

## CELEBRATION OF SURPRISE

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“Sometimes curiosity may wake up courage or bring it into life. But, in most cases, curiosity vanishes all of a sudden. Courage must cover a longer way. Curiosity is like a pleasant friend who you cannot trust in. He incites you and, as soon as he wishes, he goes away. Then you, alone, must push forward mustering all your courage.” Haruki Murakami. *Chronicle of the bird that winds the world up*. (Murakami, 2010) p. 99

Abstract:

This writing proposes a reflection on certain ways to connect with others who significantly impact on the quality of the link built. We will particularly make a revision of what has been called “ability to be surprised” associated with “curiosity”, a position that has regained importance in “postmodernism”. We will also discuss the role of reflectivity in the production of intersubjectivity and in the creation of transformative connections. We will also briefly check some of the challenges which emerge when trying to pass on / teach “curiosity” and the capability to be surprised as instrumental “techniques” in psychotherapy, in simplification, or in research.

*Keywords:* curiosity, surprise, astonishment, reflectivity

### **Does curiosity turn people into salt statues<sup>2</sup> and also kill cats<sup>3</sup>?**

In Western philosophical tradition (Gomperz, 2000), interest in the “curious being” emerges associated to the search of wisdom, although from the beginnings it spreads out its double face: both as a search of wisdom and as a mythical transgression as well. Aristoteles (Aristoteles, 1997) supported the idea that philosophy starts with astonishment and, at the beginning of *Metaphysics*, he sentenced that:

“...men start and have always started to philosophize moved by admiration: at the beginning, they admired the most ordinary surprising phenomena; later, step by step, they went forward, thinking about major questions such as the changing of the moon and those ones related to the sun and the stars and the creation of the Universe. But, he who thinks about a problem or is amazed by it, recognizes his own ignorance.” P.41

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<sup>2</sup> Biblical tale about Lot’s wife, who became a salt statue for having rendered to curiosity

<sup>3</sup> Popular saying: *Curiosity kills cats*.

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In Karl Jaspers ( Jaspers, 1989) there appears an interesting distinction related to the place occupied by the questions:

“The Greek word *philosopher* (philosophos) as opposed to *sophos* -the lover of knowledge- differs from the one who, possessing wisdom, has called himself a *wise man*. This sense of the term still survives: the search of truth – and not the possession of truth- is the essence of philosophy [...] Philosophy means “to pave the way”. Its questions are more important than its answers, and each answer becomes a new question”. p 15

In tales where the human search of knowledge of the world is told, the act of taking a position before “the things”, taking curiosity, astonishment and passion for discovery as starting points, get through to us as dramatic or tragic histories.

In the old myths<sup>1</sup>, wisdom was “granted” by a superior being, such as Prometheus or Jehovah, or could be either produced or obtained through lawful or no lawful means outlining, in those histories, different spaces and relational weaves for the human being. Each one of these narrative forms used to show particular ways of linking with knowledge, with education, with the links between “teachers” and “apprentices” and/or the culture of the period. In a schematic formulation, it is possible to describe two extreme ways of telling those links: the receptive or passive vision<sup>2</sup>, which proposes some stages where the links of transmission, of teaching, and of the - somewhat ritualized- passage of knowledge, occupy the main place in order of importance .On the other hand, in the countered vision, we can find heroic tales where the search of independence, of rebellion from hierarchy, passion for adventure and risk, and great challenges looking for knowledge - infringing prohibitions and breaking traditions- are outlined .

The conception which assesses the receptive position—the form called "Abrahamic"<sup>3</sup> -, conceives the human being as a recipient that needs to be filled with information and learning , as an evolutionary being who is walking along progressing knowledge degrees until he reaches his teachers´(or his Gods´) level. Here we find ourselves in humility

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1 it is part of the constructive process of myths that they organize binary and dilemma like forms to frame challenges

2 depending on the conception of “human being” a person has, his inter dependence, his free will and his freedom degrees, he will be described as receptive/ passive or independent/ transgressor

3 making a reference to Abraham´s receptive form when receiving Jehovah´s knowledge and his coexistence with those not answered questions. There is a book written by Rabi Nilton Bonder which embodies this drama: “Taking off shoes : an Abraham´s path for the other one”

regions of gratitude, of respect, of recognition, of interchange, of "when the pupil is ready, there appears the Teacher" in mystical traditions.

The "Promethean" form (Esquilo), conceives the human being as someone who possesses the right to reach knowledge, to get to the Gods' height, with the freedom to hesitate about their existence in order to assure his Hero condition; to be "the size of everything" in Illuminism, in Renaissance and in Humanism. This active form of taking a position in the search of knowledge has been constructed in the weaves of tensions between freedom and fate, between the times of the search and those of the necessity to know and, as Leonardo Boff (Boff, 1998) used to say to us

"all of us somehow have got, a hen-dimension and an Eagle-dimension inside us. A hen-dimension is the social system that prevails in our existential composition, in our daily life, the established habits and the horizon of our concerns. They are limitations as well."... An eagle-dimension belongs to dreams, projects, wishes, ideals and utopias that, even frustrated, never die inside us because they can resurrect". p.42

Old mythology is full of teachings where the desire of knowledge is assimilated to arrogance and to transgression to the Gods' dictates. In the Greek myth about man's origin, the history of Zeus's gift for Epimetheus and for Pandora<sup>4</sup> is a dense representation of those tensions: some valuable thing that is given entails the prohibition to know what it contains. Zeus appears as a God who tempts the human being with curiosity, anticipating that the desire for knowledge would be more powerful than the divine warnings ( a present from the Gods which cherished disobedience, which sparks off disasters on humankind, although it also releases the bird of hope).

Adam and Eve had to face a similar situation: in Biblical tales they face the curiosity dilemma opposed to innocence, and they are tempted to "know" what they are not allowed to. Like most tales that colonize us, these are pregnant of "teachings" that warn us about the dangers of letting ourselves be carried along by the passion for curiosity, fed by the wish to know. Nevertheless, in human history, those stories promoting the necessity to restrict the

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4 The myth tells that Zeus sent Pandora to Epimetheus as a present and he became fascinated about her beauty in such a way that he made up his mind to join her immediately. Zeus gave them a beautiful box as a gift. It was decorated with precious stones and gold. The box was locked. When Zeus gave Pandora the key, he warned her that, if they wanted to live happily, they should never open the box. They did so and lived happily, without any problems and without growing old, until curiosity made Pandora open the box and then, all the world's evils emerged from it ( such as illnesses, bitterness, pain, wars, and other misfortunes...) but also hope - under the shape of a bird which took flight!. It seems to be that curiosity- for the ancient Greeks- was not only the source of all evils but also the origin of hope. (Gomperz, 2000)

wishes to know and to research the “invisible”, hardly accomplish to permanently take control. Other tales filter into the gaps, growing inside, expanding their nets of sense until they achieve enough visibility and strength to be heard.

José Saramago, with his iconoclastic irreverence, transports us to the scene of the original punishment – in his *Book of Cain* (Saramago, 2009)- He constructs a “Promethean” tale where he undresses the eternal paradox confronted by the Western human being: he is invited to be a quasi- God, created at His a image and similarity, with the capability to discuss with Him at His same level, but compelled to limit his curiosity under the pressure of horrible threats.

“Then the Lord said, when He knew Good and Evil: man has been made similar to a god, so now you could look for the fruit from the tree of life for you to eat and live forever. That would be enough: two gods in one Universe. This is why I throw you and your wife out of this garden of Eden...” p.21

This way of taking into account cultural stories questions or diminishes the presentation of those tales as revealed “eternal” truths and they bring about more complex social life versions: as entanglements of stories where some of them take a dominant position at other versions’ silence expense. Here, we will come to terms with a skeptical view of those versions that seem to narrate truthfulness certificates or those pretending to be unquestionable.

### **Did curiosity kill the cat?**

In her magnificent review of history of curiosity in philosophy, Jeanne Hersch (Hersch, 2010) outlines that the first reason for curiosity in Western newly born philosophy was the consciousness of change of everything. This impact fed a series of questions about the Universe and everything that lives in it which, until then, had not been formulated. These interrogants expanded up to the moment when questions about *persistence* and *change* and the course of time, became the matrix where the human adventure of love for knowledge started. The author says:

Is the reader able to imagine the extraordinary radicalism of such questions, when it was set out for the first time? We are able to live perfectly well amidst things as far as they have got a relative stability for our practical life: if we place a loaf of bread on the table, and we can find it there a short time later, that is enough for us." (p.10)

Socrates, with his "irony", was the first to set up a method to lead the interlocutor's reflection to the experience of perplexity and confusion produced by the experience of not-knowing, to accompany him to discover that the sensation of being sure of his truth is an illusion that propels a new beginning of reflection. Saint Augustine (Augustine, 2010) confronted us with lack of understanding and with the effect it causes upon the way we place facing ourselves and also facing the world.

In him, it emerges the question of *what to do when something is incomprehensible, or problematic*.

A "problem" refers to the obstacles against which our thought crashes and which do not depend on our comprehension difficulties or on our amount of knowledge, but on our human condition. The difference between a "question" and a "problem" (Hersch, 2010) is that, when we must face a certain kind of question it is possible to find an answer (even though it is temporary), but if the question can only be answered with another question in a series deepening the question without offering a response- then we are facing a "problem". In each problem, then, there is a mystery which, the more we try to clarify it, the more it deepens.

This differentiation between a "question" and a "problem" allows us to remark that the differences between each other are not linked to the knowledge being pursuit, but to the attitude towards the knowledge being sustained. This distinction lets us reflect about our positioning as well as the responsibility we assume in the way we stand before the questions. In this situation, options leading to different roads are opened: we can stand at the search end and/ or at the production of answers which stop or postpone preoccupations, or at the side of the risk of the mystery concerns, although we know we will not find the answer<sup>5</sup>.

In reflections closer to our times, especially in Latin America, the "problematization" became a dialogic method, an heir to Socratic maieutics and enhancer of the critical consciousness; especially thanks to Paulo Freire's work (Freire, 1970). It was precisely this pedagogue who outlined the alienating role of looking at the world like something "natural" and, consequently, the disturbing role of questioning "what is given".

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<sup>5</sup> We want to rescue the place Barnett Pearce has granted this mysterious dimension of knowledge in his work.

Notwithstanding, the way curiosity is considered and astonishment too are linked to our conception of man . An example of this is that S. Agustín (Agustín, 2010) as well as Heidegger (Heidegger, 1951) used to refer to curiosity as a wicked and degrading form of love for knowledge, an “epistemic passion”. Walter Benjamin (Benjamin, 2010) on the other hand, used to consider it as something that widens and enriches the perceptive capacity of human beings<sup>6</sup>.

The heart of the matter of this old discussion is where we can find what is the role aimed at – in life- to idleness, to pleasure and to the existential ludic dimension. Saint Augustine/Heidegger – united under the ascetic moral of work- consider sinful and lack of authenticity the distraction emerging from curiosity, while Benjamin, proposes it is as a source of an entry to new experiences, linked to creativeness . This seems to be a tension that is lasting until today and that frequently is expressed in the false options which oppose rigor to creativeness<sup>7</sup>.

The word “curiosity” becomes from Latin *curiosus* (careful, diligent) and -as an emotion- is related to behavior, exploration and learning research, all of them present in humans as well in animals. Despite this, although we can find curiosity in most living beings, one of the differentiating characteristics between curiosity in human beings and that in other animals, is that it seems to be that man is the only one who could develop a meta-curiosity: a curiosity about curiosity.

From the historic- critical process, associated to Humanism (which has allowed the revalorization of creative and libertarian forms of access to knowledge), curiosity tends to be considered a passion that impulses the search of knowledge nowadays and, making a difference, as opposed to that glance upon things based on what is naturalized and obvious, and that throws a uniform light over life.

**"La vida te sorpresas, sorpresas te la vida, oh Dios!"<sup>8</sup>.**

Tooru Okada, the main character in Murakami's novel, when he says: "... Curiosity is like a kind friend you cannot trust in. He impulses you and, as soon as he wishes, he goes away" means that

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<sup>6</sup> Paolo Virno (Virno, 2003) makes a deep critical analysis of this item in a tale that exceeds this work

<sup>7</sup> In order to go deeper into this aspect Nachmanovitch's "Fair Play: Improvisation in life and in art" (Nachmanovitch, 2004) is an unavoidable reading.

<sup>8</sup> "Pedro Navaja", Rubén Blades's song

curiosity is volatile and expresses the necessity of another impulse in order to go on investigating when curiosity diminishes.

*Where does that energy which avoids we disperse from everything that may awake our interest come from?*

Interest is a feeling or an emotion which has its attention centered on an object, on an event or on a process. In the developments of Contemporary psychology, this term has been used as a general notion capable to contain other more specific psychological concepts such as curiosity and, in a minor sense, surprise.

In the opinion of the researcher on emotions Paul Silvia (Silvia, 2005) , the characteristics of interest are not well known, and it has been considered a form of evaluation of the news related to lack of knowledge and complexity, as well as the evaluation of the capability and the potential of facing a definite situation.

*Which are the similarities and the differences between a cat´s curiosity when it faces a curtain´s movement, a human being´s curiosity when he faces another person´s unexpected attitude, and a subject´s curiosity regards his own way of reacting before something unexpected?*

Later, we will come back to this especially relevant question for those who participate facilitating or promoting transforming and change processes, being either therapeutic contexts, educational ones or of social transformation.

Attention to what appeals our interest, in order to be able to support, as a consistent intention of the search of knowledge, seems to require the support of an attitude which we could call “capability to be surprised”, because this is the one able to give support so that changeable curiosity does not disperse jumping from side to side.

Surprise can be considered as a short term emotional status produced by an unexpected event, or, in other terms, as an epistemic state generated by the non- satisfaction of an expectation. That is to say: in order that a state of surprise takes place, it is necessary that a background of expectations had previously existed and that they had not been fulfilled<sup>9</sup>.

In this sense, we could consider surprises as the final result of predictions or failed anticipations. Surprise as an experience, which cannot last long, the same that it cannot

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<sup>9</sup> Without any doubt we could include the “negative expectation: an attitude of not expecting that anything that calls our attention takes place

constantly maintain its original energy and turns to be proportionally inverse to the person's capability to get used to situations. As a similarity to curiosity, it may present "degrees" in its appearance, due to the fact that situations of major or minor surprise, which could be neutral, pleasant or unpleasant could emerge, and where its intensity seems to be related to the unsatisfied expectations degree.

Consequently, surprise is intimately linked to the way we build our worlds<sup>10</sup> and our daily life course, especially when we take it as stable, secure and predictable stages.

Then, it emerges as an epistemic state rooted in our beliefs, values, wishes, emotions, preferences, pre-concepts and, on that trail, linked to the way we give our actions coherence.

As Gadamer points out:

"Our being is not composed by our judgement, but by our prejudices".... "prejudices are not always wrong or unjustified; they do not always distort truth. Moreover, our existence historicity implies that prejudices, in their strict sense, constitute the direction our experience will take. They are the basis of our world's entry."... "conditions under what we experience, under which we are able to listen what experience has to tell us. It does not mean that we are captives of our prejudices and that we only let enter what does not violate the premise that "there is not anything new to be told". On the contrary, the guests we allow enter our lives are those who wake curiosity up in us. But, how could we manage to know which one will be able to achieve it? Are not our expectations and our desire of knowledge something new, determined by what possesses us due to its antiquity?" (Gadamer, 1997)

p 45

Surprising experience irrupts in the form of uncertainty, unsteadiness, astonishment and, when very intense and long lasted, it may become a transforming impact which, with its disturbing energy, may emerge as a powerful generator of changes in our beliefs systems. This impact will not necessarily follow the transforming path. The surprising thing may be restricted to an occasional fright which, not being fed by curiosity, is controlled by pre-concepts and naturalized routines.

When curiosity becomes a capability to be surprised, marveled or admired, and the powerful engine which impulses the necessity to know better what has caught our attention, that tension feeds the desire to become the explorer of some aspect of reality either banal or uninteresting to others.

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10 and, consequently, to the ways by which we organize our sense of identity/ies



"Objects" that stir up interest, curiosity or astonishment, do not exist in worlds parallel to the world where people who are living those emotions exist. The relational weave where those experiences emerge is built from the inter-connections and interdependences that structure and organize our lives. On those stages, the "other one" may emerge as a focus of interest, astonish us and wake our curiosity up and, as a consequence of that impact, open a space to be explored as an unknown and disturbing landscape.

The forms or designs of the other one's "exploration" that are organized, that occur (they emerge and are sustainable) according the type and quality of the existing connections, as well as the connections framing them, resume all the singular complexity or our relational life, its ethics and the micro politics dimensions of those worlds.

*What are the relational forms we call "connections"?*

The word "connect" itself refers<sup>11</sup> to "*establish a relation between one or more things*", "*Join or get in contact or relation something with another thing so that they become an only thing or stay linked*": tie elements up that, without that factor, would appear isolated, disconnected, without any reference, not contextualized.

These connections suppose a form of joint that implies, from both parts, a genuine interest in the other one, and also the disposition and openness to be explored<sup>12</sup>; a relational position that supposes "transparency" and implies "to be there", positioned "in first person" (Fuks S. I., 2010) and without protecting oneself behind a technique. This form of relation was synthesized by J. Shotter ( Shotter J., 2009) p31:

In this way, as I can see it, there are certain crucial moments in human life, in our active and lively relations with others, where a second person answers in a spontaneous way the pronunciations (or any kind of expression) of a first one- either with an active hearing or with an answer sensitive to them- establishing between them a "lively connection", a moment that, following Bakhtin (1986), we could call " a dialogic moment"; or better, which I originally used to formulate as " a joint action" (Shotter, 1980), and later, as an "interactive moment" (Shotter, 1993, p.2).

We are making a reference to the type of links that, although they may be conditioned by the context (or contexts) that encircle the sense of the meeting, the flow of the joint actions,

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11 Manual Dictionary of Spanish Language Vox. 2007 Larousse Editorial, S.L.

12 We use the word "explore" to substitute "investigation" which has a connotation and an academic weight opposed to the sense we are proposing.

developed to give/find that moment a singular sense, restrictions may overflow their developing frame and become transforming encounters.

These entangled weaves take shape, are expressed in social action/ practice, in the conversational forms that are organized. Barnett Pearce (Pearce B. W., 2011) – who has supported a consistent concern for these themes along his production-in his book "*Communication and the Human Condition*" proposed a relationship of mutual causality between the forms of communication we design and the ways of "human being" we generate. In this publication, he expressed we communicate in the way we do due to the kind of persons we have become, and that we are the type of persons we are, due to the forms of communication we have contributed to organize and where we take an active part. Some constructivist positions are held on that direction when they support that we have created relational worlds with our way of speaking with ourselves and with the others. In this work we are only trying to reflect on the complexities and challenges of the worlds we participate in when we take a position expanding our curiosity and our capability to be astonished. Summing up, we are talking about forms to inhabit relational worlds, generated by curiosity and astonishment- which may be thought of as matrix frames inherent to transforming conversations and, in this sense, considered meta-instruments.

*What is it that makes us celebrate the apparition of what we were not waiting for?*

*What movements do we generate so that the disconcert that disturbs and frightens us becomes a wish to come closer to it, to know better what worries us and opens us to unknown connections that commit us?*

*What transformations do we need to produce within ourselves to be capable to allow something surprising disturb us, just there where we had only seen things that did not arise our interest?*

*Which aspects distinguish those curiosities and surprises from the one that makes the cat jump or from those which make a person try to find an explanation of something he does not understand?*

The main difference between the cat's surprise and ours, seems to be that strange human capability to observe oneself as if he is the "other one" and to look at himself with the others' eyes.

That possibility to feel curiosity just for the sake of experimenting curiosity, to be capable to unfold oneself and re-cognize oneself when unfolding, makes the difference.

The fact of been aware of curiosity and paying attention to an event (the same as the cat does!) and, simultaneously, been disturbed by the experience of having been experiencing that emotion (curiosity) which floods us with questions, seems to be one of the dividing lines which distinguish us as species.

Within a complex thought that exceeds reason, this second level of curiosity shows a disturbing existential stage that questions who experiences his way of walking along his relational life.

The process is expansive and almost fractal because, departing from the original restlessness "*What's happening to me?* it will be overflowed by "*Who am I?; What am I? Am I this person who is being impacted by what is happening?;* Then expanding to: "*From now onwards, what consequences in my way of life will occur, in the commitments I assume, in the responsibilities I must face, in the testimonies I produce?*"

### **Reflectivity; what else are we talking about...?**

Barnett Pearce (Pearce, 2011) proposes in his work "*At Home in the Universe with Miracles and Horizons: Reflections on Personal and Social Evolution*" his conception of the human being's consciousness, based on what he calls "miracles". In his 5<sup>th</sup> miracle: *Self-consciousness: from the self-consciousness to the reflective consciousness (conscious of being conscious)* proposes:

"This quality of the mind is, as far as we know, a late development in Universe evolution, unique in a species in this planet and, I think, a relative late development in our species as a whole and in the maturity of each of us individually.

The self-reflective consciousness is the capability of the mind that allows men and women intentionally change their perspective. I am not sure that all of us can develop a reflective self-consciousness. I am not sure that all of us want to develop it. A self-reflective consciousness is not always something we want to have. It makes us fear death or failure, ask ourselves about our faces shape before we were born, be afraid of the future, etc. Our self-reflective consciousness is also the mechanism that allows our spirit to fly, to imagine what we cannot see, to construct and set to work plans to change the world we live in. When admiration and astonishment are generated, our brain is allowed to be all-embracing and our mind to work at the superior levels of consciousness". p.7

This observer's self observation of his own observations, is a manifestation of a different "reflectivity" in his own observations, is an expression of a different "reflectivity" from the

mere rationality; a meaning of reflectivity that overflows the “ think oneself” associated to the cognitive processes or to the classical introspection of modern psychology, constituted as an essential principle in a relation with knowledge which we could call Epistemology of Reflectivity . Reflectivity, understood like this, marks out the intimate connection between the comprehension/ construction of our world we make in our internal dialogues, and the expression of that understanding in the account we produce for others. These accounts make up the support/ software as well as the vehicle of that comprehension, and they do not exist outside the communication where they are built and express.

Several authors have dealt with the reflectivity theme, of which we can find early references in Macchiavelli (Macchiavelli, 1972). In Sociology, this concept was introduced by Alfred Schutz (Schutz, 1973) with the name of inter- subjectivity. He defined it as the form where the subjects give sense/ meaning to their behaviors. Recently, Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1995), Giddens (Giddens, 1997) and Luhmann (Luhmann & de Georgi, 1993) have especially devoted to the notion of reflectivity: Bourdieu outlines the presence of this idea in his theory as well as in his own intellectual practice. By the way, Giddens connected reflectivity to the concepts of society in risk and development of the ego, nodal points of his definition of late modernism. Luhmann, places the concept of reflectivity in the centre of his social system theory, where he puts the actor´s capability of observation as a basis of social complexity.

Given other interrogations, from the 60's ethno-methodology has made remarkable contributions to deepen this subject, and has outlined that the methods turned to by researchers in order to know the social world are basically the same as those used by actors to know, discover, describe and act in their own world. -Heritage (Heritage, 1984); Garfinkel (Garfinkel, 1967); Fuks (Fuks S. I., 2010); Hammersley, M. y Atkinson, P. (Hammersley, 1994) -

John Shotter, has stressed the importance to understand our human existence "from inside" and in his article from 1999 entitled “*At the boundaries of being: Re-figuring intellectual life*”, he set out:

" strange things occur at the contact point between two or more- different among them- forms of lives- There emerges another form of collective life with its unique and singular own world ( a culture?). As Bajtin (1984) pointed out, it is only in the meeting of a plurality of consciousness without having been fused together, each one in their own world, that such a space (dialogic

structure) is created"..." its unique nature can only be lived and understood from the inside of the practices where they are created..." (consulted on 28/11/2010 in <http://www.learndev.org/dl/ShotterAECT2000.pdf>.)

From these conceptions, the task to know the others' world (and how these inhabit them) was to focus: "to grasp the forms subjects produce and interpret their reality, in order to grasp their investigative methods" (Guber, 2011) p.45.

These outlooks that have emerged from academic spaces, when introduced in social practices associated to change- such as psychotherapy- impelled a shift up from the protocols' structural power and "truths" to the interlocutors' forms of the world exploration and the ways these build the conversation/ meeting focus that summons them. Despite the impact these ideas which became from the academic world had in the emergence of what we call "postmodern therapies" today, this effect deepened due to a singular feature of these contexts which relates it to the investigation-action proposed by Kurt Lewin (Lewin, 1946) and deepened by Argyris & Schon (Argyris, 1974 ) among others: the spiral process which describes the sequence of action-reflection-action and which specifies its commitment with the change<sup>13</sup>.

In these conceptions about encounters, which rescue the constructor/ constructive presence of the observer/ investigator, it becomes more evident than in classical academic research that who investigates the other one's world is being "investigated" by his/ her interlocutor, who is disturbed by similar questions to those of the investigator/actor:

*How does "the other one" produce his world?, How does he know it?, How does he transform it? And, what consequences does all that have in the shape our encounter takes?*

From its origins, in the therapeutic meeting area, the therapist's "task" has been the comprehension of the forms his interlocutors try to give sense to their own life and, especially to those aspects of it that emerge as "surprising". The transformer thing has been the incorporation of the fact that the consultant, besides the explicit task of trying to understand the surprising aspects own his own world, also tries how his interlocutor/ therapist, on a different level, builds his vision of what they share: the consultant's world. And this, far from being something that should be controlled and restricted, could become

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13 this commitment with transformer action found the deepening of the ethics that sustains it among us, especially in the IAP (investigation-action-participation ) idiosyncratic of the Latin American Community Psychology. To go deeper into this aspect see: Montero and Serrano. (Montero, 2011)

an endless source of new possibilities. The updating effect was produced from a new manner to conceive the context, where everybody involved in the communicative interchanges of the therapeutic encounter, become co- contributors ( with different responsibility degrees) of the shape the encounter takes, of the fitted out connections from the diversity of histories that take place, of the conditions under which the bodies can express themselves, of the emerging synergies to empower each one´s best, of the coordinated ethics and of the transmuted meanings.

From that point, understanding what the questions asked by the “others” are, and by which methods they try to obtain answers to their uncertainties, entails ( from the “ observer/ therapist”),the expectation that such an exploration might lead his own reflectivity so as to tune in to the reflectivity of the one who is making the consult.

This interactive design of interpreters trying (by means of dialogues) to give sense to the surprises produced in their interchanges, may set basis for an encounter full of possibilities for the people involved.

This takes place in an expansive, expandible and empowering process which will be able to occur, only if the therapist is open to three dimensions of reflectivity at stake in the encounter: a) his reflectivity as much as a member of a culture; b) his reflectivity as much as a therapist – with his theoretical perspective, his disciplinary habits, and his epistemic-centrism (Bourdieu, 1995), and c) the subjects´ who consult him reflectivity.

Such an entanglement of reflectivities<sup>14</sup> do not produce a stable configuration in which once obtained the connection, the latter stays indefinitely. Oscillations are often produced; they move from the fascination generated by the magic flow of an empathetic connection, to perplexity\_ produced by the inevitable mix-ups and misunderstandings.

It is in those mixed up reactions<sup>15</sup> (perplexity, astonishment, curiosity) where the dialogic condition can emerge, due to the fact that confusion and surprise together can open the possibility of exploring the vast mystery of language expressed by Wittgenstein (Wittgenstein, 1980).

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14 Magnificently described by Shotter, J ( Shotter J. , 1999)

15 "The origin and primitive shape of the language game is a reaction, and only starting from this more complex forms of language can be developed – I mean- it is refinement, at the beginning it was action" (Wittgenstein, 1980) (p.31)

Martin Buber (Buber, 1977) too, referred to those “un-encounters” when he set out that, in every dialogic situation, necessarily open, the encounter may become a “mix up”. This “encounter- mix up” dialectics knits a fine and thin line – a “narrow defile”, picking up the thread of the Buberian metaphor– of dual relations which existentially determine us: a person can open himself to the Other one’s presence and strike up a real dialogue with him, or try to adapt the Other one to his own beliefs.

In accordance with Martin Buber’s ideas, the "encounter" is placed as a main factor of the man’s world and the task to understand the Other one implies the acceptance and the act of opening to the Other one’s presence with responsibility, without trying to impose him any truth or to colonize him with our manner to see the world.

“The term *responsibility* comes from *respond*; and lack of responsibility means when we do not respond to others, when we stay locked within ourselves\_ inside our scheme of ideas\_ hiding ourselves behind our defense barriers, blocking the other one’s presence in this way.” (Calles, 2004) p. 16

For the therapist, to be in good conditions of assuming an opening position before what is astonishing (of himself) in the encounter with "the curious other one", requires of something else than the study of theories or the addition of tales that inform him about other manners of building the therapeutic encounter<sup>16</sup>. A fissure in epistemology of expertise is required (such as described by Michel Foucault (Foucault, 1988) Donald Schön (Schon, 1997), Anderson & Goolishian (Anderson, 1992); Edgar Morin (Morin, 1994), Paul Ricoeur (Ricoeur, 1992), among others) and this does not only occur by the mere comprehension of theories, but also as we do not learn to meditate by reading about meditation.

According to what we have been coming across, we should ask ourselves if those meta-instruments of knowledge-curiosity/astonishment- might be reduced to a technical dimension (functional or operative) but in such a way that its transformative power is not eroded. And this is a nodal question, as far as the context where the question is framed is that of the formation of therapists, facilitators and other sailors of the change processes.

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16 even though the fact of counting on theories which have been accepted by the scientific community modulates the disturbing impact of the whole process.

The scientific knowledge peculiarity – understood like this- does not reside in its methods' reliability, but in a processing of reflectivity and its articulation with the social theory of reference. And this brings us back to the questions:

*What does the "expert" interlocutor do with his own reflectivity?,*

*How does he take a position before those disturbances generated by curiosity and astonishment in the relation with himself and with his theoretic suppositions?*

These questions , although they may serve ( in the formative systems for therapists and facilitators) as an invitation to revise the importance we give to the strengthening of the capability of location, as if everything could be lived like something new, unexpected and unpredictable; how we take care of the "natural" tendency, generated by insecurity and uncertainty, to take refuge in what is well-known, routine and obvious; and how we build contexts that allow us to enjoy the sacred game of (self) inventing worlds \_ there, where nothing seems to be able to surprise us.

In order to subvert the flight towards safe recipes\_ which cut down on restlessness and uncertainty\_ theoretical contributions that may expand the flow of the “expert’s” information are not enough, because this conceptual increase could be restricted to the mere incorporation of a fashion or to the chocolate cover called “politically correct attitude”. That is: to the mystification to incorporate "the adequate manners of speaking, thinking or acting" in an un-critical way.

*What conditions do we need to develop in order to connect, expand and keep those abilities alive?*

### **Homo Ludens**

On Friedrich von Schiller's opinion (von Schiller, 2004), the first modern author who wrote about this game which has the capability to intermediate between pleasure and severity.

This question was taken up again by Johan Huizinga, (Huizinga, 2000), who postulated that the modern work has become "desperately serious". This author supported that, when the “utilitarianism of doing” is imposed, adults loose something essential to the capacity to think: the free curiosity produced by the playground.

Clifford Geertz (Geertz, 1988), when studying the " deep game", supported that there are available connections in the human being, which permit him recover the infantile capability



to produce and renew his performance rules. This can be seen in the daily rituals which create and maintain social cohesion among people.

After Freud's initial intuitions, Erik Erikson (Erikson, 1983) has made the deepest study about the importance of the infantile way to deal with game rules and their relation with the adults' socialization. According to this author, when children play, they learn to modify the self-imposed rules. This affects, in adults' life, the capability to repeat practices of technical character and, little by little, modify them by changing or improving them, taken for granted that, in order to improve a technique, it is necessary to change those rules that are repeated.

In tales about the history of craftsmanship, the masters did not teach their apprentices, but allowed them to observe when the former were working, and it was the apprentice's responsibility to be able to generate the questions that could make knowledge about the task to be learnt comprehensible. However, the apprentice needed to try to repeat the master's "task" at a certain time. Then, he had to face another difficulty: the artisan's tools have always been "made for his hand", adapted to his body, his strength, his energy, the user's rhythm. The apprentice had to face the fact that he would necessarily build his own tools. For that purpose, it became necessary for him to understand his body, his mood, his spirit and his timings, and also his capability to enjoy and formalize his work.

As Richard Senneth (Senneth, 2009) says in his study on craftsmanship, the game opens the training and it is a school where to learn to increase complexity.

"The scalpel, a simple tool, served to very complex purposes for scientific work in the seventeenth century. The same had happened in the fifteenth century with the flat point screwdriver. At their beginnings, both were elemental tools. They perform a complex work just because we, as adults, have learned to play with their possibilities instead of dealing with each of them for an only purpose. Boredom is, in craftsmanship, as important as in a game. When bored, the artisan looks for what else to do with the tools he has at hand" (Senneth, p. 335)

In a similar way, the "craftsmanship of contexts"<sup>17</sup>, needs to recover his capability of playing in order to re- find his personal tools and tune them to the stage where he is.

As John Dewey set out, "A work that stays soaked of play, is art" (Dewey, 2004), and the pleasure to play may expand freedom and let enjoy the adventure of living surprise as an

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17 as we call the set of abilities to "read" contexts, in a work, insert it, design it, modify it and/ or build alternative frames which offer more options. (Fuks S. I.,2004 ) (Fuks S. I., 2009)

invitation to discovery.

*What kind of training designs, we need to develop, to go in that direction?*

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