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LETTER TO PLATO

Dear Plato, dear Master,

Perhaps nobody has told you yet what the scientists of my day have magnanimously made known to everyone, breaking down the distinction between the man of common sense and the philosopher of “ecstatic knowledge”.

I too have come to know certain facts. I have placed them in relation to recent problems concerning art and to your doctrine of “ideas” and have decided to write you this letter.

Well, the famous neurologist Vittorino Andreoli told me that when an organism is composed of few cells it never possesses a nervous system and even less a central nervous system, or brain, because since there are few cells they are all in direct contact with the exterior of the body to which they belong and therefore can have, autonomously and directly from outside, what they need for survival. And yet without the directives of a brain all the cells act for their own individual good which is simultaneously the good of the whole organism. The cells of an organism are each structured in accordance with its own exigency just like those which without being part of an organism live in coacervation in an autonomous and not communal manner. Cells in coacervation, even if close to one another, have no reciprocal useful relationship and no interchange, unlike those of an organism.

I am asking you here if it is possible to say that an organism is such and differs from the accumulation when the cells take on, with the others nearby and adjacent, a function ordered towards a common purpose and are no longer autarchic and autonomous. If this may be said then it seems to me one may also say that a non-incompatible relationship is possible between “plurality” and “unity”. One may say that what determines “an” organism as such is the common finality of its parts and it is thus possible to think that the parts of an organism are in turn “one” and are so because they are moved in turn by a finality such as the nucleus, the membranes etc. (in the specific case of cells). These parts in turn are constituted of other increasingly numerable parts characterised by a common finality, such as molecules, atoms and smaller particles. As I said, the “plurality” (the parts of an organism) becomes “unity” only when the parts assume a common finality. You have shown that “one” cannot be formal even if spherical and monobloc, as Parmenides said. I recall your observation: that the centre of a sphere is not the surface, so it remains that “one” is only the *end* which however, precisely because it is the end, transcends the parts. Through its unity it transcends forms and their mechanism. Contrarily, in fact, if the finality of the mechanism were identified in the mechanism itself, as the moderns would have it, even the very idea of mechanism would be lacking. In fact it is the “one” which makes possible the “many” inasmuch as the “many” are “many one”. If the “one” of the finality did not exist we should not be able to have the idea of “one” and therefore neither should we be able to have the idea of the “many” mechanisms and the many forms, the many cells and the many atoms which are “many” precisely because they are “one” in the finality.

Individuation of the mechanism, that is, the form function of an object or a body is possible where a “finality” is identified, as we said with regard to the organism in comparison with the coacervation. So it is necessary that the “one” be the existence of the “many” and vice versa: the many would not exist had they not “a” finality, and the finality would not exist if the many were not finalised because without the many nothing would be finalised.

The transcendence of the finality renders possible the existence of both the “one” and the formal “many”.

The “many” would be annihilated, that is, non-existent, without the existence of the “one” and yet the “one” in turn would have no “reality” if it lacked the “many” because it would be the finality of that which does not exist, and a finality of that which does not exist does not exist. Thus it is necessary that “one” and “many”, that is, the bodies and their purpose, are simultaneous even though distinct.

So I was saying to you that when an organism becomes complex thanks to the continual multiplication of its cells, when the cells are so numerous as to exceed the surface of the organism exposed to the exterior, which is to say when some cells are isolated from this exterior within the organism and no longer have the possibility of external contact in order to directly satisfy their needs of awareness of their individual good and bad, and hence can no longer directly choose their good and attend to their preservation, the organism manufactures nerve cells and sets them in a system branching throughout the body that brings into the organism, that is, into the internal cells of the body, the information that the external cells already know due to their position.

In the so-called higher animals the number of cells is such as to arrive at billions of billions, so the nervous system, as may be seen, needs a centre for data gathering and retransmission of commands to all the cells of the body in accordance with information received, again with view to survival of the entire organism.

Just as couriers bring information to the central State office from outlying districts, so the information from the outlying areas of our body is brought to the brain by a chain of nerve cells.

Just as the Government issues orders to frontier regions concerning what to do or not to do with regard to adjoining states in accordance with information received, so the brain issues orders to do or not do this or that, in accordance with information received, to all the cells of the body. And it cannot be excluded that States, since earliest antiquity, have organised themselves without knowing it on the model of genetic organisms with view to the same necessity and therefore in accordance with a natural law. In the functions of receiving and communicating information the whole body feels, takes part in these functions, feels itself in a tension finalised towards its functions precisely as in a true democracy. The State is at the service of the individuals comprising it and the latter identify the State with their own interests. And it cannot be excluded that for both a body and for a State there is a natural collapse when there is no reciprocation of “amorosi sensi”, as you put it. You conceived your Republic precisely as a natural body with specialised subdivision of the parts. Like a body, which uses various cells specialised according to functions. You thought of men specialised in particular functions at the service of the republic.

But to return to our main interest: the cells of an organism without a nervous system and without a brain nonetheless possess, as I told you, the capacity for finalised behaviour: they have their optimal way of behaving in order to live and multiply. Neither more nor less than the cells organised by a central nervous system. Their method appears very simple but is equally perfect.

Thus, as I told you, as the number of cells of an organism gradually increases, the complexity and not the perfection of the nerve network and its central system increases. This complex nerve and brain organisation seems to be formed to solve a problem formerly solved by the same organism when its cells were so few as to be all logistically located in contact with the external world, as I already said. But it is necessary that, over and above appearances, this organisation be finalised for the solution of a problem that is new and posterior to that of nutrition or survival and multiplication of the cells, the solution of an already solved problem being incomprehensible.

Good. These facts call for a correction or more precise stating of your theory of the anteriority of “ideas” with regard to reality.

Your doctrine has it that reality is a “copy” of the “idea”. You’ve already understood me, but all the same I shall give you information that the science of your day could not give you: our brain too, like that of other animals – and here I humbly beg you to continue reading my letter with

goodwill – was formed after the complex developments of the number of cells of our ancestral body which was itself formed like others starting out from our first common ancestral cell. And as with all organisms, our ancestor too had first to form a nervous system and then to centralise it in the encephalon.

This presupposes that our first ancestral cell and our present cells must have possessed and must possess a structure with the function of a central nervous system which though not capable of a long term memory is capable of deciding immediately, that is, without cerebral *mediation* and rapidly, with regard to its own good, and of refusing the bad.

This decisional ability or teleological freedom of cells and acephalous organisms is interpreted by some as pure mechanism without free finality. But it goes against reason that a mechanism should move without purpose. In fact if an organism had not a finality it would be immobile, it would have no other purpose than to exist without moving for a purpose. The power to be immobile in full self-satisfaction renders any mechanism superfluous because the simple power of self is in itself sufficient for its existence and there is no need of any mechanism for existing in accordance with a mechanism. It is therefore necessary that where there is a mechanism there is also a finalised Exigency which renders the mechanism efficient and finalised by transcending it.

Individual cells, as we have seen, possess teleological efficiency, they possess *logical efficiency*. So it is necessary that the behaviour of the organism composed of cells without a central nervous system should differ from that with a central nervous system only in not having a centralised and long term memory. The encephalic idea thus appears to us as the memory of the *cellular logical-efficient* capacity, a memory also useful for the preservation of those segregated cells logistically located far from the organism's external contact, as I told you. We may therefore hypothesise that both organisms composed of cells without a nervous system and organisms organised by a brain have an "idea" of their finality. The former have a *short term memory idea* suitable or useful to current decisions without remembrance or historical memory of decisions taken previously, and in this act-decision they exhaust memory of themselves. The latter have the possibility of preserving this short term memory since it is transmitted by means of the nerve network to an archive teleologically active in favour of those cells without contact with external reality.

As you have seen, this archive feeds information also to those cells that are logistically in contact with the external world, thanks to the nerve network which first brings the short term memory to the brain but then redistributes it, by means of the same instrument, as *long term memory*. The brain is no other than the memory of an organism's teleological necessities, but in both the acephalous and cephalous organism we see a finalised mechanism equally perfect to the extent that we cannot say which of the two is better.

Now, going back to our first ancestral cell and hence to the precedence of ideas with regard to reality, I have to think that now you too, having learnt of the origins of our brain and the exigency or purpose for which it was formed, will think that Socrates, in the marvellous dialogue with Hippias, should maintain the contrary of what he did maintain.

Today you would put into the mouth of Socrates that it is no longer thinkable that the idea of bed is anterior to a real bed and is a copy of the "species" bed given by God, since in that case our first ancestral cell, ancestral also to other animals such as fish and worms, would have already had to have the idea of bed.

The first ancestral cells had no brain for thinking historically so they could have neither the idea of "species" nor the idea of bed, which is historical par excellence.

Historical ideas, as you have seen, call for a central nervous system in order to be determined, to be structurally built as long term memory with the pieces of short term memory. So it seems to me that if something must be anterior to physically formal reality, as you would have it with the idea of "species", in the case of the bed this something is only the exigency of repose

which is anterior to the idea of bed because one may rest even without a bed. The cells feel this exigency in relation to their form without a historical or encephalic idea of bed and the species bed.

You see that the constitution of a central nervous system or brain is due to the exigency of preserving the memory of the exigencies gathered by the nerve network.

The constitution of the nervous system is due to the exigency to transmit, to the internal cells of the organism, the experience of the cells in a position of contact exterior to the organism. The cells' position of contact with the exterior of the organism is due to their exigency for nutrition or awareness of the world external to the ends of an internal interest, and in turn nutrition is due to the exigency to exist. After which it seems to me that all these needs differentiated by their phenomena are moved by a single Primary and undifferentiated need. It seems to me that the Exigency to exist is the same for all phenomena.

In fact if it is true that the constitution of the central nervous system is the last in time in the formation of an organism, if it is true that once the central nervous system or brain is constituted it is the most important in relation to the finality of preservation of the organism (even if as a result the brain has been able to have other finalities). I believe, and You must tell me if I'm wrong, that the *whole* organism is posited by the Exigency of its existence. If this is so the temporal succession of what we have listed as needs, which lead to formation of the organism, including its central nervous system, are no other than a list of phenomena due to one Exigency alone. Then the phenomena are in a logical succession because their Exigency is one only. In fact what was numbered as the first exigency in the finality of the preservation of an organism is also the last, which means simultaneous with the first and the intermediaries. Their consecutiveness being only a partiality of the whole, they are reduced in the whole to unity. Since the Exigency is not subject to suffering time and the determined numeration of phenomena, it is necessary that it be "one" and transcend phenomena.

Implicitly, the Primary Exigency, transcending single phenomena, cannot be a cause of phenomena since between cause and caused there cannot, for requirements of reason, be difference of nature.

And again for rational exigencies it immediately follows that single phenomena cannot cause, only in themselves, other phenomena. In fact phenomena are logically coordinated, and what is subject to coordination cannot be coordinator: what is subject to power does not have power. If phenomena are logically finalised, the logic of phenomena transcends them. And "one" transcendent finality cannot but finalise "one" single phenomenon. So the many phenomena are parts of a single phenomenon. It thus appears clear that also the constitution of organisms with a brain is a part of the same phenomenon that constitutes single-cell, beings, molecules, atoms and the entire mineral world: what I mean is the whole of existence.

Today certain scientific researchers deny that phenomena have a necessary cause and think that the phenomenon is due to its "condition". This concept of "condition" seems no different to me than the concept of cause. It seems to me that "condition" is a multitude of simultaneous causes. Instead of having a previous necessary cause, as the ancients said, the phenomenon would have many and some of them would give the phenomenon at random. This new theory of chance, setting aside the ancient theory, seems to be a distortion of Heisenberg's theory. The great scientist realised that in the subatomic world (and only there because in the great cosmos it is admitted that the law is not random) observation of phenomena interfered as concomitant cause in the carrying out thereof, contaminating them. He realised that the only way to approach the truth of phenomena was to numerate the experimental results and see in how many observations under given "conditions" the expected phenomenon occurred. This means attributing causal power to "conditions".

The phenomenon would still depend on the *necessary nature* of the cause and not be given at random. In fact the case would invalidate the *value* of the calculation of the probabilities. If the

absence of the phenomenon were due to chance, so would the phenomenon be, and no science can be founded on what could be and at once not be. Heisenberg must have deeply believed in the necessary link between cause and effect if he elaborated a method of inquiry on the cause-effect relationship which excluded discontinuity and the researcher's imprecision of observation.

So I was saying that just as phenomena cannot cause other phenomena, and that these exist for Primary Exigency which transcends them, so this Exigency cannot cause them, otherwise it would not transcend them since between a cause and the caused a relationship of the same nature is necessary.

Some time ago it seemed to me that the mover of phenomena was an efficient cause, but now I realise that the concept of cause is so formed as to be inadequate for what I want to say.

In fact by "cause" we understand that which has the power of an act which is the caused. This relationship presupposes a temporal anteriority of the cause with regard to the caused, whereas now I seem to understand that between the phenomenon and its Exigency there is no temporal relationship (of the earlier with regard to the later), no relationship of giving and taking, but of "being" simultaneously. The Exigency of the world which we have called by the name of God not only cannot be the cause of the world because this would mean attributing to the Cause the nature of the caused, but no more can it be efficiency of the world since it is impossible that an efficient thing like the world is posterior to its efficiency, so the "causes" and phenomena are simultaneous and thus also the modern concept of "condition", presupposing anteriority of the "condition" over phenomena, is inadequate. In fact according to scientific researchers, without "condition" the phenomenon could not occur, so the "condition" is a multitude of causes, which, as we have seen, is impossible.

It therefore remains that the temporal logical successions of phenomena are due to the fact of being these, consequential parts of one single uncaused phenomenon, and transcended by the Exigency of its unitary existence. It follows that between an anterior phenomenon and another subsequent to it there remains the same logical relationship as between cause and effect, excepting provisional deviations of the course of the envisaged phenomenon due to interference of the freedom of unknown phenomena, phenomena which, once known, restore full logicity to their course as if they were due to necessary causes. Randomness is therefore excluded.

You will now ask me if a determined phenomenon may occur without objective causes, which is to say without "condition".

At first sight it seems impossible, but I have observed this: a group of young plant shoots growing from seed in a homogeneous manner in the shade of a little wall. Some time later I saw that some of their extremities tended towards a crack in the wall which afforded light and air. After a few days I noted that the shoots bent towards the light had grown considerably in comparison with the others and were decisively headed towards the top of the wall. It was clear that these shoots were behaving, from a finalistic viewpoint, in a different manner from the others and in this, with regard to their growth, in an optimal manner. The others remained smaller. I ask you this question: was the crack the *anterior* cause of the greater growth of these shoots, or was it their personal exigency to grow more?

It seems to me that the one and the other are simultaneous. It seems to me that if the crack is a cause then the seed, the earth and the heat are cause, and the shoot itself is cause of its own greater growth. If this is so, the shoot is cause of itself, which is impossible as we have seen. So the Primary Exigency of the shoots is the same that moves the environment and the shoots and appears simultaneous with their existence, and the phenomena in logical succession appear to us as rational parts of a single reality. The "parts" are consequentially logical because they constitute reality and not because they are caused as phenomena, which would be to admit their total lack of freedom.

However it is still necessary to resolve an apparent contradiction: if the reality is one, are its parts, which is to say the rationalised phenomena, obliged to be just as they are and is there no

freedom? Is what I called a personal project-related idea an illusion? The response is that personal intervention in the world of things is free but in accordance with the law formed by the freedom of things previously possessed in the formation of the world. I am not free to not think since in not wanting to think I think about not wanting to think. Thus I am free to add to the evolutionary phenomenon of the world that which the world lacks for its evolution in accordance with my personal opinion and, as my opinion is given by logical Exigency, it is necessary to the logic of the world. Freedom is guaranteed by logicity and not by caprice, which is to say by chance. The latter does not even guarantee itself. Since if chance is given at random it could be not given. What is given is guaranteed by its necessity. Thus the project, though personal and free, is universal and governed by law.

I repeat myself: the addenda of a sum are set out freely with different values and are therefore free, but the sum is unique and the law determining it is one only. The idea of reality prior to personal encephalic consciousness is bound to the freedom of previous ancestors or individuals and constitutes law. The project-related idea of present individuals is free and will constitute law when it is codified. The brain is free in the active but not retroactive project. In fact modern researchers have observed, as You will see below, the existence in the encephalon of two distinct zones, one genetic which has taken on atavistic experiences as law, and another called the “plastic zone” which represents free personal experiences and therefore renders possible a personal project free from genetic law, and thus *the world constitutes itself through its own freedom which becomes law*.

Dear Plato, I'll come back now to Your problem of the anteriority of “ideas” over reality.

After having seen that the rational or encephalic idea of reality is posterior to any given reality, in the light of recent discoveries it seems to me necessary to understand better, I should say in a detailed way, how one can have, over and above the encephalic idea of any object whatsoever such as a specific bed, also an idea of its “species”.

First of all I have seen that the only Exigency is that of existence and that the logical and objective succession of phenomena is finalised towards the constitution of the totality.

Then I see not only that the totality cannot have a finality beyond itself, but not even an immanent finality. It seems to me necessary that the sum or totality of phenomena has no finality at all, because the totality is the finishing line of the finality of its parts.

It seems to me that a finality cannot be immanent: an athlete runs to win the race. Victory goes beyond running and transcends it, but if the finishing line did not exist the athlete would run to run. The finality would be immanent, that is, inexistent. Finality by its nature calls for its extinction by means of the carrying out of its acts towards a destination.

The immanence of the finality of the world seems to me a conjuring trick devised to save the infinity of the world and at the same time, contradictorily, the concept of cause, which is to say its beginning from nothingness.

In fact if the world is infinite it seems not to possess a finishing line, and without a finishing line the finality disappears and thus the cause disappears. In order not to make it disappear it is declared that the finality is immanent to the world.

But I believe that finality is only *in* the things that form the world and the finality of things, like the things themselves, dies out in the creation of the world.

Some may point out that the totality of the world is given by its parts: if the parts possess finality, this is also possessed by the totality. One may reply to this observation by pointing out the example of the bodies of the earth which have a determined weight on the earth, but the earth constituted by the totality of the weighing bodies has no determined weight. To assume a finality as a sum of the parts, even though within the world, means admitting for this finality a process of return to phenomena and so there would be two finalities, one towards the totality and the other a

return to phenomena. If this were so it would also be possible to repeat formally identical bodies, the form of the bodies being the phenomenal form of the finality.

So it is necessary that the bodies of the world be different and in eternal change, precisely due to their personal finality. Even with a purpose to achieve they constitute the immobility of the world. And how it is possible to have movement of the parts and immobility of all of them in their totality is once more suggested by the nature of the addenda, which are many, different and mobile and their sum necessarily immobile.

The world cannot have finality since this would be re-proposing (on the world's part) that which its parts proposed in order to constitute it. It seems to me that the finality of things is the creation of their identity, which is to say their specific difference from others. If things did not have this finality, and therefore no reciprocal difference, the world in its nature would not exist. Thus the finality transcends things in constituting the world. If the world were to include the finality of things it would destroy itself. Finality is *in* the world but not *of* the world. So there is a clear necessity for logical coordination, meaning finalised towards the constitution of the world, of the individual parts of the world which it transcends without being their cause.

Dear Master, I believe I can see that *modes* of existing are given by one single Exigency and I believe it is true that *modes* of existing depend on the freedom of existing things.

In fact without freedom, infinite modes of being are not possible. After all, there is no sense in imposing one form of existence rather than another for the Exigency of existence. Before any form of existence exists it is impossible to prefer one to another, so freedom is innate to existence and any predetermination of the world is senseless. We may therefore think that existence had and has the freedom to give itself form by itself, but not as a choice which would presuppose the existence of several forms to choose from. Giving itself form by itself should be understood as inventing its own form by itself. Only in this way is there freedom, because the freedom to choose between this or that form is an obligatory choice of either this or that. Original and absolute freedom is not choosing but creating the form, and this naturally involves the contemporaneity of existence and of God, intuited as Exigency of existence as I have already said. Thus the first cell, our ancestor, took its form for itself. There being no constrictions, what it decided was perfect for its purpose. It decided by itself its form of life, just as its constituent parts of molecules, atoms and tinier particles had done.

Evolution of the *mode* of existing led the first cells to establish themselves as organisms and, subsequently, some of them to form a central nervous system and a related manner of existence.

It is thus necessary that what You call *idea of species* of a bed is the idea of genetic rest associated with a multitude of ideas referring to all beds experienced, which is to say the instruments of rest descended from one single Exigency.

Further, I seem to understand that the "idea" of bed which You imagined not only does not have a *formal relationship* with a determined bed but not even with objects which by analogy have the same finality of genetic rest.

Billions of years ago there was no cutlery for eating at table, because it was not necessary and not required by exigency. So today this cutlery cannot have a relationship of resemblance or formal imitation with an idea of its "*species*" which, descending from God, as You would have it, should always have existed in the cells and atoms of our molecule ancestors.

It thus happens that the part of the (human) brain that deals with the memory of the necessities or exigencies of genetic rest immediately interacts with the part of the brain known as plastic, which deals with the current processing of the whole organism's finalistic behaviour, and associates the form of a bed with the possibility of satisfying a need for rest, even if that person has never had the idea of bed. It seems to me that in the possible use of an object, by necessity one creates for this object the idea that You call "*species*", so any object such as a bed is other than its

finalised function which it transcends (certainty that objects remain transcended by their finality is achieved when one sees formally and functionally different objects with an identical finality, like a watch and an hourglass). In reality the bed is formally unique. It is independent of any other form of bed and therefore independent of an idea of “*species*”. And here once more I believe one can understand how it is possible to have the relationship of the plurality of determined objects with the unity of the so-called idea of species. One understands once more the means by which it is possible to have a relationship between the “one” and the “many”, as I told You.

So it seems to me impossible that a carpenter builds beds by making a copy of the “idea of species” of bed, because between the “one” of the finality and the “many” beds built by the carpenter, as I have seen, a formal relationship is not possible. In the same way, nor is it possible for a painter to make a copy of one of the carpenter’s beds in a painting. Each idea and each representation of the idea appears to us unique, and dependence on an anterior model inexistent.

I should say then to take it for granted that the idea of “species” of objects is inexistent and must give way to the idea of form of finality, as said earlier, and I should say that the artist paints an object like a bed which does not formally “resemble” the “bed” built by the carpenter but represents it objectively through the analogy of its finalised function, recognisable by the genetic exigencies common to both the artist and the beholder of the work of art. A “copy” is therefore impossible. Impossible both in the idea and in the concrete, physically perceptible form. What unites different forms in so-called *resemblance* (every form is absolutely unique) is their common finality and the usability thereof on our part. The unifying formal element is the synthesis of the formalised elements finalised by us, meaning by our project. This of course involves exclusion from our interest of forms of the real object not finalised by us, and we have always called these “accidental” although, in the object, they occupy the same role as those we call “substantial”. The forms useful to our project we call “substance”. Those excluded we call “accidents” but it is clear that both the “substance” and “accidents” of an object are really the same. And so it may also happen that what have formerly been considered “accidents” become “substance” in accordance with our new project-related interest.

Dear Master, I confess that I made a great effort to seek the origin of the idea of “species” and its “substantial” form. This is why you must tell me if it has been wasted effort.

And now I’ll tell you about the results of an experiment carried out by Moruzzi: “Overturning visual perception by placing in front of one eye, from birth, a permanent lens which turns images round by a hundred and eighty degrees, one obtains a *structuring* of the occipital cortex involved, which is inverted with regard to the contralateral” (Vittorino Andreoli, *La norma e la scelta*, Mondadori 1984, p. 25).

You understand that something falling on an eye with that lens rises to the other eye, and this means that if the idea of “species” of object were anterior to seeing the object, the lens could not modify the structure of the cerebral cortex dealing with perception of the object, and the overturned view of the objects would be only a passing optical disturbance. As You can see, even ideas, which are the basis and the constituent elements of the form of reality, such as verticality, horizontality and gravitation, are posterior to the perceiving to the vertical and horizontal lines etc. of objects. These ideas, as You have seen, are formed structurally, and therefore objectively, in the encephalon on the sensorial dictates of the “plastic zone”, that zone which deals with consciousness of new problems and therefore with their solution by means of project-related freedom. It follows that the logical structure of thought is established by the physical structure of the cerebral cortex, and this from the sensorial perceiving of reality. I see that the logic of thought is dictated by the logic of nature external to the encephalon, or at least, reasoning, I may theorise that encephalic rationality is harmoniously simultaneous with the logic of nature. By this I mean that *thought is objective and the senses possess logical and finalistic functionalities like the brain*.

But for about two hundred years philosophers have been in love with an apparent idea: they have believed that the “idea” of reality and reality were not objective. Whereas You, more than two

thousand years ago, had strongly postulated the contrary. Later I'll tell You about the crime. But following the latest scientific discoveries we may say that the "subjective" is reduced to only the "individual". The individual is distinguished from the subjective by its possibility of personally utilising the objective ideas of its plastic encephalon.

The subjectivism of the old modern world, on the other hand, repudiates the objectivity of the idea of reality and poses this dilemma: either the world is posited by the subject (subjectively posited) or the individual is predetermined and without freedom.

But it seems to me that objective ideas do not impede freedom of the individual who, intervening in the evolution of the world, affirms the objectivity of the world and personal freedom. The latest discoveries reaffirm both freedom and the objectivity of ideas. They deny that the conditions of consciousness are immutable or *a priori*. They deny that these conditions are common to all individuals.

It seems to me that my project is new with regard to what the senses brought to my brain. My finalistic intervention on reality, free because finalistic, is objective because it has the strength to modify the previous objective reality.

I should tell You that I am a painter and, as I told You, this is why in the final analysis I am writing to You.

I should like to tell You that observing the processes that allow me to paint a picture I see that first of all there is the desire to paint. This, I should say, is traceable to that Exigency and logic-efficient capacity I told You about. Then I see that the idea of reality, or the encephalic memory I have of reality, permits me to imagine by means of my freedom the form of the work I am planning, in accordance with an aim of mine that takes form in accordance with my personal form or structure.

The picture I am going to paint will, I believe, make use of ideas or memory of objects of reality as constituent material, such as the bricks of a house, and of an impulse or Exigency to put forward a new reality, like a new house responding to a new function that is not identified in the objects of reality which I use, such as bricks, and of which I have an objective idea, but will transcend them by means of my purpose in creating the painting, like a house. But in the making, the new painting does not respect the project-related idea, even though it does not overturn it. No preceding idea of a painting has ever guaranteed the painting I later produced. In the making, the new painting becomes really new, and when it is complete and placed by me into reality, I see that the idea preceding it in a project-related manner has not been realised. In the new formal reality it is seen that from the idea or memory of reality to the project-related idea, and from this to the idea of the new work, there are three steps. So the idea I have of the new picture when it is done is the third idea, setting out from the memory of reality anterior to my personal project, and I can only have this when the picture is finished, and not before beginning it, because before beginning it, it is project only, afterwards subject to unpredictable modifications during execution due to intrusion of the liberties of the external world formally different from my project. Thus the "objective" apprehended by me permits me its objective evolution through my project, even if it does not permit me my whole project.

Some so-called modern theoreticians think that the work of art, precisely because it proceeds from an exigency without guarantee of the result, is not produced by the artist's logical rigour but by irrationality understood as freedom from the rigour of finalised coherency. As a-logicality, as one Benedetto Croce said. I should say that it is meanwhile necessary to distinguish what is without logical rigour from what is not rational: as You have seen, even organisms without an encephalon, therefore without rationality, behave with a logical rigour which is perhaps superior to that of organisms possessing an encephalon.

So I should say that the capacity of satisfying the exigencies of an organism, the capacity of a suitable and productive personal response to the conditions external to the organism, derive from a

highly and rigorously logical capacity which, aside from encephalic memorisation, replaces it in its essential function. This capacity for logical behaviour is also possessed, as I told You, by acephalous and therefore non-rational organisms, so rationality and logicity are distinct entities, yet this logical rigour anterior to encephalic rationality is what qualifies encephalic rationality as logic inasmuch as the latter is posterior to the former and the former constitutes it fundamentally. And it is clear that there cannot be rationality without logical rigour.

This logical rigour or finalised coherency produces life. In fact where there is no logical rigour there is less possibility of survival.

Thus only the work of an acephalous organism may be irrational yet still logical, as we have seen.

Having distinguished rationality from logicity it is useful to remember, as we have said, that encephalic rationality is the project-related memory of the peripheral logic-efficient capacities of the organism. And so the form of art is the opposite of what is imagined by the so-called moderns: first of all highly *logical* in order to be a property of nature at all levels including the subatomic; secondly it is rational because it is constituted by the encephalic memory of peripheral cellular logic. So only where cellular logical rigour is absent will there be no encephalic rationality and therefore no emotive cerebral response either in the artist or in the beholder of his work.

A scientific experiment which confirms the dependence of all cerebral emotiveness on cellular logic was carried out on a macaque by a group of scientists.

The reactions of the encephalic system were electrically recorded to quantify the monkey's neuronal response to a drawing (the monkey's neurons are "homologous" to those of man). The animal was shown a frontal view of a human face. It was then shown the same drawing but without the eyes. Subsequently the drawing was shown with what we should call in today's artistic jargon *naïf* lines. Then the image was decomposed and shown in separate parts: "abstract" we should say in artistic jargon today, meaning non-representational: without analogy with the genetic forms of the first drawing. Well, the neuronal responses, beginning with the most intense to the first image, gradually diminished until they almost disappeared with the abstract. (Jean Pierre Changeux, *Ragione e piacere* p. 25, Cortina Ed. 1995). As I have already told You, Moruzzi demonstrated that cerebral structure is dictated by the structure of the images of nature supplied by the senses. This other experiment demonstrates that the sensitivity of the encephalon is subject to emotive reaction only when the images received therein are logical. *With this it is experimentally ascertained that so-called abstract art produces no emotiveness because it does not possess logic of image. It is ascertained that the brain recognises only the logical figure.* The concept of form, then, is such because its structure is efficient logic: I mean that reality is as the senses perceive it and only consequently as the encephalon thinks of it. This is why there is no encephalic activity beyond logical form.

This logic of the senses is visible in the whole of nature, starting, as You have seen, with the unicellular organisms. The logic of cells, and by necessity of molecules and atoms too, led to the constitution of our central nervous system, as I already told you, which turns out to be the final structure delegated to coordination of the logical exigencies of the various parts of the organism. Coordination which in its function we call rationality, and which is less if less logical forms come into sensorial perception. These, preserved in the encephalic memory, make rationality possible even at a time distance from the logical-sensorial perception. This rationality at a time distance may seem, but only seem, an entity independent of the logical sensorial perception transmitted by the nerve cells to the brain.

And now I shall tell You why I have written this long preamble to the heart of the matter: today there are so-called artists who have abandoned the logical form of nature and who invoke You as a predecessor because they imagine that You condemned art because it is figurative, meaning to say, because it is logical.

In reality these so-called artists are the children of a certain Professor Hegel who, in turn, grew out of the basic principles of Emanuel Kant, the philosopher generally held to be – I'll tell you why later – the father of all modern philosophy. As I was telling You, this Professor Hegel, who plagiarised You by using your arguments set forth in the “Laws” and “Ippia”?? dialogues, and was a teacher of aesthetics among many other things, said that art had a duty greater than its powers and would die from the effort of competing with philosophy. All in all, since Professor Hegel believed himself to be a philosopher, he said that philosophy was more suitable than art for bringing the “supreme interests of the spirit” to consciousness. At the most, art could survive by abandoning its form. As You can see, it is the logical form of nature that is being disputed, and today other eminent professors are convinced that the logic of the form of nature is not the same as encephalic reason; indeed they maintain, as Hegel did, that the “flesh” is so low that it has to be rescued by the “spirit”, intending by “flesh” the logic of nature and by “spirit” any oddity at the limit of madness produced by some dysfunction or encephalic lesion.

The false master copied this great idea of the “spirit” that conquers the “flesh” and served it up to his pupils as his own. They in turn, believing they were doing a good deed, proclaimed that art must either die, as the master had wished, or survive without being a “copy” of reality, which is to say by freeing itself from its so lowly placed “flesh”. This new pure-spirit art was called “abstract” and is created, as You will have understood, without the logical form of reality.

The artist arrives at the opening of his exhibition and says “art is”, but nobody sees anything because if the artist were to show something, the spiritual purity of his art would be polluted. Some time ago “artists” exhibited blank canvases or their own excrement, identifying these things in the artistic subject, but they were simpletons and have now been superseded by the latest spiritually super-pure brainwaves. Now, to console the visitors at the opening of their exhibitions, and to leave a tangible sign that art is there but cannot be seen with the eyes of the “flesh” since it is pure spirit, artists cut up bits of plastic or cloth or paper, or condoms, or sanitary towels stained with menstrual blood, and distribute them to those present who go happily off to the restaurant, convinced that at last art has freed itself from its “accidents”.

As I told you, it was Immanuel Kant who laid the groundwork. This Kant said that ideas of reality are formed within us not because the images of reality model our brain, as Moruzzi demonstrated, but because our brain models reality by a capacity or pre-constitution of its structure given *a priori*. Kant implicitly admits that the “categories” of “pure intellect” are in the brain. You must keep in mind that in Kant’s opinion our brain is like a mould, like one of those used in baking in order to give pleasing shapes to cakes and biscuits: fine, the *a priori* conditions are these moulds which we are said to possess in the place of that plastic part of the brain which models itself in accordance with sensorial experiences and which, as I described to You, is structured setting out from a condition that is amorphous or in energetic power with a structure. In Kant’s opinion – but Kant could not think what we, thanks to scientific discoveries, can think today – the form of nature was like baking dough, as I told You, which takes form only if poured into the mould. So in this philosopher’s opinion the idea of reality is conditioned by the mould possessed *a priori*, and we ourselves fabricate reality which does not exist outside of ourselves or in any case not in the form that we see.

He was in such good faith that he wrote: “Nothing worse could happen to these efforts (of mine) than someone making the unexpected discovery that nowhere is there or can there be *a priori* knowledge” (Kant, *Critica della Ragion Pratica*, Laterza 1983, p. 13). But someone made the unexpected discovery: it was the *evolution* of the species which, refuting all immobile knowledge, consequently refutes any immobile or *a priori* condition of knowledge.

Evolution is open to every transformation of the individual and of the species and the *categories do not appear to us as conditions of knowledge but conditioned by knowledge, as Moruzzi demonstrated.*

Well backed up by Kant, Hegel then stated that the “spirit” – that certain something struggling against the “flesh” – would win the artistic struggle only by doing without the logical

form of nature. "One may hope that art increasingly rises up and perfects itself, but its form has ceased to be the supreme need of the spirit" (Hegel, *Estetica*, Einaudi 1976, p. 120).

As You can see, these so-called modern artists, repudiated by scientific experience, are desperately seeking points of support for their theory of art without form. It still seems to them that as You said that the form of art is the "copy" of reality and the form of reality is the "copy" of the idea of species, which is to say copy of the idea given by God, or unique true reality, they must consider figurative art as false. In order to be "true" it should not be a copy of the copy of "truth", meaning a copy of the copy of the idea "of species". They feel that they are related to You in some way because you said that art is not truthful. I should like to ask you to clarify to these willing people your true position with regard to the value of the concept of "copy" and of truth. But given that, in the end, these so-called artists and their exegetes have got it in for me because I don't put my faeces in a box and therefore don't give "insight into the spiritual", I should like to permit myself to set down for them Your theory of the "copy" and of the "truth" of art, naturally with your marvellous text to hand. And with your consent I should put it like this: Plato could not give the *copy* the negative value *false*, which means the *opposite* of truth, but only the value of "*remote from the truth*" (Plato, *Politeia* X, p. 476, Rizzoli 1953).

This is an interpretation which I believe will not be opposed, because if it had said that art is the contrary of truth, which is to say false, for the sole reason of being a *copy* of reality, then it would have said that reality too is false since it is a copy of the idea of "species".

Not only, but Plato also says that ideas of "species" come from God who is the author thereof. So: if from ideas of "species" we have, due to their descent, a false reality, it would mean that ideas of "species" too are false since they too are subject to origin (from God). Since the false cannot be a descendant of the truth nor the truth of the false, if ideas of "species" which come from God are false, then God too is false.

But Plato did not say this, therefore the Platonic "copy" is the partial representation of Divine truth. Everyone can accept that the first idea is *remote* from the second and the second from the third without claiming as a consequence that the second and third are false. So figurative art is the art of truth, though not identified in Divine truth. Something which, after all, no one has ever claimed.

But reading, hand on heart, Plato's marvellous dialogues one well understands what Plato was fighting his strategic battle against.

Plato distinguishes "*technical or scientific capability*" (Plato, *Lo Ione*, p. 90, Rizzoli 1953) or "*the capability to act towards a purpose*", from the purpose, which is to say from the theme of art. "*This capability of acting towards a purpose when it produces only damage, does this seem to you a good thing?*" (Plato, *Ippia maggiore*, p. 556, Rizzoli 1953).

"*Mimesis of something inferior therefore accompanies and generates inferior products*" (Plato, *Politeia* X, p. 476, Rizzoli 1953). One sees clearly that "mimesis" as such is not in itself inferior. In fact if the theme of art spoke the truth it would be a good thing. "*We are aware of being subject to the whole charm of poetry*" (Plato, *Politeia* X, p. 482, Rizzoli 1953) and since poetry is the first of the accused, followed by painting, we understand that acquittal is given to both with the words "*The profit will not be small if poetry becomes not only sweet and soothing but also useful*" (Plato, *Politeia* X, p. 438, Rizzoli 1953). And then you have forgotten or do not know that "*poets are of a divine race, the divine breath is in them; with the aid of the Graces and the Muses they draw truth from many things*" (Plato, *Leggi*, p. 341, Rizzoli 1953), so they do not say the opposite of the truth.

And that mimesis as such is not guilty may be read in the second book of the "Laws". *If it is given us to know that the copy, due to artistic merit, has all its own parts and colours and the right figure overall? Does it not follow that he who knows this will also know whether the work is beautiful or in what way it is deficient in beauty?*"

"*In fact the criterion of justness in mimesis, as we are saying, is precisely this: if the*

imitated thing is perfectly identical to the original". Plato wants mimesis to be perfect, otherwise it is condemned as being not true. Since Plato said that the idea is the first model of form from which copies descend, *the copies will be formal* in accordance with their model, and your theory of ideas without form is overturned, I should say.

Dear Plato, I wanted to end this letter but a half-idea came to me: after having pointed out that there are two rational or encephalic ideas – one which represents the reality communicated by the senses and the other which projects future realities – I realised, but I already told You, that the cells of our ancestors and present day cells had and have a finalistic operative nature like those of the encephalon.

This operative nature of the cells we called *logic-efficient* capacity, that is, equipped with adaptive capacity useful for survival and equipped with the capacity to transmit information to the encephalon in a project-related manner. I now realise that these capacities too are carried out in two consequentially logical moments: the first renders the cell *aware* of the reality anterior thereto, and the second renders it *efficient* in the project-related transmission to the encephalon of the reality apprehended, and at the same time awaits a provision or command from the brain to be⁴ carried out usefully, which is to say in a project-related manner, in favour of itself and of the entire organism.

So I see that also every single cell has, like the rational encephalon, two "ideas" characterised by two different functions. This is why I would now expect You to say that the logic-efficient action of the cells is due to two "ideas", even if they are not preserved in an encephalic memory. Not only: since these ideas are constituent of rational encephalic ideas and have in common with the latter the Exigency of their existence, I would expect You to say that logic-efficient capacities, or ideas of every single cell, being anterior to rational encephalic ideas, are less remote from the truth and nearer to God than rational encephalic ideas which, following Your ancient doctrine, ought to be a copy of cellular ones. I also think You would add that rational or encephalic ideas, being formed by information received from the cells, are not cakes shaped by a pre-constituted encephalic mould or given *a priori*, as Kant says, who is followed by the so-called modern world.

You would also specify that encephalic-rational ideas formed by cellular logic-efficient ideas, these too in accordance with project-related finality, modify reality with their project so that the reality renewed by the project, being re-perceived by the logic-efficient cells and retransmitted to the encephalon, participates in the formation of a successive encephalic project and is thus re-perceived in a circular manner by the cells and retransmitted to the encephalon. Thus the logic-efficient ideas of the cells and encephalic ideas participate together in the evolution of the previous formal reality.

You would clarify that it is impossible to separate the cellular idea from the encephalic and the latter from the form of existence, as Moruzzi demonstrates, and that ideas of reality are not "copies" of reality but reality itself.

Dear Plato, let these truth-lovers know that informal art claims the existence of a knowledge independent of its source. It claims to separate the encephalic idea from its logical form based on the freedom of the cells of our organism, which seems to me, over and above any doctrine and in the light of modern scientific discoveries, just a witticism.

I send my heartfelt respects and thanks for Your "Dialogues" which are and have been for me, together with the cellular information of my organism, the reason of my reason.

Yours,
Mario Donizetti