of the first known cosmogonies of prehistory. Apparently, the former developed in the context of sedentary or near-sedentary societies, where knowledge of natural cycles became an integral part of life. Although many of these narratives are reconstructed from archaeological remains, inscriptions, and later traditions, there are clear examples of cosmogonic

systems that reflect the worldview of these cultures. Consider Göbekli Tepe, located in Turkey. This site dates from approximately 9600 to 8000 B.C. This supposedly ceremonial site features pillars decorated with animal carvings and abstract symbols that suggest a worldview related to animal, human, and supernatural forces (It is unclear whether its builders were sedentary or not, but it is a pre-neolithic site). Although it lacks writing, its monumental design perhaps reflects an attempt to make sense of the cosmic order. In the Fertile Crescent, encompassing regions of present-day Iraq, Syria and Turkey, symbolic systems were developed from 7000 BC focused on deities related to fertility, earth and sky. The Great Mother Goddess and the storm god represented the balance between natural forces essential to agriculture. These ideas influenced later Mesopotamian civilizations. In the Indus Valley, located in present-day Pakistan and northwestern India, from about 7000 B.C., early communities developed symbolic narratives linked to fertility and water. The female figures suggest the worship of a Mother Goddess, while water was conceived as a primordial element of life. Although the writings of this region have not been deciphered, the seals and artifacts indicate a cosmogony focused on natural cycles. In Egypt, the first cosmogonic visions date back to around 5000 B.C. and are related to the flood cycles of the Nile River. The earth emerged from the primordial chaos, represented by Nun, while the sun (Ra) and the sky (Nut) were considered essential creative forces. This initial conception of the cosmos marked the development of later Egyptian mythology.

Figure 6: Göbekli Tepe

The creators of these cosmogonies were individuals whose ability to abstract, symbolize, and connect natural forces with transcendental meanings positioned them as more evolved and visionary minds compared to the rest of their contemporaries. Let us keep in mind that fear predominates to this day as the basis of many religions and political and economic systems. And fear is still among us.

4. Start by recognizing if what is written here describes the surface of your inner Universe.

Before I get into the subject, I must say that I selected this model because my introspection suggests that it is the right one for me. I must make it clear that I have no idea whether or not this model works for other current human primates. For this reason, the reader must verify for himself whether or not it is valid for him (Gurwitsch & Zaner, 2010; Yoshimi & Vinson, 2015).

For Gurwitsch, consciousness is not merely a series of isolated acts or states but rather a structured field in which certain elements assume greater prominence than others at a given moment. This field is organized into three distinct layers:

1. **Theme:** This represents the focal point of our attention at any given moment. It is the object or content that occupies the center of our awareness, that to which we are actively and directly attending. The Theme constitutes the core figure within the perceptual field.

2. **Thematic Field:** Surrounding the Theme is the Thematic Field, which encompasses other elements present in our experience, though these elements remain in the periphery of consciousness. While not the central focus of attention, the Thematic Field plays a supporting role, influencing the way we perceive and understand the Theme. These peripheral elements may be relevant or tangential to the Theme, yet they remain linked to it in some capacity. The elements that are in the Thematic Field can become relevant or capture our attention for some reason, thus moving to the center of the field of consciousness and becoming the new topic. For example, while you are reading, the sound of a car on the street might be in the Thematic Field, but if it suddenly gets louder or bothers you, it could become the main topic of your consciousness. Also, an element that is initially on the Thematic Field may lose its relevance or cease to influence our conscious perception in a significant way, thus becoming part of the Margin. The Thematic Field then acts as a kind of 'middle zone' between the subject and the Margin, allowing for this constant exchange between what is at the center of our attention, what is on the margin, and what is completely out of focus but still part of the overall context.

3. **Margin:** The margin is the broader context within which both the Theme and the Thematic Field are 'situated'. It encompasses everything that lies outside of our immediate conscious focus, yet it provides the background conditions that enable the Theme and Thematic Field to be intelligible. Although not consciously perceived, the Margin profoundly shapes our interpretation and understanding of the overall experience. Some elements of the Margin may disappear completely from our consciousness if they cease to be relevant, while new ones may emerge as circumstances or context change.
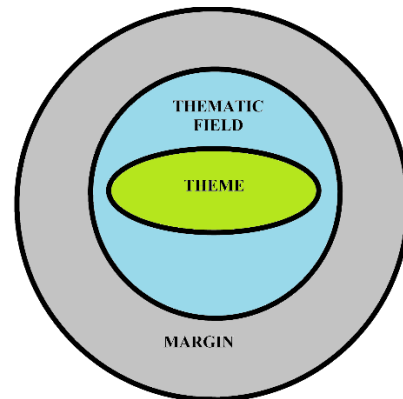
Figure 7: Schematic of the field of consciousness showing its three domains

This whole process is fluid, with the contents of the subject and the margin being the 'objects' of what we call 'attention'. The biological mechanism(s) by which certain elements 'enter' or 'leave' the Margin are not known. On the other hand, it is not possible to know what the nature of the field of consciousness was in our ancestors. At most, it is possible to theorize about the type of elements that could 'enter' the Thematic Field: dangerous animals in the vicinity, possible meals, mating partners, other situations of possible danger, etc. In the case of present-day populations of human primates, questionnaires designed to obtain information about the nature of objects entering the subject's field of consciousness can be used to see if we get any information about its structure and dynamics. The emergence of new material in the field of consciousness can be brought about by various stimuli. This is a fascinating field for personal research.

5. Nietzsche and the individual.

5.1. Here we present some considerations about the relationship between human evolution and Nietzsche's masters and slaves (J.S. Gómez-Jeria, 2024a).

In Nietzsche's philosophy, the 'master' is not an individual who exerts control over others, but rather one who possesses full mastery over oneself, one who is the sovereign of one's own life, values, and decisions. The 'master' is autonomous, capable of affirming their own existence without relying on external norms or societal impositions. *The essence of the 'master' is the ability to create and define one's own path, an individual who lives by their own will and principles, without submitting to the expectations or dictates of others.* The master embraces the unknown, using it as an opportunity for growth and self-expression, rather than something to be feared.

In contrast, the 'slave' is an individual who is governed by values and norms imposed from the outside, someone who does not exercise control over their own

life but instead is conditioned by the values and expectations that shape their environment. From an evolutionary standpoint, this reflects a lack of cognitive, cultural, and social autonomy. *The 'slave' lacks the agency to define their own trajectory, and their evolution is shaped not by self-determined goals but by external influences, be they social, economic, or cultural*. Almost all mankind.

When applying these Nietzschean concepts to the evolutionary development of *Homo sapiens*, let us remember that we stated that not all individuals possess the same degree of autonomy in terms of cognitive and cultural evolution. *In this context, the 'masters' are those individuals who exercise full control over their cognitive and cultural development. These individuals possess the capacity to create, innovate, and transform the world around them according to their own will and vision.* They are not dependent on external norms or dominant cultural frameworks to define their paths; rather, they are the ones who craft and reshape the structures in their environment. These individuals are not conditioned by the limitations imposed by their surroundings. Their cognitive and cultural evolution is the result of constant self-affirmation, enabling them to be at the forefront of innovation, both on an individual and collective scale.

Fear plays a central role in the relationship between the master and the slave. The master's lack of fear is rooted in their autonomy and the confidence to live according to their own values, whereas the slave's fear arises from their dependence on others and the inability to define their own existence. *The slave, constantly shaped by external forces, remains in a state of vulnerability, driven by the need to conform and avoid the consequences of non-compliance*. The master, free from this external dependency, does not experience the same kind of fear, as their life is governed by their own self-determined principles.

Nietzsche's 'master' can be seen as a very scarce evolutionary product due to his ability to exert absolute control over himself, a trait that implies great autonomy and inner strength. In evolutionary terms, most human primates tend to rely on external social structures, norms, and expectations to give meaning to their lives and ensure their survival within society. However, the 'master' is distinguished precisely by his ability to act in accordance with his own principles, without submitting to these external influences. From an evolutionary perspective, the ability to be completely autonomous is relatively rare. In human primate societies, cooperation and submission to common norms have been central to collective survival, leading most people to adapt to living within established frames of reference. The 'master', by defying these norms and living according to his own will, is an individual who has transcended common expectations and has attained a higher form of existence, guided by his own values and visions.

This scarcity is also reflected in the idea that, for Nietzsche, the 'master' not only creates his own path, but is also able to affirm life as it is, without fear or resentment. This ability to self-define and embrace life in its entirety is a rare and elusive quality, as it demands great psychological strength, the ability to challenge conventions, and most of all, constant personal evolution. In this sense, Nietzsche's 'master' represents not only a rare figure, but also an evolutionary ideal that few manage to fully embody. Nietzsche's master does not need slaves! Moreover, when inside a community of masters a group problem must be solved, two or more Nietzsche's masters can form a momentaneous assembly to solve it but without personal predominance or pretensions to dominance as among the human prime. I wrote something about them elsewhere.

Conversely, the 'evolutionary slaves' are those individuals who, due to social, economic, or cultural factors, are deprived of the same autonomy to cultivate their cognitive or cultural capacities. These individuals are subject to external structures that restrict their access to the resources needed to assert themselves as 'masters' of their own evolutionary paths. Their evolution is conditioned by the constraints of their environment, leaving them with limited agency to shape their own development. In this sense, these individuals are not 'slaves' in a literal or absolute sense; rather, they are subjugated to circumstances that prevent them from exercising full autonomy in terms of self-determination. They may be trapped in situations that limit their ability to define their trajectory, whether due to lack of access to adequate education, socio-economic disadvantages, or being constrained by cultural frameworks that curtail their potential.

It is crucial to understand that the Nietzschean notion of 'master' does not refer to groups or collectives but to individuals. In the evolutionary context, some individuals find themselves in a position of greater cognitive and cultural autonomy, driven by factors such as access to education, technology, and social resources. These individuals are able to transcend the limitations imposed by their environments, asserting their own evolutionary paths.

In contrast, other individuals, lacking these resources, cannot fully develop their potential autonomously. Instead, they are influenced and shaped by the external structures around them. However, this subjugation is not necessarily permanent: few individuals in these conditions can, through education, the subversion of norms, or access to new resources, free themselves from these limitations and become 'masters' of their own evolutionary development.

Following Nietzsche's dialectic of the 'master' and the 'slave', the evolutionary process for each individual can be understood as a continuous struggle for self-affirmation and autonomy. Individuals who exercise

control over their cognitive and cultural development can be viewed as 'masters' in this evolutionary context. Much like the Nietzschean 'masters', these individuals do not rely on external structures to define their paths but assert their will and determine their own evolutionary fate. Conversely, those individuals who are constrained by their socio-economic, educational, or cultural environments occupy a more passive and subordinated position. Yet, like the Nietzschean 'slave', they have the capacity to liberate themselves from these limitations and assert their autonomy through personal development, innovation, or transformation of their circumstances.

Evolution is not a homogeneous, linear process: not all individuals are afforded the same opportunities to assert themselves as 'masters' of their own evolutionary paths. However, the potential for transformation remains. Just as few Nietzschean 'slaves' may overcome their condition by subverting dominant values, so too can individuals who find themselves in subordinated evolutionary positions break free from these constraints through education, creativity, and self-affirmation, thereby achieving greater cognitive and cultural autonomy. Remember monsieur de la Mettrie: *For a wise man, it is not enough to study nature and the truth; he must be willing to proclaim it for the benefit of the few who are willing and able to think. As for the rest, the willing slaves of prejudice, they can't reach the truth any more than frogs can fly.*

5.2. The concept of being master of oneself is framed in an existential transition towards the recognition of the need for self-mastery and self-awareness, which is reflected in the search for meaning and purpose beyond the structures imposed by the social, cultural or biological environment. *The drive towards autonomy begins when the individual becomes aware of their internal disorientation or existential confusion.* In Dante's Divine Comedy, the protagonist finds himself lost in a dark forest, symbolizing a state of bewilderment and despair. This marks the starting point for a journey towards self-knowledge and redemption. Similarly, *Homo sapiens*, when confronted with an existential crisis (such as the awareness of life's finitude, suffering, or deep dissatisfaction), may begin to seek ways to self-define and recover meaning amidst chaos. This recognition of inner turmoil becomes a pivotal moment for seeking mastery over oneself, as the individual realizes the need to reclaim control over their path.

The desire to be 'master of oneself' can also arise when an individual realizes that the values, norms, and structures imposed by society limit their capacity to reach their full potential. Some *Homo sapiens*, as conscious beings within a social context, may feel alienated or repressed by external expectations, which then leads them to question these structures and seek greater autonomy. In Nietzsche's terms, the individual must create their own values to be free, and this process

often begins with questioning the social and cultural frameworks imposed. The internal drive for self-determination clashes with the limitations placed by external forces, catalyzing the individual's desire to transcend them.

Some *Homo sapiens* possess the ability to reflect on their own freedom. Being aware that their existence is neither predestined nor determined by chance enables the individual to take control of their life. The desire to be 'master of oneself' becomes the quest for self-determination: the individual acknowledges that, although influenced by biological, cultural, or social factors, they have the power to choose how to respond to them. The search for personal freedom thus becomes a profound necessity in order to live in alignment with one's own sense of purpose, a journey that Dante symbolizes in his path towards knowledge and redemption. It is this moment of reflection and the recognition of freedom that empowers the individual to claim mastery over their own existence.

The desire for self-knowledge is central to the notion of being 'master of oneself'. For Dante, his journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise represents a means of seeking redemption through understanding. *Homo sapiens* who begin questioning their place in the world and seek answers regarding the nature of their being, the universe, and morality may experience a drive towards greater self-awareness and, by doing so, aspire to master their own destiny. This search for self-understanding is a key engine behind the desire for internal control. Through reflection and introspection, the individual gains a clearer grasp of their true nature, empowering them to act in accordance with their own volition and to become the master of their destiny. As the individual becomes aware of their capacity for decision-making, they are confronted with the responsibility for their own fate. This desire to be 'master of oneself' entails accepting that not only are we responsible for our actions, but also for our personal development and evolution. *In the case of Homo sapiens, this recognition may arise during moments of deep reflection on the impact of their choices, accompanied by the understanding that, despite challenges, they hold the power to alter their course. This awareness is a crucial step toward autonomy, as the individual acknowledges that they are not merely subject to external forces but are active agents in shaping their future.* It is through this acceptance of responsibility that one truly begins to take control of their life.

Finally, the drive towards autonomy is amplified by the search for meaning. For Dante, his journey is not only a physical one but a quest to understand his existence and his relationship with the divine. Similarly, *Homo sapiens*, upon confronting the reality of death and the fleeting nature of life, may feel a pressing need to imbue their existence with meaning through the creation of their own values and the

affirmation of their identity. The ability to give purpose to life and transcend the limitations of one's circumstances can be one of the primary motivations for seeking to become 'master of oneself'. It is the pursuit of meaning that propels the individual to act in ways that are congruent with their personal vision and sense of significance in the world.

5.3. Milan Kundera asks himself 'what are the possibilities of man in a world in which external conditioning has become so devastating that interior motives no longer weigh anything?' For the Nietzschean 'master' the possibilities are all to the extent that he lights the spark and observes the jungle in which he is. For the Nietzschean 'slave' there are no possibilities. The free field of his acts is zero. *And in today's world, dominated by slaves who believe they are masters, it seems that an excessive number of slaves is beginning to exist. These two facts lead us to a possible abyss.*

5.4. A personal consideration. Are there Nietzschean slaves in the practice of science?

It is said (Mario Bunge) that the work of the factual scientist consists in determining the veritative value of propositions so that, if they are true, they ascend to the category of hypotheses (*the goal of science is not to reach the truth*) (Bunge, 2007). Certainly there are some 'inferior' categories of factual science ('inferior' is relative to other ways of doing science), such as the mere description of structures, functions and relationships (e.g. synthesis and characterization of..., electronic structure of, electronic structure and biological activity of..., etc.) and the accumulation of data. Undoubtedly, these contributions are necessary for some more skilled scientist to use them to propose models, theories and laws. The texts presented here employ some propositions, which are accepted to be true (by 'public' evidence) as long as no contradictory data appears. Some of them, such as 'all *Homo sapiens* are animals', maintain and will maintain their status as true as long as we belong to the zoological tree of life. I think it is clear to everyone, I suppose, that concepts such as soul, spirit, angel and the like do not belong to the field of study of the factual sciences. *However, there is a huge gray field, of many facts verifiable by anyone and of a few other facts verified by a few, which is populated by entities whose ontological status is unclear.* This is the case, for example, of some psychological schools that seem to be a *toroul boroul*, with some primitive descriptions and models, and whose successes in a few cases are inferior to those achieved by a legitimate shaman from Siberia or the Amazon. In several parts of this gray field the temptation to apply Occam's razor is great, but it is wiser to try to know more before resorting to this crude procedure. I have had and I am eager to pass, not the knife, but the intellectual guillotine to many things I have read. Readers can decide whether or not it was worth killing millions of trees to print so much nonsense. The need to communicate information from this field to human primates that have not 'experienced' anything belonging to it requires the use of analogies, allegories, metaphors, etc. To the extent that science can provide exact definitions of some of these phenomena, the first trails will open up in this jungle that will lead to possible explanations. Two examples. 30 or more years ago so-called near-death experiences (NDEs) were the domain of unbridled speculation (NDEs prove that the soul exists, NDEs prove that the spirit exists, etc.). It was enough to examine in detail the various reports of NDEs for one of my colleagues and I to be able to propose, for the first time, a neurobiological model that associates some experiences during NDE with the malfunction of some brain areas or processes (J. S. Gómez-Jeria, 1993; J.S. Gómez-Jeria, 2006; J.S. Gómez-Jeria & Saavedra-Aguilar, 1994; J. Saavedra-Aguilar & Gómez-Jeria, 1989a, 1989b). The same was true of so-called out-of-body experiences, where the experiencer reports seeing his surroundings from a reference point located outside his body. It is already known that the stimulation of a certain place in the brain evokes this experience.

Curiosity and the continuous capacity for wonder are mandatory in scientific research: when both are lost, one falls into a kind of mental indigence. And when they were never had, it is difficult to know what I am talking about. *The ability to 'perceive' novelty, to 'see' new problems and to invent them is an indicator of scientific talent* according to Bunge. And he adds that '*revolutions have always been produced in pure science by people of this character, rather than by chance discoveries of long-winded and unimaginative researchers dedicated to isolated and reduced problems*' (Bunge, 2007).

Bunge also tells us this: '*Trouble-looking researchers are often seen as annoying. And rightly so, for an intelligence that asks questions is a critical intelligence, which is not satisfied with any achievement, however great it may be, because it perceives that it must be imperfect and, therefore, perfectible. Human progress depends more and more on the trouble-looking researcher, and a free society is one in which the posing of problems of all kinds and the investigation of them knows no limits other than those imposed by the state of knowledge*' (Bunge, 2007). In addition, these researchers are annoying because they illuminate the level and quality of the colleagues around them. The positive point about them is that they generate models, theories and/or laws belonging to the higher levels of scientific practice.

In short, there exist the Nietzschean slaves who make a science that is routine, limited, elementary, etc. And the numerous apparatus and laboratory paraphernalia that is used to create it is only a disguise that gives it an appearance of greatness. The structures that were once Universities in the full sense of the term and that today are nothing more than factories of human primates with degrees and with a scientific production of all qualities and levels are perfect niches for this type of specimens. But, as George R. R. Martin said, *even if we*

paint stripes on a toad it does not turn into a tiger. At the end of the day it is enough to read what a scientist researches to know his real academic level.

5.5. Feyerabend

He said that the world we wish to explore is a largely unknown entity. We must therefore keep our options open and not restrict them in advance. Epistemological prescriptions may be brilliant when compared with other epistemological prescriptions, or with general principles, but who can guarantee that they constitute the best way to discover, not just a few isolated 'facts', but certain profound secrets of nature? Read him!(Agassi, 2014; Feyerabend, 1975, 1996, 2016; Feyerabend, Gattei, & Agassi, 2016; Feyerabend & Preston, 1999).

6. The ladder representation of Plato's Cave and Nietzsche's masters.

I think I will repeat this out of necessity. When the appropriate method or methods have finally been found (there are many) for the present personal structure, it is when the Internal Diet must begin. The purpose is to remove grease, scale, cancerous nodules, bacteria and mental viruses, etc. The first objective results are obtained when desires, anger, and ignorance begin to disappear, and the subject-object notices that, so to speak, he is ascending the Philosophers' Ladder of the states of consciousness of the human mode. This experience can be likened to a gigantic, folded map that unfolds little by little. This Philosophers' Ladder, of which Plato's allegory of the Cave is but an elementary sketch (Plato, Republic, VII), consists of an enormous and apparently indeterminate number of steps and has interesting properties. I have already described this elsewhere (J.S. Gómez-Jeria, 2019a). Here I comment on a possible relationship between Plato's Cave and Nietzsche's masters and slaves.

6.1. The bottom of the ladder: the state of ignorance and inner chaos.

At the bottom of the ladder, the individual is bound in the shadows of the cave, unaware of the full extent of their potential *and trapped in a state of ignorance and confusion. The person is influenced by external forces, social norms, and internal impulses without questioning them.* At this stage, the individual has no awareness of their internal chaos or the limiting beliefs that hold them back from self-realization. Like the prisoners in the cave, he perceive reality only through distorted or incomplete perspectives.

6.2. The first rung: awakening to the need for change (at *some* point in the ascent of the Ladder).

The first step up the ladder is the realization of the need for change. Here, the individual begins to sense that their current state does not lead to true fulfillment or understanding. In this step, the individual starts questioning their own assumptions, recognizing that their life has been confined by these limitations. This is

the beginning of the process of becoming the master of oneself. *The person becomes aware of their inner chaos, confusion, and dissatisfaction, and recognizes that their perception of reality is incomplete.* Just as the prisoner in Plato's cave begins to stir and question the shadows on the wall, the individual steps onto the ladder, acknowledging the need for transformation.

6.3. The 'middle' rungs: confronting the darkness and overcoming fear.

As the individual ascends further up the ladder, he faces the painful process of confronting their inner darkness and uncertainty. In Plato's allegory, the prisoner initially struggles with the light outside the cave, symbolizing the discomfort of confronting reality and the truth. In the process of becoming 'master of oneself', this is the stage where the person must face their fears, past conditioning, and the discomfort of self-awareness. The higher they climb, the more the individual must shed old illusions and confront aspects of themselves they have long ignored. Just as the ladder symbolizes movement toward light, it also represents the uncertainty and difficulty of shedding old paradigms to make room for a more authentic self. This is the stage where the individual must confront and challenge their deepest fears (Demons).

6.4. The rung of self-awareness: a glimpse of true light.

Upon reaching higher rungs of the ladder, the individual begins to experience moments of profound self-awareness and understanding. This is the moment when the prisoner, emerging from the cave, begins to see the world in its true light. Similarly, the individual, now becoming the 'master of himself', gains a clearer understanding of their inner world, his motivations and the sources of their confusion. This moment of illumination allows the individual to recognize that freedom comes not from external validation or control but from the internal capacity to shape one's own life, values, and identity. The process of self-mastery involves making conscious choices about who one wants to become and recognizing that one is responsible for these decisions.

6.5. The rung of empowerment: embracing the power of choice.

As the individual ascends further, he begins to embrace his ability to choose and realize the power he holds over his own life. At this stage, the individual fully understands that becoming 'master of oneself' requires intentional action and self-determination. This rung represents a moment of empowerment, where the individual not only understands his capacity for self-creation but actively shapes his values, purpose, and path forward. Just as the freed prisoner can now see the world clearly and understand the nature of the sun, the individual on the ladder of self-mastery begins to see beyond superficial societal influences and understands their true potential. He is no longer constrained by the

shadows of the cave but have found the light of self-determination.

6.6. The top of the ladder: true mastery and freedom.

At the top of the ladder, the individual reaches the ultimate stage of self-mastery. The person has ascended through the various stages of understanding, confronting his fears, rejecting false beliefs, and making conscious, empowered choices. At this point, he has fully embraced his autonomy and inner freedom. The top of the ladder symbolizes complete self-realization, an existence where the individual is truly the master of himself. This is the state where they are no longer confined by external pressures or illusions but can freely live in alignment with their true self, fully responsible for their actions and their life path. He is no longer seeking validation from the outside world but live with a profound sense of inner purpose and direction. Very important: to reach the highest steps of the ladder there is a fundamental requirement, which is that it will be examined below. If this is not fulfilled, there is no possibility of continuing to ascend.

6.7. *Helping Others to Climb the Ladder? I am sorry but that is not possible*. Perhaps writing about the personal experience.

6.8. I think there does not seem to be a complete isomorphism between my model of Plato's Cave and Nietzsche's slaves and masters. This is because of the following. *The Ladder itself is nothing more than an approximation that can be improved by establishing that each of its steps is associated with a plain with its own geography*. That is why it is possible that someone gets lost in one of those plains (each with its own hells and demons) and it is quite difficult for them to find the Ladder again. *This representation, like the one mentioned above, is only a pale reflection of the real situation but serves for the purposes of orientation, classification and analysis*.

The representation of steps, each with its own plain, is associated with the symbolism of the Labyrinth. *Indeed, each plain is a labyrinth*. It is appropriate to say here that the Labyrinth is also a general symbolic representation of the personal pilgrimage that must be made in order to attain what has been inappropriately called enlightenment. We say that it is general because each one must follow his or her own personal labyrinth. It is possible that there are labyrinths that are the same, similar in a certain degree or totally dissimilar, but there is no known way to classify them and to prove that this classification includes them all, a matter that is otherwise useless and constitutes a waste of time for personal search. Of course, its description and classification for scientific purposes is important. Here, what has been agreed to be called dead ends are simply actions that do not lead to the final goal (not to be confused with the dead end at the end of which it was written 'this way you go to Heaven'). False clues do not exist in this Labyrinth: they are only paths that lead to states within the human domain that some, blinded by their ignorance (ignorance that is consubstantial with the rung of the Philosophers' Ladder on which they are), take as the end and not as an intermediate state. *Let us take the opportunity to say that the real secret that exists in what has been vaguely designated as occultism, esotericism, etc., is that there is no secret*. What is called the apple of knowledge, the first key or the first door (there are many more different names for the same thing), is there, within reach. It's all about knowing where to look. It is not difficult if one is on the right step to find Ariadne's thread or the breadcrumbs that allow, after the proper operations, to move from one step to another. The Labyrinth of the Minotaur also corresponds to a symbolic representation. The Minotaur is not a monster but a hybrid that personifies the most basic terrestrial forces that exist within *Homo sapiens*. What is the reward for all these efforts? Otto Rahn mentions it in a certain way in his *The Court of Lucifer*: Whoever looks directly at the Grail does not need to die.

Figure 8: 'Traveling' inside by dangerous areas (Chilkhaya, slide crossing with wooden aqueduct, Nepal, 1999-2001)

7. The metaphor of the ladder and the idea of becoming the 'master of oneself' within Schopenhauer's concept of Representation

To connect the metaphor of the ladder and the idea of becoming the 'master of oneself' with Schopenhauer's concept of representation, we must first

understand again that, for Schopenhauer, the world as we perceive it is not the world itself but merely a representation, a projection shaped by our minds. Schopenhauer's philosophy is grounded in the idea that human experience is mediated through subjective representations, which are not reflections of reality as it is, but are shaped by the individual's perceptions, desires, and intellectual frameworks.

7.1. Representation as illusion at the bottom of the ladder

At the bottom of the ladder, the state of ignorance, as depicted in Plato's cave, the individual is trapped in an illusory world of representations. These representations are shaped by external influences, societal norms, and internal impulses, which the individual accepts as reality without questioning them. For Schopenhauer, these representations are not true knowledge; rather, they are shaped by the will (a fundamental force driving desires and impulses), which clouds clear understanding. *The individual at this stage of self-mastery, like the prisoner in the cave, is constrained by representations that distort the nature of reality. The individual's perception of himself, others, and the world is governed by unconscious desires, societal impositions, and mental constructs.*

7.2. The beginning of the ascent: questioning Representation

As the individual begins to ascend the ladder, he begins to question these representations. This process is similar to the prisoner who starts to realize that the shadows on the cave wall do not constitute the full picture of reality. The first rungs of the ladder, then, represent the recognition that one's current representations are incomplete or distorted. The individual begins to understand that their perception of the world has been shaped by forces beyond their control, such as upbringing, culture, and immediate desires, and these representations do not reflect the true nature of reality. For Schopenhauer, the moment when an individual begins to recognize that their representations are not the truth is a pivotal shift in consciousness. *The process of becoming the master of oneself begins with the awareness that the mind shapes and limits perceptions, and true freedom comes from the ability to control or transcend those representations.*

7.3. Climbing the Ladder: transcending illusions of Representation

As the individual climbs the ladder, he moves through a gradual disillusionment with the representations that have governed their existence. *This is where the metaphor of self-mastery intersects with Schopenhauer's idea of transcending the will*. The more the individual ascends, the more he recognizes that much of their perception of the world is driven by unconscious desires and fears, which are reflections of the will, and not of true understanding or essence. Schopenhauer's notion of representation as a veil over reality suggests

that the world of appearances hides the underlying reality (which for Schopenhauer is the 'will'). To become the 'master of oneself', one must become aware of how these representations distort their perception and must move beyond them to grasp a deeper sense of self and reality.

7.4. The moment of illumination: reaching the top of the ladder

Upon reaching almost the top of the ladder, the individual achieves a moment of illumination. This is the moment when they recognize that his previous representations, shaped by external influences and internal desires, were merely appearances, not reflections of ultimate reality. According to Schopenhauer, at this stage the individual's consciousness transcends the limitations of will-driven representations. He achieves self-mastery by understanding the transient and illusory nature of his mental constructs. In Schopenhauer's terms, this could be seen as a moment of detachment from the will, where the individual steps outside of the cycle of desires, seeking instead an intuitive understanding of reality, free from the distortions of subjective representation. The individual now begins to see the world not as a mere reflection of his desires and perceptions, but as a more objective and clear vision of reality, even if that reality is still, in Schopenhauer's view, ultimately shaped by the will. Very important: to reach the highest steps of the ladder there is a fundamental requirement, which is that it will be examined below. If this is not fulfilled, there is no possibility of continuing to ascend.

7.5. The return: reinterpreting the Representation

When the enlightened individual returns to the cave, as in Plato's allegory, he brings a deeper understanding of the true nature of the world. For Schopenhauer, this return would be a re-engagement with the world of representations, but with a transcendent perspective. The enlightened individual no longer experiences the representations of the world as illusions to be acted upon by the will, but as opportunities for reflection and detachment. The person who has reached the top of the ladder, now a 'master of oneself', understands that while representations are necessary for practical interaction with the world, they must not be mistaken for the ultimate truth. The wisdom of the enlightened person, therefore, lies in their ability to navigate these representations without being ruled by them. *Now he can freely contemplate how those who believe themselves masters and those who are slaves are born, live and die without knowing anything about the World. In the present situation of the World there is only a small chance that his new state can be detected by slaves and/or those who believe themselves masters, or that he can guide some to follow his path*.

7.6. Mastery and freedom through transcending the Representation.

In Schopenhauer's philosophy, the ultimate goal is to transcend the representation of the world driven

by the will and experience life from a state of pure knowledge or will-less perception. Reaching the top of the ladder, then, could be seen as a state where the individual is free from the distortions of desire-driven representations and is in tune with a deeper, more universal reality. Becoming the 'master of oneself' involves learning to step outside of the cycle of representational thinking and, in Schopenhauer's words, approaching a form of existence where the individual is no longer enslaved by the endless cycle of desire but can experience the world in a pure, will-less way.

There is something that needs to be clearly highlighted. Nietzsche's superman, the 'ascent' through Plato's Ladder-Cave or the liberation from the chains of the Representations are achieved by the human primate only to the extent that he ceases to be an animal. Ideally, we should be able to stop belonging to the zoological family. Without that necessary fact, you can reach very high on the ladder but never arrive to the last step.
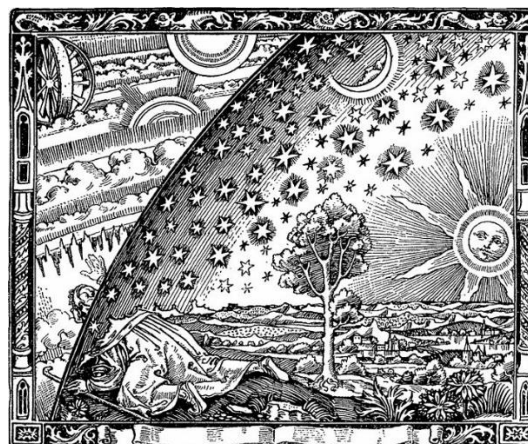

Figure 9: Behind the Representations

8. About brands and models. *Homo erectus*.

8.1. Let us remember, in order not to complicate the issue, that the brand of a car refers to the manufacturer or company that manufactures the vehicle, while the 'model' represents the specific version or design. I think that *Homo Erectus* can de considered to be 'the' brand. Why do I say this? Because a recent hypothesis about our ancestors seems to be reasonable (not to be confused with genuine) and would explain all the fossils found. The following figure shows the distribution of *Homo erectus* sites.

Figure 10: Distribution of *Homo erectus* sites (Credits: Roy Larick, Russell Ciochon, Yahdi Zaim. Athena Review of Vol.4 No.1, 16-24)

The earliest remains of *H. erectus* are found in both Africa and East Asia (in China 2.1 Mya and in South Africa 2.04 Mya). Let's accept for the moment that *H. erectus* left Africa in one or more waves and dispersed into Eurasia at various times and places and there evolved into various local forms (if it was another member of the genus *Homo* that left Africa, such as *Homo habilis*, we can reason in an analogous way). Genetic stability (that defines the brand) allowed some evolutionary products from distant areas to appear to be similar to each other (local evolution, for example, *H.*

heidelbergensis). These last products are the 'models'. This genetic stability is the reason why various 'models' can interbreed with each other (*H. sapiens* with Neanderthals and Denisovans, Denisovans with Neanderthals, and there should be more products of this type of crosses). *This is an interesting hypothesis because it predicts new crosses and different local products*. A new review of the fossils found could shed light on this regard.

8.2. 1.5 million years ago, a *Homo erectus* and a *Paranthropus boisei* walked along the same stretch of

mud within hours of each other. There's no known reason why they couldn't interbreed, which could wonderfully complicate our phylogenetic tree.

Figure 11: Excavating the *Homo erectus* and *Paranthropus boisei* footprints in Kenya (Credits: Neil T. Roach, Harvard University)

8.3. Imagine a mountain that rises steeply towards the sky. From one of its edges, a stream of water begins to trickle down. The terrain that receives it is composed of an intricate and varied amalgamation of elements that shape the path and ultimate fate of the water on its journey.

As the water progresses, it encounters areas where it slides swiftly, places that slow its flow and spots where it temporarily accumulates. Some courses fragment, branching out into multiple divergences that meander in different directions. In other areas, the water's advance is impeded or redirected towards more open spaces. The water also finds locations that function as small lagoons or ponds. The water courses that manage to continue their descent do so by following entirely distinct routes from one another. Some disperse across wide valleys, where the flow becomes slower, branching into a network of winding streams that zigzag. When new flows descend, some merge with the already established courses, increasing their volume and strength. However, not all watercourses receive this new contribution. Some remain isolated, while others experience further division of their flow due to certain bifurcations. This results in a complex and ever-changing system, where the water never follows a fixed pattern.

The landscape is not devoid of localized external influences. Occasionally, meteorites of varying sizes strike certain areas. In one sector, a recent impact has diverted the course of several streams along new paths. During thunderstorms, lightning strikes specific points. On one occasion, a lightning bolt created a channel that now directs a constant flow of water towards a previously inaccessible place. The thunder destabilizes

small rock accumulations, which fall and temporarily block the watercourses. Earthquakes have transformative effects. In one region, a seismic event left a valley dry. In another area, the tremor created a lake that is beginning to overflow, altering the lower courses of the streams.

The passage just written serves as a narrative that can be used to imagine the various destinies of migrations out of Africa. It was crafted in this way because it is easier for the reader to comprehend if he considers the first overflow of water as corresponding to the first migration out of Africa by *Homo Erectus* (or any other ancestor). As migrating groups moved, some were subjected to separation in smaller groups, phenomena such as meteorites, large thunderstorms, lightning strikes, floods, glacial cold, scorching heat, tsunamis, earthquakes, landslides, and so on. To this, we must add the local carnivorous fauna and the occasional struggles for specific territories. This narrative also serves as a metaphor for the evolution of languages, early beliefs, the creation of new tools, and the utilization of certain natural resources. *Only the scientific work of various specialists can transform this image into the concrete history of certain human groups*.

8.4. That said, here's a possible classification of actual human primates to be thought about. There are one-dimensional (1D) human primates. They appear as a flash of light but, for various reasons that have already been mentioned in other articles, they walk through life (or their lives) as if this were a path that ends in the grave. They are the absolute majority of the Earth's population. They wear something like the blinders that are used with horses so that they only look 'forward'. They are Nietzschean slaves. There are also somewhat more evolved human primates, and they are called two-dimensional (2D). They walk on a 2D 'surface' and know that the ground exists because they 'look' at it almost constantly. Occasionally some of them 'look up' and notice that there is a 'sky' (or 'an above' or whatever you want to call it). Few of 'those some', for reasons mentioned elsewhere, are capable of transforming into three-dimensional (3D) human primates. Few are also born 3D. This 3D human primate is the one that, in some cases, can perceive that perhaps he could be 'inside' something that is designated as 'Plato's Cave'. This division has biological roots that have not yet been fully studied or clarified. I comment that in other places and times this ternary division of human primates, based on other criteria, has been theorized or implemented (e.g., castes).

9. Languages and minds. Ancient Greece

Let us see what we can obtain regarding the meaning or meanings of some statements. Some interesting problems can arise when we use natural languages. An example. We use the term 'logos' in its various meanings. We know that this term is of Greek origin (Heraclitus seems to have been the first to use it)

and we also know that in Greek it has several meanings. And we also know that we know how to use these different meanings (at least the ones that are known because there is nothing to guarantee that there are some that we do not know due to lack of information). The question is this: with all that we know about 'logos' and about the language (or languages) of Ancient Greece, *can we infer about the way the Greeks thought?* (the 'structure of their minds' so to speak). *The answer is a resounding no*. It could be argued that we have many texts and fragments of texts from ancient Greece and that it seems that the way of writing suggests that the minds of those who wrote on something resemble ours. *But that is only a hypothesis that needs to be confirmed in a definitive way*. For this reason, it is necessary to reframe the question or questions about the similarity of minds in such a way that those questions that are asked must belong to the class of scientific questions. Then, if possible, conceive hypotheses that possibly answer that or those questions in such a way that scientific forms (techniques, experiments) can be designed to verify whether the hypotheses are true or false. Properly understood, before all this we must reach an understanding (a definition without intentional vagueness) of what is meant by 'mind' (or whatever we want to call it). This absence of knowledge or the lack of understanding that this knowledge must necessarily exist within the scientific field (in the 'hard', 'exact' or 'real' sciences) sometimes contribute to making reason dream and produce monsters in the worst case (Goya). A good example is the ramblings of Gerald Crabtree (Stanford University at the time) (J.S. Gómez-Jeria, 2018b). Crabtree is a good example to distinguish between '*the scientist who talks about science*' and '*the scientist who gives his opinion outside his field believing that he does so within it*'.

What we have to thank *some* Greeks for is having created, developed and transmitted a way of thinking and understanding the Cosmos that is ultimately the one that prevailed in the West (Schrödinger, 1961). Let us end this rambling by stating that, if we could bring Diogenes of Sinope to observe the world as it is today, he would only say '*many people, few persons'*. My opinion is that if we could measure human stupidity in percentage, undoubtedly in the time of ancient Greece (the 'classical' period) that percentage would have been much lower or perhaps the percentage is the same but, as we are many more inhabitants, the stupidity is more notorious. *In any case, this is only a hypothesis to be scientifically verified.* But it could be the case that if we randomly choose one of the Greeks who made up the tribunal that condemned Socrates to death and suddenly place him in the middle of a camp of extreme poverty, a peripheral population, a favela, a slum or among the protagonists of Herman Hesse'*s Medieval Legends*, it is certain that it will shine among them.

Experience shows that it is possible to find *Homo sapiens* in camps of extreme poverty, peripheral populations, favelas, slums or places where poverty is endemic, *who* live their entire lives with only the handling of between 100 and 200 words because the State has not been able to provide the tools of internal growth so that each individual can reach the maximum of his or her potential (the maximums are individual due to the effects of the personal biology but the State is still to blame for the lack of education). What understanding of, for example, Jorge Luis Borges or Lucretius can that person reach? Or what *level of understanding* of some religious writing or book can such a subject reach? In the latter case, verbal illiteracy leads to the existence of 'toll plazas' to be 'saved' (by those known as the 1%, 10%, and several others, the indulgences, etc.). And, by the way, systems of economic exploitation need 'illiterate or quasi-illiterate slaves'. Many cases are known of the blind led by some one-eyed man or of the blind who were led by another blind man, and all fell into a well.

Figure 12: The blind leading the blind by Sebastiaen Vrancx, 17th century

10. Truth. What is Truth?

'The truth will set you free' is a statement found in John 8:32 (New Testament). More exactly we read '*If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free*'. Unfortunately, this phrase has been shamelessly used for many centuries. And, an even more unfortunate fact, we are not told in that text what is the truth or truths that would make us free, much less are we mentioned what things or truths would make us free. Particular religious beliefs have interpreted these phrases as they have decided, and many others have used them to sell the eager masses any product. Assuming that phrase is historically authentic (and if it isn't, it doesn't matter because it's a very good phrase), we're going to save it here to be used later.

Reviewing a website that contains texts, I found 4974 files whose title contained the word 'truth' (February

2024). And in many languages. The Collins Dictionary Online produced these definitions:

1. The quality of being true, genuine, actual, or factual
2. Something that is true as opposed to false
3. A proven or verified principle or statement; fact
4. (usually plural) A system of concepts purporting to represent some aspect of the world
5. Fidelity to a required standard or law
6. Faithful reproduction or portrayal
7. An obvious fact; truism; platitude
8. Honesty, reliability, or veracity
9. Accuracy, as in the setting, adjustment, or position of something, such as a mechanical instrument
10. The state or quality of being faithful; allegiance

At a first glance it is more than clear that the application of any of these definitions is never going to set me free. Curiously, this phrase is used as the motto of many universities, colleges, and schools. These institutions have never 'liberated' anyone. A paradox! Thinking that surely the expression in question should have religious or philosophical connotations, I proceeded to choose a Dictionary of Philosophy at random. As fate would have it, it was Audi's Cambridge Dictionary. I got this (quote):

TRUTH, *the quality of those propositions that accord with reality*, specifying what is in fact the case. *Whereas the aim of a science is to discover which of the propositions in its domain are true i.e., which propositions possess the property of truth, the central philosophical concern with truth is to discover the nature of that property*. Thus the philosophical question is not What is true? but rather, What is truth?, What is one saying about a proposition in saying that it is true? *The importance of this question stems from the variety and depth of the principles in which the concept of truth is deployed*. Let us consider traffic lights that normally consist of three vertical signals, transmitting meaningful information to road users through colors (and symbols). I am together with a colleague near one of these devices. I enunciate the sentence: *'Look, the red light is on'* and my colleague nods: 'it is true, the red one is on'. This statement is enunciated in some natural language and seems to be true for both of them in the everyday realm (in the daily domain of the human primate).

In the field of exact sciences this is not so clear. What is certainly true for an outside observer is that there are two people who are looking at the upper light of the traffic light, that one of them is speaking and the other is responding. *But in the scientific field it must (or can) be demanded that, for the sentence to be true, it is necessary that the two conversationalists have the same visual sensation of 'red' when observing the upper light of the traffic light*. And in this case for many pairs of observers this sentence will not be true due to, for example, red–

green color blindness. So, since these scientists have a 'Color Sensation Meter' (CSM, not yet invented), they proceed to measure the sensation of color in many pairs of people looking at the upper light of the traffic light. Their results surprise them: using a red-wavelength light as a pattern, they discover at least three different groups of pairs of people (the matter may be much more complex, but this example is just for clarification): a larger group than the others composed of two people who 'see red', a smaller group composed of two people who 'do not see red', another composed of one person who sees red and the other does not (it is possible to construct more complex situations). So, and within the scientific domain, only for the pair the 'red light is on' = 'CSM indicates red' the sentences indicated by both are true. *At least it seems that this approach represents, more or less exactly, some aspect of the world*.

A few days ago, and by mere chance, I saw a video (https://m.youtube.com/watch?v =WoIkZ9lWRIs). To my surprise, I found these comments: '*This honestly feels like a visual recording directly from someone's brain. Everything about this is absolutely perfect*'. '*This is crazy accurate*'. '*I had a lot of these experiences way back in the 90's and I can't believe how accurate you got everything*'. '*At last artists recreate what I experience in my geometrical trip I never tire of these experiences. I am now 67 and have been tripping since I was 16, only now no acid only heroic doses of psilocybin thank you the artists really nailed it*'. *Let us suppose* that many years ago this author consumed a lot of LSD and that the aforementioned video shows exactly what he felt in the first stage of the trip. So, this seems to be an empirical proof that there is a group of people who seem to experience the same phenomenon in the circumstances just mentioned. It would be interesting to be able to do something similar with internal experiences of another kind.

But in the end, agreeing about the traffic light and what happens on the first phase of the LSD trip is insufficient to make the statement: 'there are people who have the same form of representation of the world as I do'. That statement is a fallacy of generalization. At most, it could be accepted that sometimes, in some circumstances and in some period of time, that statement is true. Certainly these issues are irrelevant to human primate societies living as such.

By the way, I checked several other dictionaries of philosophy and found practically the same thing (Abbagnano, 1997; Audi, 1999; Bunnin & Yu, 2004; Ferrater Mora, 1969). I must mention another fact. *I think that, at least as far as the West is concerned, philosophers are extinct, and their evolutionary product is just a collection of writers about philosophy who go round and round about the same subjects*. Philosophy today seems to be a walking dead. *Or they are painting with gray on gray, as one of them said, who was a philosopher. Or they are already at the stage of asking*

questions that cannot be definitively answered. Or perhaps, as Nietzsche said, they are already just *concept worshippers*, unable to escape the Realm of Quantity (Guénon, 2001) to enter the Kingdom of Quality.

Note that certain statements are momentaneously neither true nor false because we have no way of knowing what 'veritative status' they have. If there is any way to verify whether they are true or false, those statements are usually called hypotheses. *Nevertheless in natural languages sometimes we find certain expressions that are meaningless*. Watch out for them!

Figure 13: Judgement in The Hall of *Truth* (Hall of Maat or Hall of Two Truths)

11. Levels of understanding.

Let us look at the issue of levels of understanding during a conversation, or during the reading of a text, or when we listen to a speech or when we appreciate a work of art-art (there are some painted garbage, and some cacophonous noises declared 'art' when they have never been). Let us say that in an ordinary conversation between two people there is a 'full understanding' or that the two interlocutors are at the same level of understanding, if those two people know exactly the same set of words, with exactly the same meaning and their 'way of thinking' is exactly the same (i.e., with a similar 'internal' structure and functioning, a debatable matter of course). An ideal situation of course. An example of a lack of 'full understanding' is this: one of the interlocutors (G) suffers from paranoia and attributes to what he hears a second intention behind the meaning they both share, creating a second level of personal understanding that is spurious in this case (but which can have consequences). That is a second universe immersed in the first but only accessible to G.

Of course, when two interlocutors know the same number of words and share their meaning, but that number is very small (say about 100 words or less) the understanding can be almost perfect but certainly about trivial matters. And, the fewer words you know, the greater the probability of reacting violently to someone who has a better quality language (in terms of the number of words you use and the various meanings that some can have). Another danger is when possessing a good stock of words, in almost all daily life routine phrases, standard phrases or clichés are used of which only the envelope of meaning remains.

Let us see what we need to measure 'full understanding' since there is no reason why its measurement cannot be carried out scientifically. From a strict point of view, it would be necessary to make a list that includes all the words that are defined in the corresponding dictionary and all the others that are not and put people to mark the ones they know. This is impracticable because of the time it would take. And this is where 99.99% of those interested in the subject stop.

Something simpler. On a cloudy day you are in place X dedicated to task Y. Suddenly he hears two people A and B talking. 'I think it will rain tomorrow,' says A. 'I was wrong, and I brought the umbrella today,' B replies. What for you was nothing more than a normal, trivial conversation was an exchange of phrases intended for A and B to recognize each other as 'those who should talk to each other' and to be able to carry out some joint activity, secret or not. Unless the necessary codes are known, there is not the slightest chance of knowing that these phrases contain a second level of understanding. Or, simply, it is about two people who have decided to use language codes to be able to talk calmly in public about private matters without being disturbed. That is a second universe immersed in the first and accessible only to A and B.

Another example is the use of online game forums to talk about illegal activities using a set of standard words and phrases having a previous defined secret meaning. Now let us consider Caravaggio's Boy with a Basket.

Figure 14: Boy With a Basket (Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, c. 1593)

This painting is splendid and with exquisite and impressive details. We can contemplate it for hours without losing that feeling of being amazed. But we can reach another stage if we contemplate the painting with the following extra knowledge. At that time and place, the fruit is ripe and fresh and evokes youth vigor and fertility, which is confirmed with the young man with his soft and exposed skin and in a beautiful pose. Fruit also reminds images of temptation and provocation.

It is clear that two people, one with that knowledge of the symbols used at that time and the other not, will have very different internal sensations when contemplating that painting. And yet, within a small talk while watching it, when one person says, 'how beautiful this work is' and the other responds 'without a doubt it is', in the background lies a very different reality. The reader who has understood what is written here could now repeat the reading of the Bhagavad Gita at its different levels of understanding.

Conclusion: if you do not have the key or the keys, you cannot go from the routine conversation or the appreciation of a musical work to the next level or levels of understanding.

There is another problem that interests us (see below). Buddha, Yeshua and Muhammad (pbuh) have been attributed with supposedly secret teachings and intended for some specific and select audience of listeners. *Secret has two meanings in this context*. The first refers to the small group just mentioned. *The second is simply to make certain statements publicly, the meaning of which depends on the level of mind at which the listener finds himself*. Phrases such as 'let the dead bury their dead', 'he who has ears to hear, let him hear', 'by ear you will hear, and you will not understand; and seeing you will see, and you will not look', 'for to anyone who has, it will be given, and he will have more; but from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away', 'whoever finds the interpretation of these words will not taste death', *'a blind man and a seer, if both are in the dark, are not different from each other; but when the light comes, the seer will see the light and the blind will remain in darkness'*, 'that he who seeks does not stop seeking until he finds, and when he finds he will be troubled, and when he has been troubled he will marvel and reign over the whole and will find rest', etc. are good examples of what has just been said. Sometimes the reader is 'violated' with 'break the wood, there I am. Lift up the stone and there you will find me', a method that will be carried to perfection with the koans of the Rinzai school of Japanese Zen Buddhism.

12. Forty days in the desert.

After being baptized by John the Baptist, Yeshua felt an inner urge to reflect. Possible reasons. The desire to temporarily get away from distractions and social demands to be able to reflect alone. The need to find mental clarity and a sense of purpose. So he withdrew to the Judean desert for an extended period. There he fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. If we accept the 40-day amount as true, Yeshua could have had ketosis, significant weight loss, physical weakness, changes in blood chemistry and also dizziness, confusion, hallucinations, mood swings and difficulty concentrating.

The canonical version of Yeshua's 40 days in the desert shows indications of later 'tweaks' and offers elaborate dramatizations. At the risk of being labeled as 'selecting what is best for me', I will summarize Yeshua's sojourn in the wilderness, seeming to correspond to the philosophical maxim 'know thyself' (inscribed upon the Temple of Apollo at Delphi at least as early as the 5th century BC).

After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, '*If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread*'. Yeshua answered, 'It is written: Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'. Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. '*If you are the Son of God*', he said, '*throw yourself down*'. For it is written: '*He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone*'. Yeshua answered him, it is also written: 'do not put the Lord your God to the test'. Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. '*All this I will give you*', he said, '*if you will bow down and worship me*'. Yeshua said to him, Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only'. Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him….

After overcoming these mental and physical trials in the wilderness, Yeshua returned to civilization with, it seems, a new perspective. The gospels simply narrate that after the temptations, Yeshua returned to

Galilee and began his public activity, but they do not delve into his inner thoughts or doubts at that specific time.

My personal opinion is that this account is an excellent piece of Christian propaganda that contains some truths associated to the search for full personal knowledge. Essentially, this corresponds to the process of fighting and destroying Yeshua's demons (each one has its own collection, see below). At the end of these

forty days Yeshua felt prepared enough to go and teach whomever he found. I state that this real teaching is not known to us.

13. Anthony of the Desert

It is more reasonable to consider what is informed in *The life of St. Antony*, written by Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria. This narrative is also decorated with canonical phraseology that is easily perceptible and eliminable for background analysis.

Figure 15: Inner right wing of the Isenheim Altarpiece depicting the Temptation of St. Anthony, (from Matthias Grünewald, 1512-1516)

The first round is described as follows: But the Devil… could not bear to see such resolution in a young man but set about employing his customary tactics also against him. First, he tried to make him desert the ascetic life by putting him in mind of his property, the care of his sister, the attachments of kindred, the love of money, the love of fame, the myriad pleasures of eating, and all the other amenities of life. Finally, he represented to him the austerity and all the toil that go with virtue, suggesting that the body is weak, and time is long. *In short, he raised up in his mind a great dust cloud of arguments, intending to make him abandon his set*

purpose. Let us note that all of the above corresponds strictly to human temptations. This round continues like this: He then put his trust in the weapons that are in the navel of his own belly. Priding himself I these, for they are his choice snare against the young he advanced to attack the young man, troubling him so by night and harassing him by day, that even those who saw Antony could perceive the struggle going on between the two. The Enemy would suggest filthy thoughts, but the other would dissipate them by his prayers; he would try to incite him to lust, but Antony, sensing shame, would gird his body with his faith, with his prayers and his fasting.

The wretched Devil even dared to masquerade as a woman by night and to impersonate such in every possible way, merely in order to deceive Antony….. And again the Enemy suggested pleasure's seductive charm….. Finally when the dragon could not conquer Antony by this last means either, but saw himself thrust out of his heart, gnashing his teeth, as Scripture says, he changed his person, so to speak. As he is in his heart, precisely so did he appear to him, as a black boy; and as though cringing to him, he no longer assailed him with thoughts, for he had been ousted, the imposter, but now using a human voice, he said: '*Many a man have I deceived and very many have I overthrown; but now when I attacked you and your efforts as I have done with many others, I proved too weak*'. '*Who are you who speak thus to me?*' Antony asked. The other was quick to reply with whining voice: '*I am the lover of fornication. It is my commission to waylay the youth and seduce them to this, and I am called the spirit of fornication. How many have I not deceived who were determined to keep their senses! How many chaste persons have I not seduced by my cajoleries! Incidentally, I am the one on whose account the Prophet reproaches the fallen, saying: You were deceived by the spirit of fornication. Yes, it was I that tripped them up. I am the one who gave you so much trouble and as often was vanquished by you*'.

Figure 16: The Torment of Saint Anthony (Michelangelo Buonarroti, 1487–88)

Another round is described as: He then entered one of the tombs, the man mentioned locked the door on him, and he remained alone within. This was too much for the Enemy to bear, indeed, he feared that presently he would fill the desert too with his asceticism. So he came one night with a great number of demons and lashed him so unmercifully that he lay on the ground speechless from the pain. He maintained that the pain was so severe that the blows could not have been inflicted by any man and cause such agony….. '*You see that we have not stopped this fellow, neither by the spirit of fornication nor by blows; on the contrary, he even challenges us. Let us go after him in another way*'. Well, the role of an evildoer is easy for the Devil. That night, therefore, they made such a din that the whole place seemed to be shaken by an earthquake. It was as though demons were breaking through the four walls of the little chamber and bursting through them in the forms of beasts and reptiles. All at once the place was filled with the phantoms of lions, bears, leopards, bulls, and of serpents, asps, and scorpions, and of wolves; and each moved according to the shape it had assumed. The lion roared, ready to spring upon him, the bull appeared about to gore him through, the serpent writhed without quite reaching him, the wolf was rushing straight at him; and the noises emitted simultaneously by all the apparitions were frightful and the fury shown was fierce…. For he looked up and saw as if the roof were opening and a beam of light coming down to him. The demons suddenly were gone and the pain in his body ceased at once…

Another round is described as: So the Devil kept a close watch on Antony and gnashed his teeth against him, …; but Antony ….., remaining unharmed by his

villainy and his subtle strategy. Thus, he set wild beasts on him as he kept vigil in the night; and well-nigh all the hyenas in that desert came out of their lairs and encircled him. With him in their midst, each with open jaw threatened to bite him.

It seems that Antony had a lot of internal demons! Personally I think that Antony seems to have had the ability to face them and to have 'destroyed' many or all and to have publicized it (hence the stories). His subsequent silence is interesting.

Figure 17: The Temptation of St. Anthony (Joos van Craesbeeck, c. 1650)

14. Demons

14.1. We all suffer, to a greater or lesser degree, from political, religious, philosophical, etc., superstitions, which make us see things, not as they are, but as we are. Much of this heavy baggage is implanted in us when we are still defenseless, either because we are at the stage in which we still do not handle language (some will never do it and others will do it barely) or in the subsequent stage of mental helplessness (it is at this stage in which they instill you with Santa Claus, the stork that brings the babies, the little plant that has to be watered, religion and other things that it is happily possible to get rid of afterwards, in addition to certain forms of behavior). This happens in the parent-child chain, and it is not something for which parents should be censored, since almost all of them are inexorably condemned to do so for the time being. In any case, it must be said that it is all this gratuitous and poisonous baggage that blinds us, avoids the clear mental attitude and prevents us from seeing part of the picture. In any case, it must be said that free and somewhat poisonous baggage in some cases blinds us, avoids the clear mental attitude and prevents us from seeing part of the picture.

What are all these demons? The above-mentioned baggage lists some not very dangerous demons. Demons are not external entities that harass us from some unknown dimension. Demons live inside us and some of them hide in remote places in our internal universe. Our inner Universe could be described (at least mine) as a land of an indeterminate but very, very extensive surface, populated by forests, jungles, swamps and the like, some deserts, caves, abysses (some unfathomable), rivers, seas, lakes, mountains, mountains and *all kinds of artificial architectural structures* (some underground), and all kinds of animals (birds, fishes, mammals, etc.). *This internal Universe has a structure and a dynamic that I don't know if they are the same in all human primates*. It seems possible that you can begin to analyze them to the extent that we dream and remember dreams. Burt I am not sure. Most monsters/demons hide in dark places existing inside this Universe. Are there monsters/demons in full daylight on that land? Of course there are.

The 'demons' that populated our depths since we were born (each one has its own collection, see below) are created (or formed) each time we suffer a strongly traumatic experience. Even these experiences creating demons can be suffered within the mother before birth (alcohol, drugs, violence, etc.). Other experiences are due to the results of interactions with one or more monsters throughout life (abuses of all kinds). It seems that the rule is that the younger you suffer them, the deeper the demons generated are hidden and the more difficult it is to bring them to light (Asma, 2009; Severson & Goodman, 2018).

The technique to eliminate them has been known for a long time: V.I.T.R.I.O.L. (*Visita Interiora Terrae Rectificando Invenies Occultum Lapidem*). The journey begins by 'going to Hell(s)' to kill all demons. And what could be the reason for doing this? *Because this is the only way to be able to climb the Ladder that can only be climbed without any company*.

14.2. Let us note that in every human primate group there are multiple pyramids (parties, mafias, lodges, interest groups, congregations, etc.), where one or more one-eyed people occupy the top and the rest, with varying degrees of blindness, are ordered further down. And there are several stairs by which some human primates can ascend to create/improve/expand their sphere of comfort but that internally lead nowhere. 'One-eyed' and 'varying degrees of blindness' refers to varying degrees of lack of understanding of what we are and varying percentages of daily practice of 'being just a human primate'. *The stairs (in some cases there are none) inside these pyramids are illusory*.
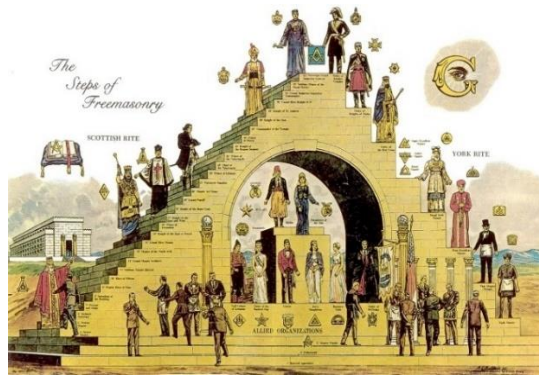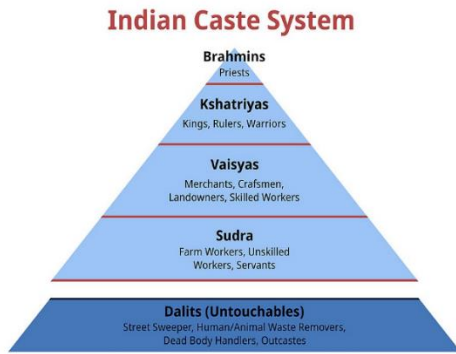
Figure 18: Examples of human primate pyramids

What I have just mentioned is what Nietzsche calls the *'Herd Instinct'*. Remember that in many herds the strongest individuals, pregnant females and the youngest are located in the center of the herd (equivalent to the top of a pyramid), thus minimizing the probability of being eaten by a predator. *The fact of accepting to belong to a pyramidal structure in order to be protected from the environment shows the surrender of part of oneself into the hands of another or others*. And it also indicates, when integration into a pyramid is accompanied by the knowledge that one will never reach the top, of the existence of one or more structural weaknesses.

A doubt. And what about the case where the human primate cannot climb the Ladder? A possible answer can be found in the figure below.
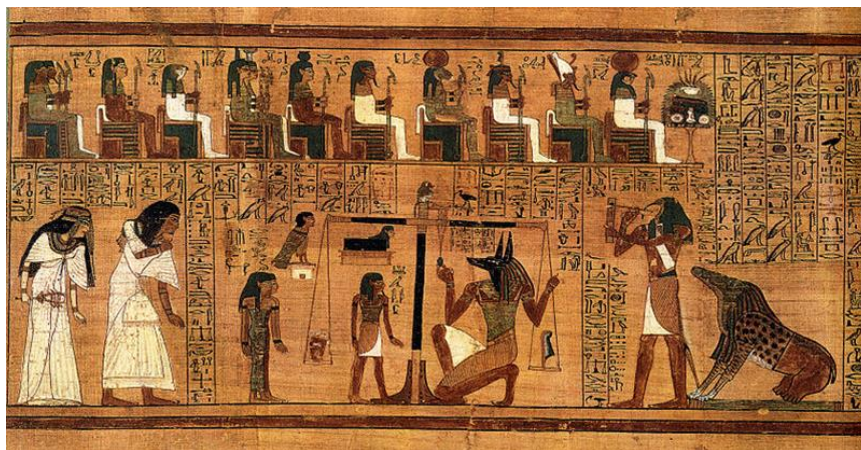

Figure 19: The Weighing of the Heart from the Book of the Dead of Ani

At left, Ani and his wife Tutu enter the assemblage of gods. At center, Anubis weighs Ani's heart against the feather of Maat, observed by the goddesses Renenutet and Meshkenet, the god Shay, and Ani's own ba. *At right, the monster Ammut, who will devour Ani's soul if he is unworthy*, awaits the verdict, while the god Thoth prepares to record it. At top are gods acting as judges: Hu and Sia, Hathor, Horus, Isis and Nephthys, Nut, Geb, Tefnut, Shu, Atum, and Ra-Horakhty (c. 1300 BC). This is only a hypothesis. My hypothesis is that evolution is creating *Homo sapiens* with the ability to perceive a 'different' or 'more expanded' reality. Apart from being born, growing, reproducing, aging, and dying, do we as a species have any other purpose? Probably yes but everyone must investigate this matter.

It must be made clear that the argument of incomplete knowledge of the universe does not serve to propose any idea about it. It is true that it can be done but, in order to gain respectability, a proposition must at some point be experimentally able to be tested in order to determine whether it is true or not. The impossibility of ever being able to demonstrate that we achieve a 'complete knowledge' of the Universe allows us to generate verifiable scientific hypotheses but also allows inventions to be sold to the credulous by social parasites.

15. Below a tree

Siddhartha Gautama went to the forest of Uruvela, where he sat under a pipal tree. It is narrated that, after days of deep meditation, Siddhartha experienced a series of realizations during a crucial night: He first gained a clear view of his previous lives, seeing the endless cycle of birth and death. Then, he understood how the actions of beings condition their rebirth and their suffering in future lives. Finally, he attained the realization of the fundamental truths of existence: suffering, its origin (desire), its cessation

(nirvana), and the path known as the Eightfold Path. At the climactic moment, Siddhartha reached the state of nirvana, described as the extinction of attachment, hatred, and ignorance, which are the roots of suffering. This state involves complete liberation from the cycle of rebirths and the dissolution of the individual ego into an experience of transcendental peace. At this time Siddhartha becomes the Buddha ('the Awakened One' or 'the Enlightened One' who has attained full *understanding* of the nature of reality).

Now let us mention the previous and great inner struggle. Mara, the Lord of Illusion, seeing that Siddhartha was *on the verge of attaining enlightenment*, felt that his power over the world would be threatened. He decided to avoid it by sending his forces to distract, tempt, or intimidate Siddhartha. Mara summoned her armies of demons, terrifying and grotesque creatures, who attacked Siddhartha with guns, fire, and screams. Yet Siddhartha remained unmoved, protected by his compassion and clarity of mind. Mara then resorted to temptation by sending her daughters, represented as seductive female figures, who tried to distract him with dance and beauty. Siddhartha, in a state of deep concentration, did not succumb to her charms, recognizing the transient nature of sensual desires. Finally, Mara questioned Siddhartha's legitimacy to attain enlightenment. He asked who could testify to his right. Siddhartha, in an iconic gesture, touched the earth with his right hand, calling the Earth as a witness to his countless lifetimes of virtue and spiritual endeavor. In response, the Earth trembled and acknowledged its merit, thus defeating Mara.

This is a situation of inner struggle against personal demons that is similar to what was mentioned above. Note that many mention the Eightfold Path as a path to attain liberation. Personally, I think that this path is only for human primates to 'live better'. The Buddha had already predicted the decline of the system.

Figure 20: Buddha, resisting the demons of Mara

According with the tradition, Dante writes in his Divine Comedy this about the beasts hindering his progress:

But! Just where the slope began to rise, out sprang a leopard, sleek and fast. Its hide was covered over with spots. No matter where I moved, there was that menacing beast blocking my way. Here and there it lunged at me, so that time and again it seemed the only thing to do was to run back down the hill [Note of Michael F. Meister. While there are differences among commentators on the symbolism of this leopard, the most reasonable interpretation is that it represents fraud, which makes things appear what they're not. Covered with a lovely hide, this swift and stealthy creature is really extremely dangerous. And it forces Dante to flee back down into the dark forest].

It was early in the morning, and the sun was climbing into the sky with those same stars that moved with it in the heavens on the first day of creation. That was the day Divine Love ignited their beauty and set them turning. Seeing all of this, and knowing that it was springtime, made me think that I just might make it past that wild, painted beast [Note of Michael F. Meister: The workings of fraud: forgetting the direction he's running, this confluence of the rising sun, the stars, creation, springtime, and Divine Love lead Dante to believe that will be able to escape].

Well, that was a rash thought! My hopes collapsed into worse fright when all of a sudden a lion came straight at me! His head raised high; he roared with such ferocious hunger that the air around him seemed to panic at his presence [Note of Michael F. Meister: Having been deceived by fraud into thinking (foolishly) that he would be safe, Dante is confronted by a second dangerous beast, a lion, which symbolizes violence]. *And as if this weren't enough, a gaunt she-wolf appeared, leaning and snarling as though racked with every kind of greed* [Note of Michael F. Meister: This she-wolf, greedy and ravenous, represents the sins of unbridled lust and sensuality]. *You can imagine how many people she's led to grief! Indeed, she brought my spirit so low because of the fear that seized me then – I just gave up all hope of climbing that hill.*

Like a gambler who one moment celebrates his winnings but then cries to see them trickle away, just so that relentless she-beast slowly forced me back into the darkness of that terrible forest I had just escaped. Running recklessly back into it, I caught sight of a figure coming toward me slowly – dim and faint, possibly, from so long a silence. Etc.……

(I employed the version found in https://dantecomedy.com/welcome/inferno/inferno-canto-1/ and the notes of Michael F. Meister).

How can be see a rainbow without experiencing wind and rain?

Figure 21: Hell

16. Yeshua. You do not understand what I am talking about

Now let's move on to other examples where the possibility of accessing more than one level of understanding is offered (this is what I call 'universes'). They are the parables and sayings of the Jewish rabbi Yeshua (taken from the Jerusalem Bible, my English translation).

In Matthew: His disciples came to him and asked, 'Why *do you speak to them in parables*?' He answered them, '*It is that you have been granted to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but not to them. For to those who have it will be given and will have more than enough; but from those who do not have, even what they have will be taken away. Therefore I speak to you in parables, for by looking they do not see, and by hearing they do not hear or understand*'.

The 'canonical' way in which this paragraph is worded (this is *the* official version of the Catholic Bible) is worthy of further revision by experts due to several contradictions. There are two important aspects. *In the first, Rabbi Yeshua informs his followers that they have been granted to know a teaching that is not for everyone* (considering that they were ignorant and illiterate fishermen, it is certainly safe to maintain that they did not suddenly become enlightened, and that Yeshua would have patiently taught them only what he believed was important, teaching that curiously is not in any text of the New Testament, NT). This creates the need to examine other texts that are proven to be as old as those that make up the NT or are even older to see what could be found in them with respect to possible non-public teaching (e.g., the Proto-Gospel of James *circa* 150, the Gospel of Thomas between 60 and 200, etc.). Whether or not they are accepted by any church as 'inspired' is, of course, absolutely irrelevant. The second aspect is even more intriguing since Yeshua is dedicated to preaching to a crowd in such a way that they do not understand anything, which does not seem to make sense. *Worse still, even the disciples ask him to explain some parables to them* (I quote: '*but to his own disciples he explained everything in private*'). I wonder if everyone understood them in the same way or form, a matter that is not clear and has not been clarified. But we can assume that there are *at least* two levels of understanding. The first is that meaning or perceptions that the crowds to whom Yeshua addressed gave to his speech. And it is certain that not all of them gave it the same meaning. The second corresponds to the meaning or senses that the apostles gave to what they heard.

In Luke: '*No one lights a lamp and puts it in a hidden place, neither under the bushel, but on the lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is illuminated; but when it is bad, your body is also in the dark. Take heed, then, that the light that is in you is not darkness. If then, your body is entirely illuminated, without any dark part, it will be as entirely luminous as when the lamp illuminates you with its brightness*'. This *appel* is very clear as to the possibility of more than one understanding of the predicate: *See therefore that the light that is in you is not darkness*. Perhaps some texts not recognized as 'inspired' are simply a 'translation' of teachings delivered at a level that were understood by only a few. In any case, and to stimulate study, note the contrast between '*And I also say to you, that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church*' (which together with an *ad hoc* interpretation of the common bag of the apostles led to billionaire churches and toll collectors between this world and the alleged '*hereafter*') and '*Yeshua has said: …… Lift up the stone and there you will find me, split the wood and there I am*' (Coptic Gospel of Thomas). And to stimulate the reader's mind a little more, here is a quote from the Secret Gospel of Mark: '*And after six days Yeshua gave him a command; and when evening fell the young man came to Yeshua, clothed in a robe over his naked body. And he remained with him that night, for Yeshua taught him the mystery of the kingdom of God*' (given the clear and evident esoteric meaning of 'naked', it is not worth discussing other possible interpretations of this text).

The canonical gospels record several occasions when Yeshua laments the 'hardness of heart' and *lack of understanding* of the people in general. Examples. In Matthew 15:16 'Yeshua said to them, 'are you also still without understanding?' In John 8:43 Yeshua says *'why don't you understand my language? For you cannot listen to my word'* (Yeshua addresses the Jews present in general, not only his disciples). In Mark 9:19, Yeshua exclaims in frustration: 'O unbelieving generation! How long will I be with you? How long shall I put up with you?' (It seems that Yeshua directs his frustration and exclamation towards the people or crowd in general). In Matthew 16:8-11, Yeshua rebukes his disciples for not understanding his teachings about the 'leavens' of the Pharisees and Sadducees, saying, 'O you of little faith! *Don't you understand yet?'*. It implies some doubt about their ability to truly grasp the lessons. In John 16:12, Yeshua says, *'I still have many things to say to you, but now you cannot bear them'*. This could be interpreted as a doubt about whether his disciples were prepared to fully understand his deepest teachings.

In the Infancy Gospel Thomas (19:3-5), probably written in the second century A.D., the infant Yeshua expresses frustration with his teacher: *'You fool, you really know nothing!'* In the Gospel of Philip (Said 74), one of the Nag Hammadi texts dated to around the third century A.D., it is suggested that the disciples themselves doubted Yeshua and his teaching. The Gospel of Judas, another Nag Hammadi text from the third or fourth century A.D., presents a Yeshua who sometimes seems to mock the beliefs of his disciples. In the Armenian Infancy Gospel, possibly from the fifth or sixth century A.D., Yeshua is sometimes portrayed as petulant and disrespectful to his parents and teachers.

The Derveni papyrus, dated to the fourth century BC, is a scroll containing a commentary on an Orphic poem. It is considered, for the moment, the oldest manuscript in Europe. It begins: '*I will speak to whom it is lawful; shut the doors, you profane*'. This prohibition generates one or more levels of understanding inaccessible to those who are not 'authorized' or 'unable to understand'.
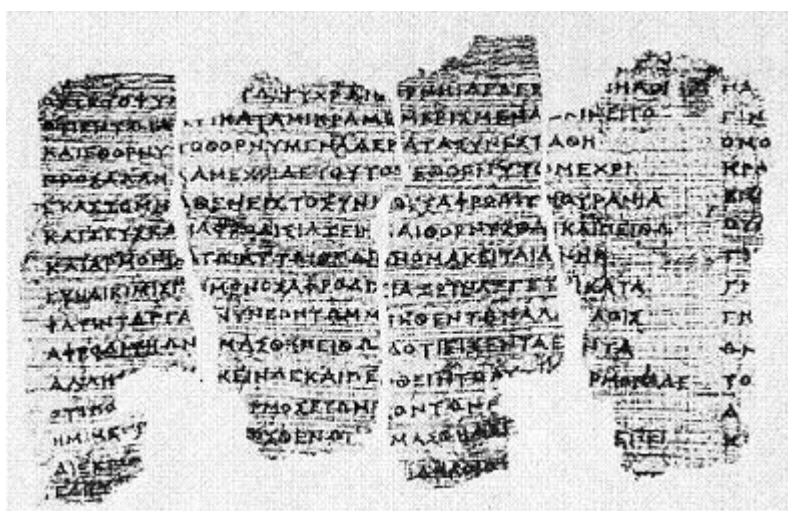

Figure 22: The Derveni papyrus

17. Siddhārtha Gautama.

Almost at the same time that Socrates was wandering through Athens, but in another geographical location, Siddhārtha Gautama (563 BC - 483 BC), became the 'Awakened One'.

It has been said that Gautama Buddha would have given a secret doctrine to some disciples before he reached the '*condition where there is no earth, no water, no air, no light, no space, no limits, no time without limits, no kind of being, no ideas, no lack of ideas, neither this world, nor that world. There is neither a rising nor a dying, nor death, nor cause, nor effect, nor change, nor stopping*'. Apart from the enormous curiosity of whether Buddha 'experienced' or intellectually deduced that such a condition existed, the question of possible secret teachings can be approached from two points of view. The first is the explicit recognition of the Awakened One

that he had not taught several things because they had no relation to the whole of what he was teaching at that time. I quote. Once, the Blessed One was staying in Kosambi in the forest of simsapa [a tree]. Then, taking some simsapa leaves in his hand, he asked the monks: *'What do you think, monks? Which are more numerous, the few simsapa leaves in my hand or those that are higher up in the simsapa forest*?' '*The leaves in the Blessed One's hand are few in number, sir. Those that are up in the forest of simsapa are more numerous*'. '*In the same way, monks, those things which I have known with direct knowledge but have not taught are far more numerous [than those I have taught]. And why have I not taught them? Because they are not connected to the goal, they are not related to the rudiments of the holy life, and they do not lead to disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, calm, direct knowledge, self-awakening, detachment, that is why I have not taught them*'.

There is apparently no way for us to know what it was that he did not teach unless some other able being goes the same way, comes to the same point, and relates the full set of experiences (there are several problems connected with this, but they are not of interest to us to comment on them at the moment). In this regard, the interested party can consult the five volumes of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya free of charge*. The other point of view is to know whether all that the Awakened One taught was public or whether some knowledge was kept to a select group. And I quote: Thus spoke the Venerable Ananda, but the Blessed One answered him by saying: '*What more does the community of bhikkhus, Ananda, expect of me? I have expounded the Dhamma without making any distinction between esoteric and exoteric doctrine; there is nothing, Ananda, with regard to the teachings which the Tathagata holds to the end with the clenched fist of a master who keeps some things*' (the *Mahā-Parinibbāṇa Sutta is available for free* consultation). That is why in this case we have that the Awakened One taught everyone the same thing without choosing one or more to teach them other things, but also that he did not teach a series of knowledge of which we have no idea of their nature. Since Buddha knew that his doctrine was going to degenerate as we see it happening today, we are left with the central question: why did he teach then? A *possible* answer is found somewhere in these texts. *For the masses he left the Noble Eightfold Path as a way of life.*

18. My doubts about Socrates continue.

18.1. To illustrate more definitively the issue of levels of understanding there is nothing better than a few comments on Socrates (J.S. Gómez-Jeria, 2018a, 2019b). But first some previous things. In its origins, philosophy was the love of wisdom (not love of knowledge, since this sometimes produces only specialists, many pedants and flocks of peacocks in the sciences and arts). My opinion is that Nietzsche was the last decent philosopher of the 19th century, that Martin Heidegger was the greatest philosopher of the 20th century, that there are no longer any philosophers of lineage in the West, and that, as Peter Kingsley states, '*philosophy became the love of talking and arguing about the love of wisdom. Since then, talking and arguing have driven everything else out of the picture, and to this day we know nothing else and cannot imagine that there can be*'. Heidegger already had the need to invent new terms in order to be able to express himself clearly and he seems to have had the idea that poetry was a method to be tested, perhaps thinking of Parmenides and his poem (Nietzsche did something similar). Words seem to have run out but that will not prevent the appearance of books entitled '*From A to B*', where A and B are any pair of characters rightly or unjustly designated as philosophers, B being later in time than A. I have seen a lot of them (with the excuse of 'influence').

It seems that, due to the bad home environment, Socrates preferred to spend his time in the Agora questioning the citizens. Athenaeus of Naucratis tells us in his Banquet of the Learned that Socrates was the lover of Alcibiades (and perhaps also of Antisthenes, one of his disciples) and a close friend of Aspasia of Miletus, who was apparently a courtesan and owner of a brothel. Another point worth noting is that Socrates seems to have been quite brazen and provocative (traits necessary to provoke 'thinking' in others), characteristics that will be maintained in their own way by the so-called Cynics.

We don't know if Socrates wrote anything or not, but it seems that he was the first to discover the enormous advantage of dialectics over rhetoric (Callicles sarcastically reproaches Socrates that he can't speak unless someone responds to him, to which Socrates replies 'obviously I can'). Socrates must have spoken a lot, about a lot, for many and in a very good way. This is reflected in the great variety of pupils he had and in the very diverse ideas they developed: Aeschines of Sphetus (or Socratic Aeschines), Alcibiades, Alexamenos of Teos, Antisthenes (taken as founder of the Cynic School), Apollodorus of Phalerus, Aristippus (founder of the Cyrenaic School), Aristodemus of Cydateneon, Cebes of Thebes, Cherephon (the one who consulted the oracle of Delphi if there was anyone wiser than Socrates, and the Pythoness replied that there was no Greek wiser than he), Clytophon, Critias, Crito of Athens, Euclid of Megara (founder of the school of Megara), Glaucon, Phaedo of Elis (founder of the School of Elis, his great beauty led him to work in a brothel before dedicating himself to philosophizing), Phaedrus (condemned for desecrating the Mysteries of Eleusis), Plato, Simmias of Thebes, Simon the shoemaker, Socrates the younger, Terpsion, Xenophon and undoubtedly many more that we do not know. As the so-called 'Socrates problem' has not been solved, the very fact that his direct pupils produced so many fascinating and different strands of thought is an indicator of the greatness of Socrates' thought. On the other hand, it is reasonable to assume that Socrates did not suffer from schizophrenia or multiple personality and that his speech was fully coherent. But if his speech was so coherent, how did so many of his disciples develop his ideas in such different and even contradictory ways? We will never know, but it is not difficult to think that these differences were generated from the different understandings of his disciples in the face of Socratic discourse (which strongly suggests that Socrates does not seem to have given very detailed explanations and that his disciples did not ask him for them). As many have constructed and promoted a Socrates 'à la Platon' it is worth remembering that it is highly likely that between what Socrates actually said (which we do not know) and what Plato wrote about what Socrates would have said there is as much way as between what Yeshua ben Yosef said or did (which we do not know) and what his sectarians wrote that he would have said or done. *An interesting point to mention is that Socrates held that it is 'safe' to speak the truth only among 'sensitive friends' and that in the defense discourse he implies that there are very few*

'sensitive' Athenians. Here Socrates already establishes a certain difference between sentient human primates and non-sentient human primates.

The various Socrates' students, while equally proclaiming themselves faithful, presented opposing images of him. And in each of them legend and history are probably mixed. It is clear that Socrates did not walk on water, he did not raise the dead, and he did not heal the blind or paralyzed. Therefore, it seems that we are in the presence of an *apparently common Homo sapiens*. Or is it that the way of being of the Greeks of that time prevented them from adorning the lives of their 'extraordinary' citizens with supposed miracles. Are there any remains of what could be the authentic thought of Socrates? *I have already offered my reasons for accepting that the Apology (Plato's) is a faithful recreation of the thought and character of Socrates*.

The issue seems to have been this. Socrates was apparently illiterate. His students were not, so if he had wanted to, he could have 'dictated' his teachings. If he had wished, there was undoubtedly a long list of students interested in copying them. William Turner, in his History of Philosophy, argues this: 'among those who felt the influence of Socratic teaching, there were some who failed to appreciate the full meaning of the doctrine of the master, and merely applied his moral precepts to practical questions'. I disagree with that opinion and think he simply did not want to do it. Why? We can only speculate. The observable fact is that several philosophical schools and sects claimed to be his true intellectual heirs. An interesting idea to explore is that Socrates expounded his thought (which is by the way a Representation) in such a way that several of his students formed their own Representation based on 'as they were' (their own level of understanding). Hence the differences. *And if this is true, then Socratic thought was something like a 'brushstroke of the World' in which each disciple distinguished nuances that were transformed into his personal Representations*. And Socrates seems to have known that this was going to happen. The novelty and greatness of his thought were the causes of our partial knowledge of him today.

To the reader who thinks that I am dedicating myself to discrediting Socrates, I answer the following. It is frankly repellent to see how over time they try to present us with an almost deified Socrates free of all the human temptations of Athens. These aseptic studies remind me of wakes: everyone speaks as if the deceased had done so in the odor of sanctity, no matter how bad it may have been. For this reason I do not attend them.

18.2. More on Socrates, Antisthenes and Diogenes of Sinope.

Some anecdotes and facts attributed to Socrates are these. *No matter how hungry he was, he could never act as a parasite* (one of the clearest forms of parasitism is represented by Thrasymachus of Chalcedon, who maintained that the only purpose of human life was to take advantage of others). He had the courage to suffer those who bothered and persecuted him. He was as effective in persuading as in deterring. He said that 'he was amazed to see that the sculptors tried to make the stone very similar to man and neglected to try not to resemble stones'. As Antisthenes always had the most torn part of his pallium in view, he said to him: 'I see through those openings your vainglory'. Reminding the reader that the pallium is the main garment commonly worn over the tunic and that in the case of Antisthenes his pallium seems to have been quite worn and lackluster, *the vainglory that Socrates attributes to Antisthenes is undoubtedly internal*.

Many things are said about Antisthenes. *He said that it was better to fall into the hands of crows than into those of flatterers, since the former devour you already dead while the latter devour you alive [the latter opinion is the exact definition of banks, moneylenders, loan sharks and credit cards since they feed on your flesh and quench their thirst with your sweat and blood]*. The best thing for men was to die happy. *Praised by certain bad men, he said he feared that he had committed some wrong*. His relations with Plato seem not to have been good since having heard one day that the latter spoke ill of him he said: 'it is kingly to hear evil having done good' (there are several more anecdotes). His disciples were treated rather roughly. When asked why he had so few of them, he replied, 'because I do not throw them away from me with a silver rod'. Asked why he corrected his disciples so bitterly, he said: 'Doctors also correct the sick'. His life was ascetic, he doubled his pallium without wearing other clothes, grew a beard and used a pouch and a crosier. *He said, and this is very important, that philosophy had enabled him to communicate with himself and probably to obtain internal results that are manifested in that apparent vainglory that Socrates mentioned to him*. What exactly is that internal vainglory? We do not know, but I suggest that it had some relation to Socrates' comment on sculptors but approached from another point of view. As far as is known, Antisthenes wrote a great deal. *Now, it is usually written to communicate something to someone, so our philosopher was clear that his texts would find at least one person who understood them as he wanted them to be understood*.

Diogenes of Sinope will take this particular way of looking at things and people and manifest it in a clear way. He clung like a limpet to Antisthenes (the latter having raised his staff, Diogenes put his head under him, saying: *'Discharge it, for you will not find wood so hard that I depart from you, provided you teach something'*). Some of his phrases (it is not clear if they all belong to him) are these. He called the governors of the people ministers of the plebs. To Plato he would have said the following. Diogenes had once asked him for wine and dried figs, and when he had sent him a full jar, he said to him, 'If you were asked how many make two and two,

would you answer twenty?' *You neither give as they ask you, nor answer as they ask you*. With this he called him abundant and copious of words [his relationship with Plato seems to have been bad]. Having been asked where in Greece he had seen good men, he replied: 'Men nowhere, boys I did see in Lacedomonia [the Spartan state]'. *Of the speakers he said that they try to say the right thing, but they do not try to do it [a good definition of a current politician]*. When he was taken prisoner, and before selling him, they asked him what he knew how to do: I know how to command men, was his answer. He asked to proclaim that if anyone wanted to buy a master. To the one who bought it he told him that he must obey him, even if he was his slave; for although the doctor and the pilot are slaves, it is better to obey them. The sentence that follows is exemplary. *One of them having taken him to his magnificent and ornate house and forbidding him to spit in it, Diogenes piled a large phlegm, and spat it in his face, saying that he had not found a filthier place.* Crying out on an occasion and saying, 'men, men'; when several of them attended, he chased them away with his staff, saying, 'Men I have called, not feces.' On one occasion, when some strangers wanted to see Demosthenes, he stretched out his middle finger and said: 'This is the leader of the Athenian people'. When Alexander the Great approached him and said, 'ask me what you want', Diogenes replied 'then don't overshadow me'. Coming out of the baths, to one who asked him if many men bathed, he said no; but to another who asked him if there were many people, he said yes. When asked about the most appropriate time to eat, he replied: 'If he is rich, when he wants: if poor, when he can'. He lit a lamp during the day and said: 'I'm looking for a man'. *On one occasion, having seen one who was being taken prisoner for stealing a cup from the treasury, he said 'the big thieves take the little one'. While he was at a dinner, there were some who threw his bones at him like a dog, and he, approaching them, pissed on them, as dogs do*. Asked which animal bites most perniciously, he answered: 'Of the wild ones, the slanderer; of the tamed, the flatterer'. Returning from the Olympic Games, one asked him if many people had attended, to which he replied: 'Many people, few men'. Asked what is best in men, he answered: ' Freedom in speech'. There are several versions of his death.

There are more thinkers who have been ascribed to the Cynical School, but these two examples are enough for our purpose. There are aspects that are worth highlighting. One is the Cynics' clear awareness that many people appeared to be human (human beings) but were not. *Navia's interpretation is that many people deceive us into believing that they are intelligent and decent, when in reality they are nothing more than camouflaged ruffians and are therefore not truly human* (L.E. Navia, Classical Cynicism: a critical study, Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, 1996. From here I got several ideas that are very well expressed. But, in at least one of them, I differ from the author). Recall that Diogenes was exiled from his hometown for an obscure

matter of counterfeit currency. *That was before he transformed*.

Thus, philosophy assumed among the Cynics an ostensive inclination and an 'exhibitionist' bent. The Cynics are comparable to artists who put themselves on exhibition and on occasion create out of their lives an entire performance for the expression of their ideas and sentiments. Diogenes has been referred to as 'the great hero of this tradition, and arguably the great prototype of much performance art'. Through his often shocking acts and merciless language, he exhibited a certain philosophical stance, and his life, no less than the lives of other Cynics, became an earnest theatrical performance, which would be repeated countless times after him, and always in the same exaggerated exhibit to alter or deface the currency, 'currency' in the sense of moral and social norms and custom, since the Cynics understood their mission in terms of the defacement of ordinary human values and modes of behavior, and the development of a rational arrangement of human affairs.

When we hear that Crates, after listening to Diogenes speak, converted all his possessions into coins and proceeded to throw them all into the sea, are we witnessing an act of exhibitionist performance? When we read about the spectacular self-burning of Peregrinus at the Olympic games in A.D. 165, are we in the presence of an exhibitionist performance? When we read about how the Cynics traveled to the Olympic games for the purpose of hurling insults at the competitors (for the Cynics had no use either for athletic events or for athletes), are we in the presence of an exhibitionist act? But we would be mistaken in assuming that such performances, regardless of their roughness and primitivism, were designed as mere circus performances, created for the amusement of the unthinking crowd, or conceived only as a means to gain notoriety and personal advantage. We must repeat Michel Foucault's contention, which appears to hold its ground at least in the case of some of the Cynics: what the Cynics said and did was generally said and done with consummate deliberation and as an expression of powerful philosophical concepts.

My personal interpretation of what has just been written (I admit to having taken some texts from elsewhere but, due to the long period of time that has elapsed, I don't know where), is that we are not in the presence of vain people but of deliberately provocative acts of the koan type used by Zen Buddhism.

19. Musical Cryptography
It is known that information can be encrypted within musical works. Imagine listening to some wonderful composition by composer X and having no idea that we could also 'read' some encrypted message inside it. The reasons for this can be varied: because the author knew that he could do it and did it, perhaps because the author hoped that in the future someone

would decipher the information, because he needed to do it for communication reasons, etc. Only when we can decipher what exists, if any, will we know the specific motivations. Josquin des Prez may have hidden messages in some of his works (e.g. in *Missa Hercules Dux Ferrarie*). Perhaps Johann Sebastian Bach could have incorporated a secret code in his work *The Musical Offering* (BWV 1079). Also, Bach used musical notation to write the names of his friends and hide their names in several of his compositions. Others suggest that Mozart included hidden messages in his music, for example in his opera *The Marriage of Figaro*. Haydn, Tartini, Vivaldi, Ravel, Schumann and Elgar perhaps used musical works to hide different kinds of information. In ancient times, the legend of the Terpander's kithara suggests that this Greek musician and poet used his instrument to hide secret messages in the music he composed. In Indian classical music, especially in the Carnatic music system, sophisticated systems of musical composition and structure have been perfected. Perhaps some composers have used musical techniques to hide messages in their compositions.

On the other hand, in the Vedic tradition it is believed that certain mantras have specific effects when recited in certain combinations and sequences (do not confuse the sequence of words with the sequence of sounds). In this case we might think that mantras contain information that is not encrypted in the natural language or languages spoken in the places and times in which they were composed, but that they belong to the Language of Birds that derives directly from the language spoken in Eurasia approximately 15,000 years ago. *In this case, it would be a language aimed at specific individuals located in a specific place in Plato's Cave.* In traditional Chinese music, messages may have been hidden. Let us cite Chinese opera, where music and drama are closely intertwined, it could have allowed music to be used to convey subtextual or symbolic messages. In traditional Japanese music, especially court music and imperial court entertainment forms (e.g., gagaku), musicians may have used musical techniques to conceal messages in their compositions. But, as far as I know, there are no studies in this area. *The paradox of all this is that in order to try to decrypt the information that is inside a certain musical work we have to know for sure that something is encrypted in it. But that's in contradiction to the secretive nature of encryption. Quite a challenge.*
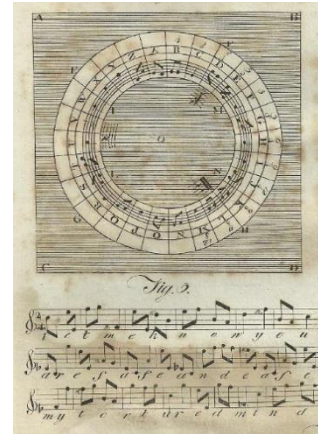
Figure 23: Musical Cryptography (see Abraham Rees, Cyclopædia,1778)

20. Vagueness in chemistry, physics and natural languages.

The intensional vagueness, which is notorious between two people who apparently agree on something (the color of the upper light of a traffic light, for example), is remedied with the creation of artificial languages in the exact sciences.

What is a hydrogen atom? In the artificial language used by chemistry, 'hydrogen atom' could refer to protium, deuterium or tritium. The 'chemical context' in which the term 'hydrogen atom' is used can certainly indicate which of them is being talked about. In the artificial language of physics, 'hydrogen atom' could refer not only to protium, deuterium and tritium, but also to hydrogen-4, hydrogen-4.1 (in which an electron has been replaced by a muon), hydrogen-5, hydrogen-6 or hydrogen-7. The 'physical context' in which the term in question is used will indicate the species to which reference is made. Intentional vagueness is extremely rare but not non-existent in these languages. Another problem with some artificial languages is that only a few experts can fully understand what is written/described in them. An example. I submitted an article (Wiles, A. *Modular elliptic curves and Fermat's last theorem*. Annals of Mathematics, 141(3), 443-551, 1995) to several experts in other fields of the exact sciences asking them how much they understood of its content. No one, including me, could understand it. This is not some kind of 'scientific sin' but is simply an effect of specialization and the need to illuminate new horizons of knowledge with new forms and terms. Discoveries in mathematics and other exact sciences raise these kinds of philosophical problems: was it absolutely necessary that determinants had been discovered or created at the time they were? Was it only a matter of time, given the crisis of classical physics, that the theory of relativity had necessarily been discovered by someone after Galileo's contribution? (J.S. Gómez-Jeria, 2018b, 2019b).

Figure 24: Vagueness?

21. Symbols. What are they for?

A symbol is an object, word, or concept that represents something more complex, abstract, or meaningful, often through cultural, emotional, or conventional associations. The interpretation of an object, a word, or a concept, as a symbol may be more subjective and depend largely on the individual experiences, associations, and perceptions of the observer. Today it seems that symbols have lost their connection with the inner life and that in many cases everything has been transformed into empty rituals devoid of meaning. For *Homo sapiens*, lacking clear vision, it is impossible to grasp the symbol unless he becomes fully aware of this inability and executes the actions to evolve internally.

Concerning symbols, Marie-Madeleine Davy sums up where they could be presented as follows: '*Il serait possible de faire une étude des symboles tels qu'ils se présentent dans la théologie, la philosophie, la mystique, la liturgie, l'hagiographie, les sermons, la musique, les nombres, la poésie, les bestiaires, et lapidaires, l'alchimie, la magie, l'astrologie, la science des songes et des couleurs, le drame liturgique, la littérature profane, le folklore, l'architecture et la sculpture*'. By the way, you have to have the necessary experience to see a symbol where others do not see only what their senses show them.

Are symbols whose nature as such must be learned through some teaching of any use? It seems that its use is for the members of religious or philosophical congregations to be enraptured when they observe one. Nothing else. But there is something important to be said in this regard. *There are symbols that act on the viewer without the need for him to know that they are symbols. These are the fundamental ones*. This is the case, for example, of certain mandalas created specifically to obtain a given effect.

22. Blame Feng shui

Wikipedia says to us (English version) this about feng shui: '*Feng shui is a traditional form of geomancy that originated in Ancient China and claims to use energy forces to harmonize individuals with their surrounding environment*'. '*More broadly, feng shui includes astronomical, astrological, architectural, cosmological, geographical, and topographical dimensions*'.

Before continuing, I have considered it pertinent to quote part of a story by Jorge Luis Borges, entitled *On rigor in science*, which is a reflection on the relationship between Representation and reality, and how the search for precision and accuracy can sometimes lead to the absurd. Borges wrote: '. . . *In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied an entire City, and the map of the Empire, an entire Province. In time, these Excessive Maps did not satisfy, and the Schools of Cartographers built a Map of the Empire that was of the Size of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it*'.

That is a good description of the relationship between Feng shui and 'reality'. Consider the 64 hexagrams of the Book of Changes. These hexagrams are formed by combining the original eight trigrams in different arrangements. I can ask a certain question and use some technique to obtain a hexagram whose analysis will give me an answer. I can get nuances from that answer by, for example, turning a hexagram upside down, replacing the solid lines with cut lines and vice versa, etc., etc. There are many more ways to modify a hexagram. I can also create some even more complex system to get an answer. I have designed as an example the system shown in the following figure.
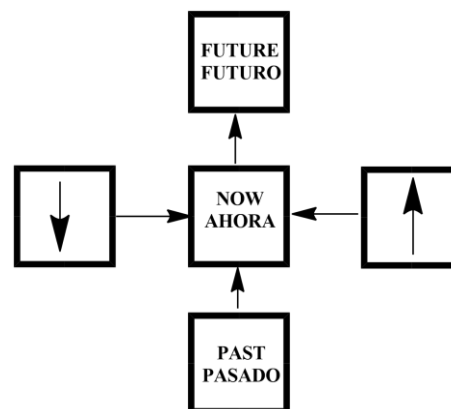

Figure 25: Possible hexagram structure

In this design, each square contains a hexagram obtained by some ad hoc technique. The central square, called Now/Ahora, contains a hexagram corresponding to the situation of the moment, and is the one that generates the question or query. The square below contains a hexagram inside that contains information related to the previous conditions that generated the hexagram of the situation at the time. The square on the left (with the arrow pointing downwards) contains inside a hexagram containing information about the forces opposing a way out for the situation at the time. The square on the right (with the arrow pointing upwards) contains a hexagram inside that contains information about the forces that facilitate a way out of the situation

at the moment. The square above contains a hexagram inside that contains information related to the final situation generated by these forces (Future/Futuro). *This representation is more complex than the use of a single hexagram and can be further expanded by adding squares to the right, left, and bottom that contain hexagrams of forces somewhat weaker than the former ones*. Without the need to increase the number of squares, a logical system could even be designed to modify them (inverting the hexagram, replacing the solid lines with cut lines and vice versa, etc.) to obtain even more information. It is understood that the construction of the system and the modifications of the hexagrams must necessarily be subject to logical and justified rules.

If I were to expand to infinity the number of squares on the left, right, and bottom sides, I would get something like the causal chain that produces the Now/Ahora state, I would be close to physical reality, and perhaps I could even predict exactly the future of that situation. See Borges' text above.

The same logic can be applied to Feng shui. I invite those readers who have used it to design a place to examine the ramblings that follow. The static of the place are the walls, the ceiling and the floor. For the roof, justification of the color. For the walls, justification of color and what is hung or put on them (paintings, tapestries, tiles, etc.). For the floor, justify its design (stone and type, wood and type, etc.). The content must be carefully studied: orientation of the bed (oriented or not according to the Earth's magnetic field for example), orientation of all the content in relation to the window or windows, (type of window, type of glass in them, sunlight, moonlight, winds, etc.). Perhaps the location of the place should be analyzed in relation to the 'amount' of yin and/or yang present, etc. In the extreme situation this again resembles Borges's story. What could we do in this case? In general terms, and given that this is a real situation, we can theorize and start from the basis that what mainly affects the place under study are external light, heat/cold, local magnetism, the colors of the walls and floor, local radioactivity and, very importantly, the sounds inside the structure. Local magnetism and radioactivity can be measured to regulate them. There are countless studies about colors and their combinations that are positive for the environment and its occupants. The heat and cold are adjustable.

Light, more specifically the range of wavelengths that are acceptable inside the structure, can be regulated with suitable glass in the windows. Sources of radiation and/or sources of electromagnetic fields such as power line, Wi-Fi, cell phone, cell tower, microwave, etc., must be detected and considered.

Mastery of sound is fundamental. Remember that in terms of decibels a person can perceive sounds from 0 to more than 85 decibels. In addition, the frequency range that the human ear can (comfortably)

support ranges from 20 to 20,000 Hz. Infrasound can cause states of anxiety, sadness, tremors sometimes due to imperceptible air displacements (waves of high volume but between 0.5 and 10 Hz, can make the vestibule vibrate in the inner ear, engines such as those of certain air conditioners or jet planes can cause vertigo, nausea and headaches, etc.). For skeptics, there is evidence that an infrasonic signal of 19 Hz might be responsible for some ghost sightings, an optical illusion caused by eyeballs resonating and that infrasounds caused a pseudo perception of movements on the sides of the visual field. Remember the use of sound cannons against protesters.

A word against the singing bowls. We are told the story that the 'singing bowl set' makes a thoughtful gift for those who practice yoga, meditation, or mindfulness'. 'The sound waves emitted by the singing bowl can reduce stress and help you sleep and purify your mind, making your active brain waves calm down, form a vibrating massage and therapeutic effect. The sound and vibrations promote a relaxed state, help yogis open deeper self-regulation, release positive mindset', etc. A quick review of Web sales sites makes it abundantly clear that the advertising for selling them does not include any verifiable scientific information about the possible physical and/or mental effects of the sounds produced by a given bowl. Some sounds are quite negative as exemplified above.

Katrin Kroemer, Henrike Kroemer and Anne Kroemer wrote a book entitled *Ergonomics: How To Design For Ease And Efficiency*. It has a lot of useful information. If you want to practice, you can buy equipment to measure sounds and detect electromagnetic waves.

23. Not all *Homo sapiens* are Human beings!

Politically speaking, I am an idealist and an incurable romantic. Any authentic revolution would have devoured me because of the way I wrote. Since in these times it is increasingly difficult to think lucidly without going with the flow, it is often necessary to say some things in a 'violent' way.

To begin, here is the list of some characteristics that, if missing in a *Homo sapiens*, could prevent it from being defined as a 'human being': absence of a developed brain or severe brain damage that impedes consciousness and thought, absence or severe damage to the nervous system that impedes signal transmission and response to stimuli, absence or severe damage to vital organs such as the heart, lungs, liver, absence of consciousness or capacity to experience sensations, emotions, and thoughts, inability to think abstractly, reason, and solve problems, absence or severe damage to memory that impedes learning and retention of information, inability to communicate through verbal or non-verbal language, absence or severe damage to emotions that impedes the experience of feelings such as joy, sadness, fear, etc.

absence or severe damage to responsibility that impedes the capacity to assume responsibility for one's actions. Importantly, this list is not exhaustive. But '*Homo sapiens*' is not a synonym of 'human being'.

24. Why must some be executed or be physically castrated?

24.1. The thesis that collective rights are always superior to individual rights can be supported from various social, political, and ethical perspectives. *This view asserts that the interests and needs of a collective, such as a group, community, or nation, should take precedence over individual rights when both come into conflict*. One of the fundamental pillars of collective rights is the concept of the common good, which transcends personal interests. Social justice is centered on ensuring that benefits and resources are equitably distributed among all members of society, rather than being allocated based solely on the demands of individuals or privileged groups. While individual rights focus on personal autonomy and freedom, these liberties can sometimes collide with collective well-being. For instance, if an individual has the right to engage in activities that harm the environment, society as a whole suffers. In this scenario, collective rights, such as the right to a healthy environment, must take precedence, as collective well-being ensures the survival and quality of life for all members of the community.

Human societies rely on cohesion and solidarity among their members. Collective rights help to foster and maintain social unity by focusing on shared interests, such as economic justice, equal opportunities, and access to basic services like healthcare, education, and security. If every individual were free to act entirely autonomously without regard for the impact on others, selfishness and isolation would prevail.

For example, collective rights related to education and healthcare seek to guarantee access to these services not just for those who can afford them, but for everyone. In this sense, collective rights aim to rectify inequalities and enhance the general cohesion and well-being of society, even when such objectives may conflict with individual rights, such as the right to not be taxed or to opt out of contributing to a shared cause. This is to balance one of the results of the biological inequality.

The concept of sustainability not only refers to the preservation of natural resources but also to social sustainability. Collective rights allow communities to manage their resources efficiently by regulating the distribution of goods and services according to the population's needs. In times of crisis, such as a public health emergency or environmental disaster, collective rights take precedence to ensure the safety and stability of society. For example, during a pandemic, public health policies that restrict certain individual rights, such as freedom of movement, may be necessary to protect the population as a whole.

Moreover, the preservation of cultures and languages, which are collective rights of indigenous peoples, highlights the importance of safeguarding collective identity against the pressures of globalization. The existence and prosperity of these cultures depend on the recognition and defense of collective rights, which often must be prioritized over individual decisions that might endanger their survival. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his work *The Social Contract*, argues that individuals give up certain personal rights to form part of a community and live under a common order that protects collective well-being. In this framework, the general will must prevail over particular interests. *Society is formed through an implicit contract where individuals agree to submit to the general will, which is oriented toward the collective benefit*. This concept underscores that societies must be willing to make sacrifices for the common good. Collective rights represent that sacrifice, and in contexts where individual and collective rights come into conflict, the latter carry greater weight. For example, a state imposing restrictions on individual freedoms during a crisis to preserve the lives of its citizens is acting in the name of collective justice. In a participatory democracy, collective rights ensure that decisions are made considering the needs and will of all groups within society. Individual rights can sometimes be interpreted in ways that favor specific sectors, but collective rights guarantee that decisions and benefits are shared equitably among all members of the community. Active participation by individuals in political and social decision-making through collective mechanisms ensures that public policies reflect not only the interests of the more powerful groups but also those of traditionally marginalized communities. In this way, the collective voice directly impacts the protection of everyone's rights, especially the most vulnerable.

It is important to acknowledge that, in some cases, individual rights may come into conflict with collective rights. However, in a democratic and ethical system, whenever such a conflict arises, the priority should always be the general welfare and stability of the community. When individual rights are exercised irresponsibly or without consideration of their consequences for others, society must intervene to protect the collective. Now, the proposition that a person who violates collective rights loses their individual rights, including the right to life, is a position with deep foundations in social contract theory, collective justice, and responsibility to the community. It is possible to construct a detailed defense of this idea under certain conditions.

When an individual violates collective rights, they breach this social contract and, consequently, expose themselves to the loss of the individual rights granted by society. The loss of individual rights as a consequence of violating collective rights is seen as a necessary measure to restore the balance between the individual and the collective. If an individual, by

infringing on collective rights, endangers the well-being of the community or the stability of social order, it is considered that they have broken the implicit pact that ties them to that society. In this sense, the forfeiture of certain rights can be viewed as a logical consequence in order to restore balance and justice within the community.

When an individual violates collective rights, they may cause irreparable harm to the community. This harm does not only affect individuals in isolation but compromises the integrity and sustainability of society as a whole. For instance, if someone endangers the environment, attacks collective health, destroys shared resources, or perpetuates violence, they are undermining the well-being of all members of the community.

24.2. *In this context, collective responsibility implies that those who violate the rights of others, which are fundamental to coexistence and general well-being, must bear the consequences of their actions*. This includes, in extreme cases, the loss of certain rights, such as the right to freedom or even the right to life, as their actions have jeopardized the integrity of the collective.

From the perspective of justice theory, it is argued that rights are not absolute, but rather contingent on social responsibilities. If an individual fails to uphold these responsibilities and harms the collective well-being, their right to life and other individual rights can be seen as secondary to the necessity of protecting society as a whole. From the standpoint of retributive justice, the idea that an individual should lose certain rights, including fundamental rights like the right to life, could be considered a proportional response to the severity of the violation of collective rights. If an individual commits an act that threatens the existence of the community or the lives of others, the loss of certain rights may be viewed as a necessary measure to restore order and prevent impunity. If an individual becomes a direct threat to the community, whether through acts of terrorism, genocide, or any other form of mass violence, the society has the right to defend itself, even if this means suspending individual rights, such as the right to life. During a war, individuals who commit war crimes may be deprived of certain rights, as their conduct has been deemed a threat to peace and the integrity of society.

The right to life is not an absolute and inalienable right in all cases but is intrinsically linked to the existence within a society that respects the fundamental norms and principles of coexistence.

The philosopher Thomas Hobbes, in his work Leviathan, argues that the rights and liberties of individuals exist only within the framework of a society that ensures order and mutual protection. If an individual breaks that social order through destructive acts, they implicitly forfeit the rights granted to them by society,

including the protection of their own life. While the death penalty or the forfeiture of fundamental rights, such as the right to life, may seem extreme, some advocates of this position argue that it is necessary to prevent further abuses and ensure that society remains just and orderly. Allowing those who commit grave violations of collective rights to continue enjoying all their individual rights could lead to a sense of impunity, fostering the repetition of such violations. Punishing those who violate collective rights sends a clear message about the limits of individual freedom within society. The preservation of the community, its stability, and collective well-being requires the imposition of severe consequences on those who undermine these principles.

24.3. A tentative list is as follows: genocide, war crimes, mass terrorism, crimes against humanity, hostage-taking, destruction of vital natural resources, massive environmental pollution, nuclear or biological attacks, extreme labor exploitation, organized drug trafficking crimes, kidnapping and trafficking in persons, use of chemical or biological weapons against the civilian population, illegal trafficking in organs, use of children as soldiers, mass espionage that compromises national security, serial homicides, serial rapes. Perhaps there is more.

Here is an incomplete list of extreme acts that can be considered serious violations of individual rights committed on a single person and that justify the loss of the right to life: robbery with homicide, kidnapping with homicide, rape with homicide, rape of minors, torture with homicide, femicide, infanticide, premeditated homicide, aggravated sexual abuse, trafficking in hard drugs, cannibalism, strangulation or intentional asphyxiation, homicide by or with mutilation, enforced disappearance with death, ritual crimes, living incineration, homicide with extortion, extreme exploitation with death.

Each of these acts constitutes a grave violation of collective rights which justify the loss of all individual rights, including the right to life. The other thing that should be studied are the reasons given by those who oppose such measures.

24.4 The ideas presented in these lines have very varied origins. The first ones date back to the times when I was an administrator of sites, forums, and private mailing lists in the 1990s-2000s. Others come from writings uploaded to the Web with pseudonyms to avoid problems, etc. Reading Desmond Morris did not produce a state of enlightenment in me, but it did allow me to order the ideas and present them in a more palatable (sic) way. In his The Naked Ape, Desmond finds it necessary to apologize to the reader for I don't know what or what reason. There are no such apologies here because what has been said has solid foundations. I present it as a series of questions and answers because that is how the first document was drafted in the 90s.

1. Can you define the fundamental bases of your position? 1a. Our positions (I write in the plural out of respect and recognition for those who contributed several times to those ideas) are based on the following facts that are verifiable by any reader. The surface of planet Earth is finite. The percentage of mainland may be variable (glaciations) but remains finite. Let's put ourselves in the best case scenario and accept that it is possible to use all the solid ground (100%) to build 500-story buildings where we can also put crops, domestic animals and everything of which we can think. No matter how large that new surface area is, it is still finite. On the other hand, and without exaggerating so much, it can be stated categorically that there are areas of the earth's surface that are not habitable: slopes of volcanoes, areas floodable by flooding rivers, areas at risk from tsunamis, floods, earthquakes, etc. In short: whatever we say and whatever stories we want to tell, only from the geographical point of view, there is a maximum number of inhabitants that this planet can accept.

1b. To the considerations of point 1a, we must add several others such as those that follow (there are more by the way). Unfortunately, since no one bothers to determine what is the maximum number of inhabitants that can inhabit a sustainable Earth, the uncontrolled growth of the population is causing the extinction of many species and entire ecosystems are disappearing or are going to disappear, more and more individuals are settling in risk areas and dying, and pollution is increasing uncontrollably. Therefore, it is essential not only to stop the growth of the population, but also to generate the conditions to reduce its number. We will return to these aspects later.

1c. The last point can be expressed very shortly. We have about 5,000 to 11,000 years of civilization which is a trifle compared to the last million years of evolution that leads to us, Homo *sapiens*. Beneath that layer of civilization's veneer lies a primate-like biological behavior that regulates almost 100% of our daily lives. We can dress in ermine robes, jewelry, weapons or space suits but, underneath all that paraphernalia, lies a simple naked jumpsuit. Morris's books contain a good number of concrete examples.

1d. Another aspect that should be included in this conversation is the following. No matter how much they are, the resources that Mother Earth gives us are finite and sooner or later they will begin to run out. Let's make this very clear. It doesn't matter what the number of inhabitants is, and it doesn't matter if we move towards what has been called a post-technological civilization. It also doesn't matter if we perfect the ability to extract mineral resources from places such as the bottom of the sea or from nearby asteroids (the latter is a long way off).

1e. It should also be noted that the uncontrolled growth of the population will reduce the areas devoted to cultivation, animal husbandry and, over time, the areas used for fish farming.

2. You affirm that there is a maximum number of inhabitants for a sustainable Earth. Do you have any numbers in this regard? and Are you included in this issue? Those are good questions. I don't know the maximum number and I don't include myself in that maximum number.

Soon or later, due to the increasing number of human primates populating the Earth, an excess population will appear, and it will have to be controlled without any excuse. Mandatory eugenic abortion and eugenic sterilization will be introduced, and eventually genetic engineering will begin to operate to obtain biologically healthy human primates in all their dimensions.

It only remains to add that, since this primate has taken its stupidity to the limit of believing that the Earth belongs to it and not that it belongs to the Earth, it is to be hoped that the species that succeeds us evolutionarily will dispose of us as quickly as possible. In any case, this insolence and arrogance is going to cost us dearly. We must try to raise the level of the human gene pool, which is nothing more than a disgusting puddle since the population explosion (modified from Ursula K. Le Guin).

25. About masks

Let's start this section with this statement from Graham Parkes: 'Over the course of a day, a member of society is asked to play a number of roles, and to help interpret the various roles we use various types of masks, which reveal as well as conceal. *Metaphorically speaking, the face becomes a mask. We rarely present ourselves to others in a complete way, but mostly through the mask that hides some part or parts of our person*. In addition, just as we put a good face on things or pretend to hide what we would prefer others not to see, we also use 'internal' masks to hide aspects of ourselves that we would prefer not to recognize. At the same time, however, the choice of a particular mask signifies a part of the person and can reveal an aspect of the wearer's personality that would otherwise remain hidden'. *The ability to form facial expressions is present from birth and develops and becomes more complex with age*.

Let us now add a few Nietzsche, who was the inspiration for these thoughts.

'In any case, it is not possible to ignore the fact that I do not fully understand this self-imposed preoccupation, which distracts me from myself (and moreover from Schopenhauer, which so often amounts to the same thing), which in its consequences exposes me to people's judgment *and even forces me to assume the mask of an erudition that I do not have*' (To Carl von Gersdorff in Görlitz, Correspondence vol. 1, 500, April 7, 1866, Naumburg).

'*It is my destiny to show myself only under masks, I am very sincere with you in revealing so much of me.* This is only between us' (To Heinrich von Stein in Halle, Correspondence, Vol. 1, 584, Draft, mid-March 1885, Niza).

'The intellect, as a means for the preservation of the individual, develops its capital forces in fiction; for fiction is the means by which the weakest and least robust individuals are preserved, those who have not been granted horns or the sharp teeth of a butcher animal to engage in the struggle for existence. *This art of fiction reaches its peak in the human being: here deceit, flattery, lies and fraud, gossip, hypocrisy, living on inherited lustres, masking, concealing conventionalism, theatre before others and before oneself, in a word, the incessant fluttering around the flame of vanity is to such an extent the rule and the law*, that there is scarcely anything more inconceivable than that a sincere and pure impulse towards truth could have arisen among humans' (Nietzsche, On truth and lies in an extramoral sense).

Figure 26: Plague mask

Consider the following statements:

1. As a member of several groups (society, workplace, place of study, societies, mafias, lodges and clubs of all kinds to which we belong, etc.) we are asked, or rather almost forced, to use/place certain facial expressions *that the passage of time has established as those that 'must be used' in certain circumstances* (it is the 'social mask'). There are few facial expressions that are accepted to be 'used' at any time: '*I'm sick*', '*I feel sick*', '*X died*', and the like. At a funeral, the facial expression is expected to denote sadness, seriousness, and respect. Smiling or laughing would be very inappropriate. In a job interview, you are expected to maintain a serious and attentive countenance. *Expressions of boredom or frivolity would convey a bad impression. When receiving a gift, the recipient is expected to smile and show joy and gratitude, regardless of whether the gift is to personal taste or not.* In romantic or intimate encounters, expressions usually communicate affection, interest and complicity with the partner. In formal meetings or public events, it is usual to maintain a neutral and attentive face, avoiding gestures of annoyance, disapproval or sarcasm. When introduced to someone new, you expect to smile in a friendly way and make eye contact. *The social mask is a concept proposed by sociologist Erving Goffman that*

refers to the human ability to control or modify facial expressions according to social norms and expectations of a given situation.

What is expected of us is that those masks reveal/show that the individual is 'functioning' according to the circumstances. *In these cases, an external observer cannot know whether or not the association 'facial expression-internal reality' exists*. This absence is what opens the door to various forms of deception.

2. *When the association 'facial expression-internal reality' does not exist in reality, it is when we can say that the individual is hiding something, or does not want to show something, or wants to be seen in a certain way and, as Graham Parkes says, the face becomes a mask. The social mask serves to facilitate interaction, but taken to the extreme it can also become a false façade that makes it difficult to show our authenticity*. Like literal masks, it hides but also reveals aspects of the person who wears it. *Some examples of humans who simulate facial expressions to deceive others: smiling and being friendly with someone we really don't like or dislike*, just to look good socially, making a surprised or interested face when someone tells us something boring or that we already know, so as not to seem impolite, masking anger with a smile during an argument with a partner or a loved one, to avoid appearing too aggressive, during job interviews, amplify gestures of enthusiasm and assent to make a good impression on the interviewer, on romantic dates, force gestures of joy and attraction when we do not sincerely feel them, hide gestures of pain or sadness during a bereavement to appear strong in front of others, etc. We also have politicians who feign empathy and closeness to people through fake or rehearsed facial expressions and people with personality disorders who manipulate their facial expressions to achieve their goals. But there is no more repugnant case than the one who smiles at you, gives some minimal sign of generosity with what is not his, his actions belie his smiles and tries at all costs not to appear related to reprehensible acts (the latter thanks to the semi-blind, poor in spirit of butt kisser who stand up for him). An inspiration for a statue of falsehood.

3. The assertion that '*we rarely present ourselves to others in a complete way, but mostly through a mask that hides or does not manifest some part or parts of our person*' seems not to be completely true since **there is no facial expression that shows one in its 'totality'**. We cannot use several masks at the same time, only the one that 'corresponds'. *At most, we must be consistent with ourselves and with our environment and show the facial expression corresponding to the moment on our face.*

4. There is something that has fascinated me about masks and that is fully reflected in Lord of the Flies by William Golding: the change of identity/personality with the right mask in the right place at the right time (in

a few cases I believe). Sociologically, masks allow us to assume identities other than one's own, to hide one's face and social class. They have been important in secret societies and protest movements. They allow you to free yourself from social inhibitions. By assuming a masked identity different from one's own, a psychological dissociation is experienced that can be liberating and cathartic for the person.

5. Historically, the use of masks can be traced back to shamanic and tribal rituals of prehistory. For example, the ivory mask from La Roche-Cotard in France which is about 75,600 years old. In general, they depict the heads of animals such as bison, lions, bears, birds of prey. It is speculated that they were used by shamans in rituals to acquire the power of the animal represented. Some masks combine human and animal features, suggesting some sort of fusion between man and beast during the shamanic trance. In the Trois Frères Cave in France there are cave paintings from the Paleolithic era of a shaman wearing a deer mask ('The Sorcerer', 13,000 years ago).

Ancient civilizations such as Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans wore masks in theater and festivals. In Ancient Egypt, gold funerary masks have been found placed on the faces of mummies to protect them and represent the ka or life force. They also wore masks of zoomorphic deities such as jackal-headed Anubis. In rituals and festivals, priests wore masks to impersonate gods and deified pharaohs. In Ancient Greece, masks were essential in the theater. They overrepresented emotions and helped the actors play different roles. They were made of wood, bark, linen, and plaster. In the Dionysian rites to the god of wine, satyr masks were used to symbolize debauchery. The Etruscans influenced the wearing of masks in Ancient Rome. They were used in festivals, funeral rites and to represent ancestors. In military triumphs, generals wore masks reminiscent of gods. In the amphitheaters, gladiators and actors wore helmets and masks.

In Ancient India, Sanskrit theater included elaborate masks of Hindu mythical characters such as Krishna or Kali. They represented exaggerated emotions. In tantric rituals, practitioners wore masks of deities to identify with the divine. The Assyrians used masks of winged deities with human heads and bull bodies to decorate royal palaces. They symbolized the protective force of the king. Masks have also been found in Persian and Babylonian funeral rites. Jade masks from the Shang Dynasty (1600 B.C.-1046 B.C.) have been found in China. They represent protective spirits and were placed in tombs. In shamanistic rituals, totemic animal masks made of wood were used.

6. In the Middle Ages, individuals from the lower classes participated with masks in transgressive carnivals where the nobility and the clergy were criticized. They could act more freely under the cover of anonymity. In the eighteenth century, the Italian subculture of the "Incroyables and Merveilleuses" used elegant masks and masks to attend libertine parties that contradicted public morals. The Feast of Fools was celebrated in many European cities at Christmas and Epiphany, participants elected a Bishop of Fools and paraded in costumes and masks, satirizing clerical authorities. The Carnival of Venice emerged in the eleventh century and typical masks were created for it, such as that of the plague doctor, Captain Spavento or the voluptuous Moretta. Venetians could conceal their identity while participating in dances and courtships. The May Festivities commemorated the arrival of spring with parades, banquets, dances and theatrical performances where masks of folkloric characters were worn to symbolize seasonal renewal. The Celtic people celebrated the Winter Solstice with masks and animal costumes representing the spirit of the forest and fertility in pagan rites that were assimilated as Christmas Day. The Rio Carnival has its roots in the Roman Saturnalia and European carnivals, it came to Brazil in the colonial period and today is famous for its striking costumes, dancers and feathered masks. We urgently need more Fiestas de los Locos.

7. Masks are related to concepts such as identity, self-awareness, duality and metamorphosis, since by hiding the face and imitating another appearance they generate a dissociation and splitting of the person between their real self and the new character assumed. This invites us to reflect on the changing nature of human beings, who are constantly transforming their identity and can play various roles throughout life according to social circumstances. Wearing a mask shows that identity is not fixed but malleable and subject to constant adaptations according to cultural norms and expectations of others. *By allowing multiple identities to play, the masks demonstrate that human self-awareness is not monolithic but fragmented between different facets of the conscious and unconscious self*. The duality between hidden face and false face in the mask is a metaphor for the internal complexity of each subject, often divided between what we must be in order to adjust to collective patterns, and our internal impulses that are hidden from the public gaze.

The good mental health of the population should include various Carnivals of Masks in which the participants are really disguised with masks (that no one can recognize).

26. This may sound funny or not credible but when I was young this was the situation at that time. When I started working at the University I genuinely believed I was entering a kind of sanctuary of knowledge. It took me only a week to become disillusioned in this regard. Then I found out that in Paris there were the same type of humans with the same type of behavior as in my country. I certainly found very few notable exceptions. And I also met few notable people.

In what follows I am going to describe a distillate of the worst biotypes found in any University, as well as in other places.

There are those who make stupidity a mode of daily behavior (they exist!), the hypocrites who close the kingdom of research to others and do not even enter themselves (parasites), the blind guides who strain out a mosquito and swallow a camel, those who like to walk in long robes, those loving greetings and the first chairs or seats wherever they go, those who believe themselves to be the drum major of some small group, the flutes who believe themselves to be the orchestra, etc. *Some of them are called the Peacocks. If the shoe fits you, wear it.*

27. Remember Teilhard de Chardin

Let us remember Teilhard de Chardin, an excellent paleontologist and co-discoverer of *Homo erectus pekinensis* (Peking Man). Teilhard had a problem: he was a religious of the Jesuit order, which would bring him problems from the clash of his beliefs with reality. The church will make it very difficult for him to do his scientific work. In 1926 his superiors of the Jesuit order forbade him to teach. In 1933, Rome asked him to leave his position at the Catholic Institute of Paris. In 1939 Rome banned his book *Human Energy*. In 1947 Rome forbade him to write and teach philosophical subjects. In 1949 the ban on publishing *The Human Phenomenon* (banned in 1944) was renewed and he was forbidden to accept a position at the College de France. In 1949 he was forbidden to publish *The Zoological Group* (an excellent book!). In 1955 his superiors forbade him to attend the International Congress of Paleontology. In 1957 the Supreme Authority of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (the Inquisition) forbade de Chardin's works to be kept in libraries, including those of Religious Institutes. It is also forbidden for his books to be sold in Catholic bookstores and to be translated into other languages. In April 1958, all Jesuit publications in Spain carried the information of the Provincial Superior of the Jesuits that de Chardin's works had been published in Spain without prior ecclesiastical examination and in defiance of the Decrees of the Holy See. In 1962, the Congregation of the Holy Office issued another *severe monitum* (warning): Several works by Father Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, some of which were published posthumously, are being edited and are gaining much circulation. Leaving aside a judgment on those points that concern the positive sciences, it is sufficiently clear that the above-mentioned works abound in such ambiguities and even serious errors, as to offend Catholic doctrine... For this reason, the Most Eminent and Most Reverend Fathers of the Holy Office exhort all Ordinaries, as well as the superiors of religious institutes, rectors of seminaries, and presidents of universities, to effectively protect the minds, particularly of young people, against the dangers presented by the works of Father Teilhard de Chardin and his followers. All that remained was for his corpse to be burned (in the so-called Synod of Terror or Synod of the Corpse of 987, Pope Esteban VI ordered the body of his predecessor, Formosus, to be dug up to try him for treason. Found guilty, his remains were burned and thrown into the Tiber). Note in passing that the Church once burned some animals, such as two sows and a pig. One of the sows would have confessed to her crime (remarkable!). One of his works, *The Human Zoological Group*, delves into the problem of the place that man occupies in the picture of nature, and the value that man represents in it. In this work the concept of zoological scale is introduced, which would be a natural unit of sub-phyletic order endowed with a well-marked individuality (at the same time in the area and in the form), weak mixability with the other elements of the phylum, considerable mutant power in the origins and aptitude to prolong itself for a long time in residual form (quotations from somewhere that I have already forgotten). Only when it is between a rock and a hard place does the Church 'recognize' its errors: science can be done within it, but only of that which it allows). *If you are one of those who can still or know how to read printed books, read some of those texts.*

Figure 27: Father Teilhard de Chardin together with scientific colleagues in Chou-Kou-Tien, China, 1929

28. For some time we have been interested in the problem of creating a catalogue or a catalogue of states of consciousness (J.S. Gómez-Jeria, 2017d; J.S. Gómez-Jeria & Madrid-Aliste, 1996; J. C. Saavedra-Aguilar & Gómez-Jeria, 1987). The scientific literature, the 'occult', the 'mystical', the 'hallucinogenic' and several others, name many alleged states of consciousness. Since the descriptions of the experiences are personal, it is impossible to integrate them all into a single list. My personal experience says that there are many and of various different natures. Now, as to whether or not my states correspond to that of any other experiential being, I do not know. What can be said for sure is that each individual could theoretically create their own cartography. What cannot be said is that it is complete. On the other hand, empirical experience, which dates back to the end of the Upper Paleolithic, indicates that it is possible, I don't know if for all human primates, to create unexpected gaps that allow access to some higher states and live those very real moments. The tools to do

so are multiple: alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, various hallucinogens, meditation, etc. The point is that these tools produce short-lived states, some with some usefulness but which ultimately serve to demonstrate the existence of an immense and splendid kingdom.

29. Use this for a prologue in your new book.

My book should have been a book composed only of prologues or, failing that, a book about Everything. The first would have been interesting and the second impossible. Even a book that deals with what is really important is a titanic task. The reader who really wants to know what exactly is missing from this text written in a language of human primates, or who wants to find a copy with the perfect grammar and spellings, must carry out their own search and relentlessly browse the infinite shelves of the Library of Babel. As custom dictates, a prologue should contain some heroic and high-sounding phrases. Here they go. We are already beginning a new century, with the clear awareness that the capitalist and Marxist utopias have been realized in their total failure, leaving not even the hope of realizing any of them. *Today the primate-man lives in his simulation: he mechanically reproduces ideals and dreams that are now left behind with a total indifference to his own content, elevating each category to its highest degree of generalization, thereby making it lose any specificity and allowing it to be reabsorbed into all the others.*

The interesting thing about this whole personal journey is the observation that in the West the class of philosophers no longer seems to contain any element (this phrase is superfluous here, but I have left it). *How happy the first philosophers must have been: they did not need to quote anyone.*

Malhereusement, some have the bad habit of measuring the quality of books according to the number of quotations used. For that reason alone I had added everything I had read related to what I write here but I deleted much of it. When I could not find the right word to express myself, I made one up. I must have been about sixteen years old when I first came across Nietzsche. It was an old bound edition of Thus Spoke Zarathustra. I do not remember that this reading caused me any special concern. But after having read and reread his works, his letters and his posthumous fragments, after having disturbed me until I lost sleep and had nightmares, *and after having looked into several abysses a few times (there is not an abyss but an indeterminate number of them) and a couple of them have looked at me*, I have ended by obtaining my Nietzsche. A Nietzsche who absorbed me definitively. One of the collateral damages of this trip was something that I fully understood sometime later, and which is very well expressed by José Luis Coêlho: 'it is very advisable that before starting to read it we take a good look at ourselves and the people we have by our side. Because after having read Nietzsche we will no longer recognize ourselves. Later we will love

him or hate him; but we will no longer be the same and our life, our way of seeing life, will have changed'.

In one of his last letters, written in Turin, dated January 4, 1889 and addressed to Georg Brandes, Nietzsche (or The Crucified) says: After you had discovered me, it was not a work of art to find me: the difficulty is now in losing myself... (F. Nietzsche: Correspondencia. Vol. VI. Octubre 1887-Enero 1889. Ed. Trotta, Madrid, 2012). This phrase says it all.

Why did I write all this? I still can't find the definitive answer to that question. Some possible reasons could be the following.

First, it is necessary to keep away by all means from the danger of specialization and dispersion, just as the Cusanus did. Traveling through the world with the blinders of specialization (work) is typical of the human primate. To travel through the world *in an entirely* dispersed way may produce a wonderful intellectual pleasure, but nothing will crystallize. And spending your whole life while deciding which of these two options to choose transforms you into Buridan's Ass. Another reason, which is perhaps fundamental, is the personal need for inner thought to be translated into something presumably visible. A mural on a wall on some lost and earthy periphery, a painting depicting a toilet (two good examples of the degenerative stage of Western art; in Lascaux and Altamira they were expressed with better clarity and quality), a good or bad book, a scientific product, a construction, etc., are always manifestations of someone's inner urge to express something. Hence this book. Note that the vast majority of primatage (defined as the rabble of human primates) lacks that inner urgency. There are several things that we all know and take for granted. But some of them are forgotten through a tacit agreement never formally enunciated, since that forgetfulness helps us to believe that we are something unique on Earth. Some of these forgetfulness are mentioned in a very crude way in this book so that we never forget that we are only a group of primates living in community. This obvious fact will be considered in this text. Only very recently have I read Desmond Morris (The Naked Ape, The Human Zoo) and Monsieur Julien Offray de La Mettrie (Man a Machine & Man a Plant) and it is refreshing to know that one can come to similar conclusions as others.

I suspect that what is written in this book is going to make the usual bad impression. This is because some of its parts smell of heresy. And it smells like this because it contains several heresies, so declared for the present moment, but which were not heresies in the past and will not be so in the future.

Finally, if I notice that too many of these texts please me, I will try to recover them and burn them since I must have undoubtedly written a string of nonsense.

30. Mycenae, the Dark Ages and Archaic Greece.

30.1. This was a project to be developed in the near future. I comment here in case I can't finish it. At some point, perhaps influenced by my readings of Homer, Hesiod and Virgil, I ended up becoming interested in the fascinating triad Mycenae - Dark Ages - Archaic Greece. There is no doubt that for the inhabitants of those lands those times must not have been very easy (Bintliff, 2012; Coldstream, 2003; J.S. Gómez-Jeria, 2017c; Lane Fox, 2009). He planned to use the available information to get an idea of who the creators of the Mycenaean civilization were and where they came from. This is important because you need to know their customs, their gods and their religious rites. DNA studies can help. Now, as Coldstream says '*many memories were handed down orally, to be preserved in later literature; but these refer to the heroic splendors and downfall of the Mycenaean civilization, and tell us virtually nothing about the impoverished life of the eleventh and tenth centuries*' (Coldstream, 2003). The period between the loss of writing (Linear B script) and the introduction of the alphabet derived from the Phoenician script (through Phoenician traders probably), is the one in which we can speculate in the scientific style and not in that of an ordinary higher vertebrate (Bunge, 1985).

For example, we can use all the known literature and, using a Decision Tree, try to create biographies of Theseus, Hercules, Perseus, Cadmos, etc. And, without being intimidated by comments, see why it is said of some of them that they founded cities or why it is said of some of them that they had to carry out certain actions (see if the facts could be true, putting them in some presumed context of their time, etc.). Or perhaps immerse yourself in the world of the gods and try to tell us the temporal, causal and detailed development of the evolution of the Mycenaean and Archaic Greek pantheons (and the connection between the two). All these issues have a causal temporal succession and, if we do not know some intermediate stages between two clearly known events, the decision tree can always help to collect all the logical possibilities. Something has been done in these respects(Coldstream, 2003).
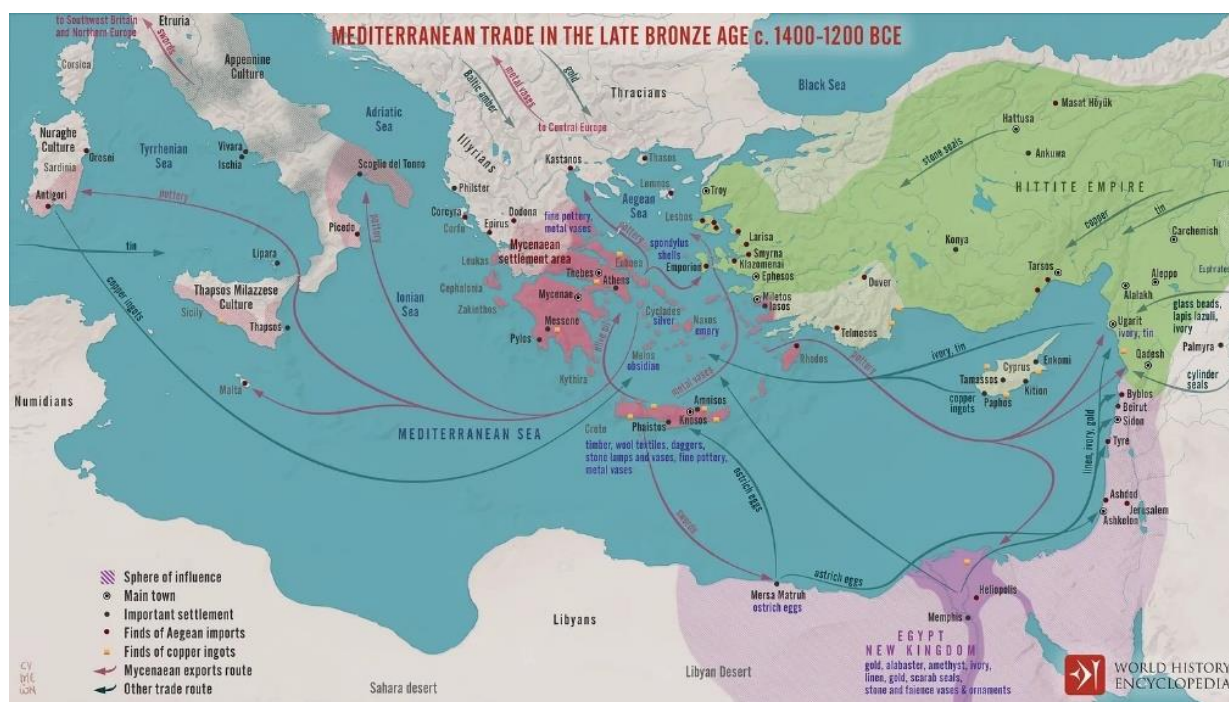
Figure 28: Late Bronze Age trade in the eastern Mediterranean (Credits: Simeon Netchev)

30.2. Some genetics

For the results of DNA analysis we have quoted verbatim the various articles in order to present the information accurately. The reader should consult the originals. Here are the approximate dates for the three periods of the Bronze Age in mainland Greece: Early Bronze Age (EBA): 3000-2000 BCE, Middle Bronze Age (MBA): 2000-1600 BCE, Late Bronze Age (LBA): 1600-1100 BCE. Approximate dates for the three periods of the Bronze Age in Crete: Early Bronze Age: 3500-2000 BCE, Middle Bronze Age: 2000-1600 BCE, Late Bronze Age: 1600-1200 BCE. These dates may differ in different papers. I cited full texts.

1. The richness of the burials in Grave Circle B at Mycenae, Greece indicates that the 35 people interred there held elite status during their lifetimes 3500 years ago. At Mycenae, the facial reconstructions previously carried out with the Grave Circle B skeletons, together with the organization of the graves and the positions of the burials within the graves, led to the hypothesis that the contemporaneous male Γ55 and female Γ58 might share a family relationship. The aDNA results confirm

this hypothesis and, taking all the evidence into account, support the conclusion that Γ55 and Γ58 were brother and sister. The implication is that Γ58 was buried in this high status and male-dominated Grave Circle not because of a marital connection but because she held a position of authority by right of birth. DNA analysis has therefore enabled us to glimpse the factors contributing to the organization of the higher echelons of society at the beginning of the Mycenaean age (Bouwman, Brown, Prag, & Brown, 2008).

2. We measured the strontium and sulfur isotope values of animal remains from archaeological sites around the island of Crete to determine the local baseline values. We then measured the strontium and sulfur values of humans from Late Neolithic and Bronze Age sites. Our results indicate that most of the humans have sulfur and strontium isotope values consistent with being local to Crete, showing no evidence for a wide-scale movement of people from the Greek mainland or other areas away from Crete in these time periods. However, we found four individuals from the late Bronze Age (Late Minoan III, c. 1420-1075 BC) cemetery of Armenoi with sulfur isotope values not typically found in Crete and are instead consistent with an origin elsewhere. This cemetery at Armenoi also has one of only a few examples of the newly adopted Mycenaean Linear B script on Crete found outside of the palace sites, pointing to an influence (trade and possible migration) from the mainland, which may then be the place of origin of these four individuals. DNA (mtDNA) studies of eight Late Bronze Age individuals from Armenoi have results consistent with people living in Aegean region at this time and cannot be used to distinguish between individuals from Crete ('Minoans') and the Greek mainland ['Mycenaeans']) (Richards *et al.*, 2022).

3. We assembled genome-wide data from nineteen ancient individuals, including Minoans from Crete, Mycenaeans from mainland Greece, and their eastern neighbors from southwestern Anatolia. We show that Minoans and Mycenaeans were genetically similar, having at least three quarters of their ancestry from the first Neolithic farmers of western Anatolia and the Aegean and most of the remainder from ancient populations like those of the Caucasus and Iran. However, the Mycenaeans differed from Minoans in deriving additional ancestry from an ultimate source related to the hunter-gatherers of eastern Europe and Siberia, introduced via a proximal source related to either the inhabitants of either the Eurasian steppe or Armenia. Modern Greeks resemble the Mycenaeans, but with some additional dilution of the early Neolithic ancestry. Our results support the idea of continuity but not isolation in the history of populations of the Aegean, before and after the time of its earliest civilizations (Lazaridis *et al.*, 2017).

4. During the EBA (Early Bronze Age), the Aegean saw key innovations in trade, craft specialization, social structure, and urbanization. These changes, which mark the end of the Neolithic Period, left indelible marks on Europe and signaled the start of the urban revolution. At the beginning of this cultural transformation, the Aegean world was mostly split between three iconic palatial civilizations, the Helladic, the Cycladic, and the Minoan, each distinguishable by their artwork, pottery style, burial customs, and architecture. To better understand the origin of the people behind this transformation, we sequenced four EBA individuals covering all three Aegean BA cultures (Helladic, Cycladic, and Minoan), two MBA (Medium Bronze Age) individuals from northern Greece, as well as 11 mtDNA genomes from EBA Aegeans. These genomes from the Cycladic, Minoan, and Helladic (Mycenaean) BA civilizations suggest that these culturally different populations were genetically homogeneous across the Aegean and western Anatolia at the beginning of the BA. The EBA genomes drew their ancestry mainly from local Aegean farmers and from populations related to the CHG (Caucasus hunter-gatherers). These findings are consistent with long-standing archaeological theories regarding the Neolithic-Bronze Age transformation, namely the immigration of new peoples from Anatolia and the Caucasus. However, because the contribution of the local Neolithic populations was significant both local and incoming elements appear to have contributed to the EBA innovations. In contrast, the MBA Aegean population was considerably more structured. One likely reason for such structure is additional Pontic-Caspian Steppe-related gene flow into the Aegean, for which evidence was seen in the newly sequenced MBA Logkas genomes. Present-day Greeks, who also carry steppe-related ancestry, share ~90% of their ancestry with MBA northern Aegeans, suggesting continuity between the two time periods. In contrast, LBA Aegeans (Mycenaeans) may carry either diluted Steppe- or Armenian-related ancestry. This relative discontinuity could be explained by the general decline of the Mycenaean civilization as previously proposed in the archaeological literature. Finally, the inferred migration waves all predate the appearance of Linear B script (1,450 BCE). As a result, the genomic data could support both dominant linguistic theories explaining the emergence of Proto-Greek and the evolution of Indo-European languages. Namely, that these languages either originated in Anatolia (correlating with the Anatolian and Caucasus-like genetic ancestries) or they originated in the Pontic-Caspian Steppe region (correlating with the Steppe-like ancestry) (Clemente *et al.*, 2021).

5. What can we deduce from the above information? During the EBA period, Aegean farmers and populations related to Caucasus hunter-gatherers each contributed their own 'religious' beliefs. During MBA, there is an additional Pontic-Caspian Steppe-related addition of 'religious' beliefs. LBA Aegeans (Mycenaeans) have perhaps new religious contributions and/or burial practices from Steppe- or Armenian-related

ancestry. It is also possible that each of the peoples who arrived in the Aegean region brought their own way of using psychoactive substances (if they used one or more, especially cannabis) It is expected that archaeogenetics will continue to provide more information

6. The use of psychotropic plants rich in entheogens or psychoactive substances may have developed out of the evolutionary use of medicinal plants since the physiological pathways to process these compounds are the same as those used for medicinal plants. These pathways are likely to be very ancient and combine taste receptors, tissue barriers, and the blood-brain barrier. However, archeological evidence for psychotropic drug use in the Paleolithic is limited (Hardy, 2021).

7. The first reference to the plant appears in Herodotus, Book 4.7 3 ff.: we read that the Scythians, after conducting funerals, build tents by setting up three poles and covering them with woolen mats; in the center of the tent a pit is dug and filled with red-hot stones; then, after crawling into 'throw the seed (i.e. of the hemp-plant) upon the smoldering seeds create a vapor, and shout for joy'. Although Herodotus explains purification, the passage seems to suggest exploit the toxic properties of cannabis. clearly those of marijuana, since Herodotus, also gives a gives a detailed description of the plant (Brunner, 1973).

8. The Mycenaean pantheon already included many divinities that were subsequently encountered in Classical Greece, although it is difficult to determine whether these deities had the characteristics and responsibilities that would be attributed to them in later periods. Poseidon (Linear B: Po-se-da-o) seems to have occupied a place of privilege. He was a chthonic deity, connected with earthquakes (E-ne-si-da-o-ne: Earth-shaker), but it seems that he also represented the river spirit of the underworld. Paean (Pa-ja-wo) is probably the precursor of the Greek physician of the gods in Homer's Iliad. He was the personification of the magic song which was supposed to 'heal' the patient. A number of divinities have been identified in the Mycenaean scripts only by their epithets used during later antiquity. For example, Qo-wi-ja ("cow-eyed") is a standard Homeric epithet of Hera. Ares appeared under the name Enyalios (assuming that Enyalios is not a separate god). Additional divinities that can also be found in later periods include Hephaestus, Erinya, Artemis (a-te-mi-to and a-ti-mi-te) and Dionysos (Di-wo-nu-so). Zeus also appears in the Mycenaean pantheon, but he was certainly not the chief deity. A collection of 'ladies' or 'mistresses', Po-ti-ni-ja (Potnia) are named in the Mycenaean scripts. As such, Athena (A-ta-na) appears in an inscription at Knossos as mistress Athena, similar to a later Homeric expression, but in the Pylos tablets she is mentioned without any accompanying word. Si-to po-ti-ni-ja appears to be an agricultural goddess, possibly related to Demeter of later antiquity, while in Knossos

there is the 'mistress of the Labyrinth'. The "two queens and the king" (wa-na-ssoi, wa-na-ka-te) are mentioned in Pylos. Goddess Pe-re-swa mentioned may be related to Persephone. A number of Mycenaean divinities seem to have no later equivalents, such as Marineus, Diwia and Komawenteia (from the page *Mycenaean religion*, in English Wikipedia).

9. The Age of Heroes (Ruck, 2019). Heracles, Jason, and Theseus of Athens all belonged to this generation before the Trojan War, after which the age of heroes dwindled and disappeared. As Jason's mate, Medea was of his age, although she was also of the previous generation as the stepmother of Theseus. As the niece of Pasiphaë, the Cretan Minotaur would have been her cousin. His half-sisters Ariadne and Phaedra were the 'brides' of Theseus. The lineage of Heracles and Theseus traced common descent through Pelops, the eponym of the Peloponnesus, and his bride Hippodamia, via their son Pittheus and daughter Lysidice, the former being the grandfather of Theseus, and the latter the grandmother of Heracles (Euripides, Children of Heracles, 205-214; Plutarch, Theseus, 7.7). This would make them both cousins of Agamemnon of Mycenae, but their heroic careers definitely predate the Trojan War. Perseus and Heracles were both counted sons of Zeus. Although Zeus had pre-Indo-European analogues (most notably, the Cretan Minoan Zeus born in the Psychro Cave on Mount Dicte, later equated with him. His appearance as a mid-aged patriarch in the Greek lands with his family of Olympian deities signaled the arrival of the Indo-European migrants, whose language would eventually supplant the preexistent indigenous populaces, and result in an amalgamation of cultural traditions. It is argued that Greek Zeus, as a god with certainly established Indo-European origins, was essentially a god of the open sky and the supposed progenitor of everything, a supreme, but not ruling deity; initially, he must have been distinct from the god of storms, who, for unknown reasons, completely disappeared from Greek religion and mythology by as early as the Late Bronze Age. From the time of Homer, Zeus-Father appeared as a storm-god, the autocratic ruler of the universe, and an offspring of elder deities, on the level of mythology. Such a concept does not correspond to the traditional Indo-European patterns and seems to have been formed under the influence of Near-Eastern concepts of the supreme almighty god, on the one hand, and the Cretan-Minoan concept of a young god/divine child, on the other. However, the Homeric concept of Zeus was adopted by his practicing cults much later, only from the Late Archaic period (Zolotnikova, 2013).

There is many more material about Mycenae, Ancient Greece, Age of Heroes, The Dark Age, Hallucinogens, and similar topics (Breitenberger, 2007; Bremmer, 1983; Carod-Artal & History, 2013; Deger-Jalkotzy, 2006; Edwards, 1979; Ferrara, 2016; Finkelberg, 2006; Gootenberg, 2022; Henley, Rossano, & Kardas, 2019; Kelder, 2009; Kelly & Metcalf, 2021;

Mull, 2022; Murray, 2017; Nilsson, 1972; Wiersma & Voutsaki, 2017; Wightman, 2014; Woudhuizen, 2013).

Figure 29: All written here is false (Beall, 2007; Schurz, 2013)

I write angrily what follows and in a rude way. The situation in the Western world is rapidly degenerating. The hidden enemy continues to foster differentiation as much as it can. His goal is to keep us busy fighting over that issue while he continues to feed on our flesh and blood (and accumulate more and more money in his coffers). This leads lucid people to withdraw within themselves, wrapping themselves in small private spheres. But, from a hopeless political reality, the firm determination to put an end to him once and for all will be reborn with force. We can only be revolutionaries because we will never admit that a state of affairs like this is perpetuated.

Is this a finished work? Genuine artistic and philosophic works are never truly finished: a decision is simply made at a point of time that the work looks good enough to stop working.

I offer this text to my uncle Gastón Gómez-Lasa (1926-2019), a brilliant scholar of Plato. Many, many years ago, and after a long day of chemical communion with the Universe and on an incredible beach, one of my friends read and commented aloud, and in his own particular way, Plato's Apology (in my uncle's translation). I think it was during that wonderful, strange night that Socrates came into my mind and stayed. I would like to highlight two phrases by Gastón Gómez-Lasa that Professor Carlos Peña (Universidad Diego Portales) mentions in a letter to a newspaper. *'All those who rise above the compulsions of survival have a hidden philosophical vocation, whether they know it or not'. 'Philosophy is an antidote to the deceitful spirit that permanently haunts human culture'*. Carlos Peña also adds that 'in one of his last works *he defined philosophy as a round trip on a few questions that human beings try to elucidate and whose persistence cures us of all dogmatism'*.

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