

Wisdom of a grain of sand

Nguyen Chien Cong

*For the ones who dare to look at themselves in the mirror, fearless and
without judgement...*

CONTENTS

Prologue	1
Thought and the illusion of becoming	14
Time and the reality of nihility	40
Emptiness and the freedom in being	69
Compassion and the intelligence of love	99
Epilogue	139

PROLOGUE

Who am I?

For lifetimes spanned, rocks break down. Rains, waves, and animals chip away bit by bit, grinding the rock to form grains of sand. Drifting with the wind, they float through the air. Sailing with the streams, and flowing down rivers, they reach the ocean. Ages of wandering may have shaped them round, supposedly to be lighter to travel. In every grain of sand is a story of a million-year-old rock, and so is the tale of the Earth. Because even the hardest rock succumbs to erosion and will eventually become sand. With time, mountains dissolve into grains. And also with time, particles are cemented back together into rocks. Bringing their whole past along the way. Among all those grains of sand, hovering around endlessly through countless landscapes and sceneries, one happened to slide into the ear of C, a one-year-old child carried in the arms of his father, on an occasional summer walk through the beach. The child cried so much as it irritated his ear, and from that moment, the father gave him the nickname *grain of sand*, small as he was, just like the grain that slipped into his right ear. C grew up in a middle-class family, he had an older brother. His parents accidentally got pregnant with him at a quite late age, around their forties, and finally decided to keep him. With the experience of

already raising the firstborn child, C's parents nurtured him with maybe more dedication and less discipline. Also, forty years and forward was favorable for career advancement, and it felt to them that their relative old age must be compensated by further investment in the child. Self-consciousness came gradually to him with delay, leaving him the time to enjoy a purposeless existence.

People sometimes said that C was somewhat different, but deep down he somehow knew that he was no more or no less special than any other kid. Maybe because he wasn't dominantly shaped by fear, he was able to be curious to explore different possibilities of childhood life. Perhaps, it was the grain of sand that whispered some sense of skepticism to his ears. Or, maybe the grain of sand is just a fragment of his imagination, and it was simply just him all along. Sometimes, strangely, his inner instinct would tell him to do things differently from the conventions of society or even against his own family. Clear signs of childishness which reflected his lack of understanding of himself, but also the lack of attention and explanation from the adults as well. Clueless, he sometimes could not understand how people behave and act. Most of the explanations were given so that the child would not ask for more questions and be shut down. The justifications given were sometimes made up to scare, sometimes mores and rules blindly accepted from generation to generation, sometimes prejudices picked up by the grown-ups during their own shaping, and of course a bunch of all possible other pretexts. Any sensitive child would be able to discern the false behind those and would be

perplexed.

So, C grew up confused between his own perception of reality and the other so-called realities, those of his family, friends, teachers, societies, etc. The more he traveled with his parents, the more exposed he was to other cultures and traditions. He was most of the time the only foreigner in his class. At the same time, the constant complexities of exposure to all sorts of explanations of life was the reason that explained his preference to take refuge in his own solitude. Beliefs, expectations, cultures, norms, etiquette, propriety, all of that conditioning conformed the child into a person he did not know, an alien to himself, an image to become but yet to understand. All those forced changes pushed the child to conceive a world he did not yet know, and configured his life around that misperceived world which did not reflect reality as it was. This somehow created miniseries of identity crises inside the child's mind, and he had to deal with it on his own terms. More widely, there seems to exist an invisible grinder that has created so many neglectful children; a neglectful child is a child who forgets to laugh. Maybe that's how innocence is crushed, and a neglected child becomes a neglectful young adult, losing one's sharpness of mind along the way.

C wasn't an exception to the conditioning. He forgot the joy of life growing up and had indeed become somewhat of a neglectful adult. Getting to his late teenage years, he got himself into the treacherous games of society. He wanted to be on equal footing or even higher than his friends and his peers, he wanted to be

admired, and he wanted to be praised by his family. His source of motivation only came from gratifications. But witnessing the misery of others, while being in a relatively privileged position, he wanted to change the world for the better. Though, he wasn't aware of his limited perception. He had to create an image of himself for each of the various groups that he frequented. He was caught in many kinds of idealism. Ideals about success, society, love, and life to name a few, and those started to shape his thinking and behaviors toward others. To him, there seemed to be nothing wrong with that because people around him encouraged this idealism or aspired to the same kind of ideals, even though this very same unoriginal way of thinking is at the root of his actions. In a sense, kindness became a means to attain a goal, something else. Many questions popped up but the constant moving of thoughts, desires and events of life kept him out of an inquiry into his own self. He felt like he never had enough time for those questions, always busy doing something else. Also, answers couldn't be found and people around him didn't even really know how to handle things on their own. Patience was too short for a fast-moving society that focused itself on practicality. He was lured into the mischievous desire to become someone important that can impact the world. But basically, all of those endeavors are in conflict with each other. So, he grew up to be a conflicting young adult. Wanting to bring a built-up goodness to the world while still nurturing an egocentric character to justify the end goal, that's a conflict within himself. Can goodness really come out of any egotistical ambition? Maybe that's what adults call com-

promise. According to societal common knowledge, in order to change the world, men and women have to struggle in the course of making their ideals real. People have to work hard, to suffer to reach the top. They have to face the opposition of the world and have to endure the struggle before being able to reap the harvest. A mundane phrase that translates the idea is: *no pain no gain*.

It shows that humanity has been on this continual cycle of struggle for seemingly forever. Looking back at oneself, one can observe personal sorrow, and one tends to call it personal because it is limited to a single person. Personal sorrow might be the pain of loneliness, grief, desperation, loss, or disappointment, which is all too common to any human being for thousands if not hundreds of thousands of years. But, “my” sorrow is not greater than “your” sorrow, it is essentially not that different. Then why does one call it “mine” or “yours”? Is it because one’s so self-concerned? When one’s consciousness is only concerned with itself, it’s so occupied that it seems not troubled by the misery of others. So, can there be compassion when there is personal sorrow? Can there be love if there is fear? Can one exist while the other is? Psychologically, the current man is no different from any human being in the past. One still faces the same problems of life as the rest of humanity. Sorrow is a fact, suffering is a fact that one can’t deny. It’s common, beyond cultures, borders and colors of skin. The human mind might try to escape from it through the search for pleasure, through god, through discipline, through self-fulfillment, through self-expansion. But it’s always there, it resurfaces the mo-

ment the experience ends, and it resumes to be self-concerned. By constantly escaping, and searching, the mind becomes isolated, competitive, dull, overburdened, always concerning itself with occupations. A self-concerned mind is a neurotic mind, it can't perceive reality, and through escape it denies reality. A dull mind is always motivated, always searching for security within the boundaries of its thinking patterns, within the boundaries of the known. Such a mind can only lead to premeditated actions which is synonymous with limited actions, and so, it acts divisively. The escape from one's inward sorrow has resulted in actions that have changed the outward world. It's a motivated movement of becoming, to escape from the current state of what one is.

Nearly a decade passed by, after the many forms of struggle in C's life including academic competitions, romantic pursuits, career opportunities, and family quarrels among many others, there came a moment when a sense of profound doubt kept boiling inside his guts. Questions arose, confusion ensued, and truths shattered; this profound doubt started to challenge every sense or meaning that one's actions might bear. It was as if there was a serious dismantlement of all ideals. One by one, any belief or even a priori knowledge had to be put on trial. Doubt played the important role of precursor to the negation of falseness. By leaping into that deep doubt, that entrance into the abyss of nihilism, going beyond the common propriety and societal morality, C found out that there's inherently an ontological inward conflict in each individual. There's a conflict at the basis of the nature of the self.

Most people will think that there can be a will or a desire to do good. But deep down, there's a discontentment with the current state of their own existence, and that's why there's a sense of becoming which is driven by a will to escape from a state of being powerless. This discontentment with one's own existence translates into a discontentment with the world, and thus it shapes the desire to do good. It is a desire to make the world a better place, more suitable for oneself and for one's own interest, not necessarily for others. Basically, it's an inward problem that has taken shape into outward endeavors, which has not only shaped countless human minds but also the surrounding environment. Those conflicting thoughts have conflictual consequences in the real world. In other words, actions can be corrupted by the many lines of thought. Goodness as an end and becoming as a means can't really co-exist.

For thousands if not hundreds of thousands of years, humanity has always aspired to solve its problems with knowledge but still fails to do so. Knowledge includes technologies, philosophies, religions, ideologies, etc. The human problems are still present: wars, conflicts, exploitation, and oppression brought by division are still happening around us. They simply just change forms. One ought to find the cause of this division if one wants to perceive a way of living that doesn't create conflict, a way of seeing that is totally free from one's conditioning. Many philosophies, religions and ideologies made into systems have tried to tackle the issue, but so far, none of them have succeeded. As a fact, one can see that

organized religions, whether it is Islam, Christianity, Buddhism or any other type of indoctrinate system have caused tremendous suffering in its execution, or ideologies like communism or capitalism or whatever else, have also led to innumerable conflicts and misery. The clinging to any “ism” doctrine always ends with division because it only includes a partial view of life, and focusing on a partial perception of anything will inevitably breed division. Division implies sorrow through conflicts and quarrels. So wherever there is a division, between “me” and “you” or “us” and “them”, there’s fragmentation, and goodness cannot be. Because *goodness* is the state of non-division and the word itself etymologically means *complete, indivisible*.

So why is there a profound discontentment with one’s own existence? Is it because of a lack of goodness due to a lack of desire to do good? All the miseries and by relation all the great endeavors of preachers, innovators, emperors, conquerors, liberators, messiahs and even of the common men and women always start with an idea of what goodness should be. Each one aspires to be good, for oneself, for others, even for god or any other ideals. Essentially, the conflict and its consequences are based on the false comprehension of what goodness really is. But, can one bring up goodness by cementing one’s own becoming? People are still very much superstitious and ignorant, whether their beliefs lie in personal ambitions, organized religions, philosophical theories, economic expansion, political tribalism or blind scientific dogmatism. It’s not because a small tribe has grown into a modern country, then

an international empire that it ceases to be tribal. So basically, the current man is facing the same problems as his predecessors. All the misery, sorrow, struggle of oneself and of the relationship with another, and in more general towards any being, still come down to the very same issues. All those problems still exist nowadays. Changing in forms, the superficial contents might look different, but the foundations are still the same. Intrinsically, one is still ignorant about one's nature, about one's consciousness, thus it's still a problem of awareness of one's own thoughts and feelings. This basic ignorance spreads out into a myriad of problems related to the man's psyche and to a larger extent society. There's no lack of trying though, many thinkers including psychologists, philosophers, educators, ideologists, scientists and other theorists have come up with systems to define what is thought. They even came up with systems to control thought. Those are merely attempts to make thought conform itself to systems, blueprints or doctrines, making it even more messy. Just like that, theories take the form of what reality is supposed to be. Nonetheless, a theory as in *theoria* is just a speculation, a way of looking, of viewing; definitely not the truth.

As the primary cause of disorder in oneself is the seeking of a reality promised by another, it then becomes imperative for humanity to know itself, in order to see reality as what is and not as what should be. All these ideas, and archetypes about the psyche and then, when one analyzes oneself according to these blueprints, it can be entertaining, but it's still just a game of

thought. One might have a semblance of understanding of one's past and frustration better. Surely, it's like self-justification for one's actions, to admit that one has deviated from the common norm, and that one needs to recalibrate according to the pattern, but it is no measure of health to be adaptable to a sick society. It is all so superficial, like just playing around on the shore rather than truly swimming in the ocean. Looking into something dead and so vague like memory for reference, or even worse digging into a fabricated book full of pretended truths, it's like being stuck in the mud of falseness. It doesn't solve the penetrating discontentment as this kind of method will always face an open-ended issue. There's no prime cause for the sickness at sight and the search for it will be endless. Can thought realize that it is sick, and irrational without interminably rewinding into the past for causes?

If one were to withdraw from constant activity to reassess every relevant aspect of one's life which includes family, relationships, work, country, and even spirituality, one would be regarded as an escapist. Maybe, is it because one is tired of all this exertion? The average man would say that reaching a goal is more important, and all the struggles along the way are worth it. But, is it more reasonable to rest when one is drained, physically and mentally? Of course, by removing oneself from all the movements of mundane activeness, one would become a nobody, some sort of outcast. Socially, one's rejected from the circles that one used to attend. As being nothing, one can feel left out when everyone else has a title, a role, a purpose, or a goal to brandish. So, as most don't like to be

treated as nobody and want to take part as an active member, one feels obliged to become something, and one plunges back into action. But, is it not important to be rather “inactive” to reconsider the constant struggle with life? If one is genuinely serious with life, must one not stop for a moment to inquire, to carefully ponder on the issues and the real cause of one’s problems? For action to be non-conflictual, non-misery-engendering, in other words complete, does one need to rethink the confusion in which one lives? Is being active at becoming something without reconsidering those existential issues really being active at all? An action that leads to nowhere, an action that worsens things, an action that creates conflict internally and externally. Is that action at all or is it in fact inactivity? So, the real evader is not the one who takes time to re-question his actions but rather the one who acts with confusion. Confused, unsure, blind, superstitious, one is trapped into the belief that one is reforming the world by joining a certain kind of group, by following certain ideals, with all the ambitions and the empty promises along the way.

It seems to be what the grain of sand whispered into the mind of C or is it something else that made C investigate into the absurdities of life? Does that really matter at all? Or, is it more essential to understand how thought can reach the underlying yet real sense of absurdity in life? And to actually be able to investigate the self without filters and prejudices, does one need to go beyond all conventions? Does it mean to surpass all the morality of society, traditions of ancestors, duties of nations, propriety of cultures, and

teachings of organized religions? It's a re-questioning of all knowledge to draw insights from the observation of thought in order to see the workings of the subjectivity of one's mind. Disturbed by the constant vain movements of daily life, to the point that C felt a lurking contempt for that which is superficial, vain, and disdained for that which reeks of false morality; those occurred so consistently that one might aspire to become indifferent to its manifestation. Being invaded by that hidden sentiment of meaninglessness, one might indeed be tempted by misanthropy.

By doubting all aspects of one's life and digging into its meaning, one's faced with nihilism as one starts to see the absurdities of life. As an example: does dying for one's country have any meaning at all? What is a country after all? Questions like those reveal the irrationality behind one's mind when one's attached to the image of one's country. One begins to peel layer by layer the falseness and the illusion of one's striving. Only through this deep negation, knowledge can be re-questioned and all aspects of life can be examined. Negation takes on a totally different meaning and is synonymous with the most positive action. Maybe one can only start to be rational only when one's aware of one's own irrationality. Even the first and perhaps also the last thing that one can cling to, which is thought, should be put to examination. One has to start the inquiry with the nearest thing which is one's thought and so, many questions arise in C's mind. It started as an existential examination of the mind to find out about thought, and the self, then it became an exploration of life, and perhaps on the way, to under-

stand after all what goodness is about. Is there a fundamental relationship between understanding the self and pondering over the true nature of kindness? Is there any difference at all?

THOUGHT AND THE ILLUSION OF BECOMING

What is thinking?

In a quest to find out about oneself, C started to inquire into the nature of thought. Reminiscing so many practical situations in life, from family, school, university, or employment, C always felt a constant pressure to compete with others. It was like a continual influence that affects thinking and hence all aspects of one's life. Maybe, was it rooted in a desire to be somehow better than others? Or, paradoxically, is it from a desire to be wanted, included, to belong somewhere? Maybe that's how groups are formed; belonging to one and excluding the others. But how does one justify oneself as better than others? Does one group up because of compatibility, with the same patterns of thinking? Ultimately, there seems to be a gap between one's own thinking and the thoughts of others and maybe that's how conflicts and affinities are shaped. Surprisingly, C realized that not everyone has the same faculty when dealing with memory: some people can record events very quickly, some can imagine pictures very clearly, some can even recollect a smell strongly from thinking, etc. Then, an important question came to C's mind: do others see, hear, smell, imagine, feel, and perceive the same reality? This query has a tremendous repercussion on one's mode of being as it questions

the uniqueness of one's thinking.

In C's opinion, the world of education and academia seemed very peculiar. An example is when people chant praises about poems. Deep down, when teachers force the pupils to learn by heart a poem acclaimed by many, C felt an uneasiness when having to memorize something that he can't picture or something that he hasn't lived yet. In that regard, there's a similitude with religious education and indoctrination. When C closed the eyes, all he could see was a blank screen, no shapes, no colors, only ideas taking the forms of concepts intertwining with each other. It seemed like C was unable to picture images in his mind; a condition later discovered as aphantasia. Meanwhile, through the years, despite the inability to form mental imagery, C recognized that he had an aptness when dealing with abstract concepts and that was why the autodidact study of philosophy emerged to be a pivot in his life. It was as if C was bathing in an auspicious environment with only words and concepts, linked together by the logic of reason. Apparently, the process of thinking seems to be related to the notion of idea. If so, how does an idea form? For an idea to exist, there thus has to be a faculty to leverage the contents of memory, which includes all knowledge. If one had no memory, would there ever be thinking at all? To such a degree, thought can be considered as a continuum of neurological events triggered by memory or by contact through sense perceptions; thought seems like a reaction, just like any chemical reaction when triggered. And as a reaction, thought is always dependent on memory. Knowledge and

experience, basically part of memory, which constitute the contents and the activity of consciousness are at the base of thought. The brain is a human organ made up of millions of cells called neurons that are interconnected in a vast network. Cells as matter in certain regions of the brain perform specialized functions such as vision, hearing, recording, etc. When there's a record of a memory, it involves changes to the brain's neural network. Neurons in the brain are connected by synapses, which are bound together by neurotransmitters. Retrieval is the stage of memory in which the information saved is recalled, whether consciously in an intentional way or unconsciously as a more passive recall. A retrieval cue is a stimulus that initiates remembering; it can be external, such as an image, word or scent, and it can also be internal, such as a thought, feeling or sensation that is relevant to the memory. Also, the very act of remembering changes how memories are subsequently stored. Emotionally charged memories or information that has been retrieved from memory many times, through routine or repetition tend to be relatively easy to recall; these memories may seem quite vivid. But with time, memories may be rendered less accurate. And the malleability of memories over time means internal and external factors can introduce errors. As such, knowledge and expectations about the world and misleading suggestions by other people may alter one's memories. Wherever there's expectation, there's a direction, and that creates the internal thinker. So, thought seems to be just a material process, born out of memory stored in the matter of the cells and moving along with further knowledge acquired. It's essential for the

sense of self and allows man to draw conclusions from previous experiences. And as a material mechanism, thought can be observed like any other matter and the capacity to record is essential for it to exist. Is one just a very complicated machinery driven by a memory-reliant mechanism?

Genes are a set of recorded memories as well; they are conclusions from one's physical evolution, of the experiences of the ancestors. Genes determine the physical traits of one's appearance which includes the color of the eyes, the height, the facial traits, etc. Chemically, genes are at the center of everything that makes man, responsible for producing the proteins that run everything in the body. For the most part, every cell in the body contains exactly the same genes, but inside individual cells, some genes are active while others are not. When genes are active, they are capable of producing proteins. When they are inactive, they are silent or inaccessible for protein production. The brain has the highest proportion of genes expressed in any part of the body. These genes influence the development and function of the brain and ultimately control how one moves, thinks, feels, and behaves. Proteins form the internal machinery within brain cells and the connective tissue between brain cells. They also control the chemical reactions that allow brain cells to communicate with each other; neurotransmitters are such chemicals that transmit information from one neuron to the next. They are important for establishing physical connections that link various neurons together in networks. There are some proteins that act as housekeepers in the

brain, keeping neurons and their networks in a healthy working order. The cell's environment, its exposure to surrounding cells, hormones, and other signals help to determine which proteins the cell makes. These cues from a cell's past and from its environment act continuously inside the cell. A genetic variation or mutation is a permanent change in the sequencing that makes up a gene. Most variations are harmless or have no effect at all. However, other variations can have harmful effects leading to diseases, and surprisingly, some have beneficial ones. It's clear that there's a complex interplay between genes and environment which influences the cell and that is the material process happening. Through prayer, hypnosis, or a certain kind of meditation or contemplation with a direction, where there's a focus of thought, a certain trigger of sensations might happen; the activity of the frontal lobe and the parietal lobe, involved in the functions of one's consciousness, might decrease. Also, such effects can shortly be triggered by the use of pharmacological substances like psychedelics. Yet nothing sticks, they are just temporary measures, bounded by time and matter, where one tries to escape for a moment, and when the effects end, one goes back to the previous state, not a radical transformation after all. Also, it's not a matter of changing from one pattern to another pattern. The searching for something through a material process is still an experience. In spite of all these, can the cells in the brain bring about a radical mutation in themselves? Which corresponds to: can thought realize that something is disorderly and that radical change is needed?

Along these lines, should one wonder what consciousness is? After all, one's living with it and one's still unclear about it. How does consciousness arise from unconscious matter? Why does one have feelings or judgments at all? Consciousness seems to be an awareness of one's own being. Where thought is concerned, consciousness is self-consciousness; some define it as the feeling of what it is like to be something. First, there's the experience, which is recorded by the brain, with a conclusion of course; whether it's pleasurable, painful, sad, good, bad, or whatever, it will shape consciousness and the latter becomes a process of judgment, filtering, and classification. Thought is the flowing, the ideation, the verbalization of this process. For example, if one sees a bird for the first time, one probably wonders what that is, the brain then records the image, the name, and other characteristics of this particular bird and if one sees the bird again, there will be a response of memory recognizing the bird. Hence, consciousness is the total process that includes the recording of experiences and the movement of thinking. In a sense, consciousness is equivalent to thought. The process of thinking, which seems private and personal, might lure the thinker into an illusion that consciousness might be independent of thought. Self-awareness separates the thinker from the thought. Inwardly, one would think that thought stems from this supposedly separate and independent consciousness that is the thinker. But if thought relies entirely on memory, can there really be independent thinking at all?

There seems to be this long-running debate concerning the

mind-body duality; dualism is the view that the mind is irreducible to the physical body. Some even go on to say that there's an eternal soul apart from the body. And on that lineage of thinking, experience is irreducible to physical systems such as the brain. It means that for some, thought or consciousness is something beyond the material process, which means the experience goes beyond the matter. But, is it really? The consequence of such a mind-set is an accumulation and an idolization of knowledge and experience. In this scheme, one is better than the others because one has just accumulated more. It is in this way prone to competition, division, and conflict. But, realistically, can there be consciousness at all if the brain or the body as a whole doesn't function? Consciousness, thought and experience are only possible because the body functions and the brain operates. Why does one have subjective experiences at all? If one looks beyond the individual body, one can see how thought is shaped. Not only one inherits genetic memory from the past physical conditioning of the ancestors, but, through the transmission of knowledge, one also carries memory from the past to the present. One's thought is not only partly influenced but actually shaped by the mold of collective thought. One's born with a nationality, goes through the patterns of education, and continues to bring on familial, communal, and racial values. There seems to be an inheritance of knowledge in the process of conditioning. If one proclaims and believes oneself as a Rothschild, British, Christian, or whatever, one's thought is subject to anterior impediments. If one's thought is limited to the framework of a certain way of thinking, then there certainly

can't be independence. One's conditioned by the family, by the country, by the church, by the books, by all sorts of institutions which one has created. And, one finds comfort and a fake sense of security in all of those even if they might be unreasonable, or irrational. The conditioning of thought has an inherent violent characteristic: if another doesn't have the same form of security as one does, one's always programmed to be ready to defend one's own set of identities up to the point of killing the other. Once again, one can see that conditioned thought is shallow, limited, and subsequently irrational and violent. How about feelings? Feelings give the impression to be very personal, and unique to each individual. Feelings seem to be the basis of every humanist theory, which focuses on humans and their values, capacities, or worth. A feeling is still part of thought, which means a reaction, a response to memory. One's angry because of one's reaction to being hurt, feels gratified by the satisfaction of an experience, sad because one feels deceived, afraid because of attachments and the fear of loss, depressed because one's lost and can't find any sense, meaning, or order to existence. The list goes on, and all things considered: who is the subject that experiences, feels, and thinks? Who is the thinker, the subject that desires to escape from an awful experience and go towards a meaningful and satisfying experience?

All this concerns not only the conscious but also the unconscious. Who is the one that dreams? What are dreams? What is sleep? What is neuroticism, or psychoticism? Are there moments when the body functions, but one is not sure of its consciousness,

of its tendencies, of its contents? Even in the realm of the unconscious, thought still operates because it's still a reaction to memory and its contents. In its unconscious state, thought seems to be unaware of itself, and yet still operates. Then, taking a step further, as one delves into the nature of memory, one might gain a deeper understanding of the underlying aspects of thought. There might be layers to the memory operating, layers that shape the state of thought and thus of being. One among them is the state of being conscious, where memory operates to the most seemingly mundane tasks of life. Then, there's a state of non-consciousness in early childhood, where usually self-awareness is not yet existent, and thus the process of self-identification is absent. That state is also present through a dreamless sleep, where usually the body goes to rest, and the brain slows down its activity, purging itself of its disorder. There's a magnificent capacity of the human brain to regenerate itself. The brain and as a whole, the body and its mind need its rest when needed. During sleep, cerebrospinal fluid flushes throughout the brain, and blood flow diminishes as the rivers flow on a calm night. But if the disorder that one lives daily is too consistent, too problematic, and if one doesn't understand that disorder, then, one might even bring the problems of one's life into one's mind, one's brain, at the moment when it needs its rest. The disorder disrupts the regenerative capacity of the brain leading later to many forms of psychological disorders in the waking life. The constant building up of daily life problems translates into one's psyche, leading to damaging not only the mind but also the body, triggering unconscious ten-

dencies. And, there are many under layers of unconsciousness as well, which dwells between consciousness and unconsciousness, where memory becomes vague and thus the perception of reality as well. Neuroticism and psychoticism are such conditions of less or more detachment from reality, a state of cognitive impairment, or a functional derangement arising from disorders of the nervous system.

The practice of psychotherapy tries to use the contents of an individual's memory as the basis for analysis. But, to endlessly and incompletely dig into the aberrant corners of the unconscious mind would be a speculative and incomplete analysis. In psychoanalysis, there are even grids of evaluation where the therapist imposes judgment on the patient's mind. There's a deformed transference of one's contents of consciousness to the analyst, and the epitome is through the use of hypnosis. But who is the analyst? Does the analyst have problems as well? Again, depending on another psychologically in a blind manner reflects one's cluelessness about oneself. And funnily, sometimes this giving of trust is only based on accreditation or desperation. Maybe, is one forced by others to conform so that one can function "normally" among them? In the end, there's no clearer understanding about oneself. And with the constant abuse of medicine in western societies or any sort of healing rituals about demons, and ghosts in other parts of the world, one becomes susceptible to superstitions and thus submissive to the preconceived falseness posing under the cover of pretended truths. One's mind becomes dull, and insensitive

and the constant abuse will make the brain and everything inoperable. Does one see the lack of congruity when one depends on what the analyst has to say about oneself while perhaps the analyst also has not understood what thought is after all? Analysis becomes paralysis. And it becomes an activity to go to the shrink, the guru, the healer. Just like the demand for spirituality, one's life is miserable, one misbehaves the whole week and on Sunday, going to church, one forces oneself to behave well. In some other parts of the world, one eats lavishly during the whole month and on one particular day each month, one becomes vegetarian to not incite killing. Can goodness, which is completeness, come out of fragmentation? Does one see the irony in that? One's already living unconsciously and irresponsibly, even in the waking life. One has become inattentive to life itself and so insensitive to others. One's already in a state of neuroticism, a delayed, malformed perception of the reality of life. Explaining all the possible forms of desire of the unconscious is the endless digging into the past, into obscure and blurry memory and that practice is always subjective, prone to errors of perception of both the memory of the patient and the therapist. It's like trying to understand the cause of ignorance by digging into each subject; there will be no beginning and no end. Again, it's asking for experience. The contemporary practice of psychotherapy has become an experience, maybe to release some repressed frustrations. However, the patient will always relapse with the problems of his life and fundamentally still lacks the understanding of himself.

In the conscious state, through language, thought is verbalized from the response of memory. Music, mathematics, french, and painting, among other aspects of human cultures, are languages in such ways. Thought dwells on images or abstract representations of a supposed reality, using languages as a means of approximation. But, dealing with abstract concepts means that one has to deal with the possibility of incoherence and misinterpretation. As an illustration, the word *tree* defines one's knowledge of the tree with all the possible features that come with it: trunk, leaves, roots, etc. Still, the word can't describe all the infinite aspects of a tree; the word in itself is empty as it is not the real thing, and thought has a very limited perception of that tree. Per se, one can't say in all honesty that one really knows a tree. Can one say the same about oneself as well? Is one just bounded by one's name? Also, one always finds it difficult to express one's thoughts through a language as one has to learn the reality happening through the limited concepts of language. That's the main reason languages grow to be more complex in terms of vocabulary. One learns about the tree in a very limited way through words, just like one learns about expressing certain emotions with notes in music. So, one tends to refine the use of a language to try to make up for the discrepancies between thought and self-expression, thinking it would close the gap between thought and reality. But fundamentally, one sees one thing and is taught another. In that sense, is language also just a by-product of thought? There's a deep misunderstanding of thought. Not only the misunderstanding of words on the surface, but a deeper confusion that concerns thought it-

self. It's an ultimate lack of understanding of one's thoughts. There seems to be a paradox in the use of something limited to approach the immeasurable, which is reality. The actual has been replaced by the abstraction, the word. There's the conditioning of cultures and traditions which reflects back and forth with the language used. Words take on connotative meanings and language becomes an important vector of self-identification. Such words include *nation*, *proud*, *courage* to name a few. But the word is also used as a communication of one's feelings, though not necessarily communicated outwardly, it holds one's feelings. It's not the actual feeling expressed with language that conditions the brain but the concept, the image, the idea brought up by the theories, the conclusions formed by the abstraction of the feeling itself. *Fear* is an actuality whereas *courage* is just an abstraction of fear, an escape from the actuality, just an idea. Thought can take different forms, written or spoken or anything else, but the learning of language is still an accumulation of memory, just like any other learning process: one records then when one's challenged, one acts. Why is it that the idea or the abstraction has become so prevailing in one's life even though it's the main reason for separation among men?

If thought is conditioned and is limited to face reality, should one be looking at the origin of conditioning? Why is a man, whether from America or Asia, conditioned? Facing an insecure world, what makes a person conform to a certain culture? Is it a demand for security, for safety? A child cries as a reaction to insecu-

rity; man has an instinct to feel secure physically from the very first moments. In a world filled with hazards, the need for physical security seems reasonable. It seems sane to protect oneself when one is confronted with danger. But this instinct is often coupled and confused with the need for psychological security and this is the beginning of the abstraction of fear. One wants to avoid the dangers of a perilous world and fear is the psychological demand for security. A newly born child doesn't have fear in its mind; he can cry, he can die, but there's no fear. Fear is linked to knowledge; there can only be fear of the known. The child solely experiences fear when it has been taught what to be fearful of. Is fear different from the contents of thought? And the teaching of what to be fearful of and what to be valued is the same process of conditioning; a conditioning based on the limited perception of reality instigated by the parents, the teachers, the peers, the leaders, the idols, etc. As an example, adults cultivate the abstraction of fear when they try to discourage the kids from being naughty, with ridiculous and illogical chicaneries, as if the source of fear is something external. And similarly, one's conditioned to be nationalistic, to have a preference for one's own culture, to be fearful of others, etc. One finds comfort and an illusory sense of security in beliefs; a form of escape from fear itself. Beliefs that are not examined, reflect the blind conformism which puts forward the comfort of mind in spite of reality. Brought up as a muslim, one thinks that one would find security and strength from Allah, but one is still living a miserable, desireful, and unhappy life. The psychological need for security expresses itself as a need for certainty, determin-

ism, and predictability. As there are no permanent things in life, one's afraid to lose the continuity in one's relationships, with the wife, the child, the painting, the song, the house, etc.

One wants to bind everything, even the immeasurable to the known, to the experience, which is ironically limited and anti-nomic to the infinite. In its latin etymology, there are two definitions to the word religion, one is *religare* which is to bind and is the sense that organized religions understand its meaning for nowadays. The other definition comes from *relegere*, which means to re-read, to read again, to inquire, to ponder. What does it mean to be truly religious then? So, as one can see, with the former meaning which is now widely used, there's this desire for binding even god to the secular need for security. In all its shallowness, it just means that one believes in god only because one's fearful, and only god can protect. In a more illusory sense, one wants to be fulfilled with spirituality, to be in bond with god, whatever that means. There's a desire to escape from the suffering of the earthly world and to enter into the kingdom of god where one would forever be at peace, free from fear. But when someone challenges this idea, as ludicrous as it seems, one would immediately bear arms to defend one's beliefs. It goes the same for nationalistic, political, or any other ideologies, each one clings to their own form of security irrationally and fights each other for some illusory ideals. Fear becomes the main driver of one's actions, guiding one's life through all endeavors, struggles, regrets, and sorrow. Fear is the predisposition to escape pain and go towards pleasure, and it

plays a major role in one's life choices and becoming. Likewise, the whole structure of the relationship between one and another, and in a larger sense society is based on the same pattern of gains and losses. One maintains a relationship because it brings something beneficial. One's conditioned to a system of reward and punishment, which in the end is just a meaningless rat race. It even translates in certain monotheistic cultures as the concepts of hell and heaven where people are judged for their life. Of course, the main questions still remain: why is one afraid? Is fear different from the one that is fearful, from thought? Can goodness come out of fear?

Going past all the various forms of fear, including the fear of ghosts, of loneliness, of ugliness, of being poor, of failing, of dying, of losing someone dear, of not being somebody, of boredom, of the void, among others, should one be asking if there's a single root to fear? If there is then what is it? What is the common factor that shapes fear? It's essential to ask what is the root of all fear. If fear stems from the contents of consciousness, it can't exist by itself, as a separate entity. There's an abstraction only when one wants to run away from fear, which is itself a fact, when one wants to escape into an idea that gives comfort. One is afraid of being poor and one wants to be rich for example. It means that one has created an imaginary, external abstraction of the fear that one wants to escape from. One thinks that fear is something separate from oneself, just like one's used to by one's upbringing. When one's afraid and doesn't want to face what one's afraid of, one

wants it to cease, so one denies its reality and runs away from it. Just like the way the parents say to their children to be stronger when they are afraid of something, out of laziness and ignorance of course. When one's hurt, the activity of thought creates the actual feeling of fear and at the same time triggers a desire to escape from it. So, one wants to become something else other than fear, other than hurt; one wants to become fearless, saner, stronger, richer, beautiful, successful, powerful, etc. One even creates a god and binds it to the concept of immortal soul, so one can escape from fear. So, a fearful mind is ambitious. There's a contradiction in that escape, one is fear, which is a reality, and wants to become something else entirely, which is an illusion, by externalizing that fear, sweeping it under the rug. Contradiction, which stems from internal conflict only brings more misery, and more fear because nothing is really clarified. One actually becomes neurotic and even psychotic as the fearful mind withdraws from reality and struggles to deal with all the intricacies of life and the relationship with others. A fearful mind that isn't aware of itself will create havoc. Characteristically, when fear is, whatever the escape one tries, it will always come back to haunt. As a clear illustration, the difficulty in dealing with unconscious fear reflects that characteristic. The unconscious fear collides with conscious life and interferes with one's rest during sleep, manifesting in the form of dreams or nightmares. These experiences are extremely difficult to analyze accurately due to their vagueness. As long as there's a desire to be something else instead of a direct observation of fear, which means facing oneself, one's consciousness, thoughts, and

conditioning, fear will persist and shape one's actions, under the cover of one's so-called own will. One fiercely creates hope out of ideas to not face the despair of fear, and one's hopes mirror one's desire of becoming or ambition. Escaping fear through becoming brings about ambition and basically conflict, internal and external, taking the forms of comparison, competition, envy, jealousy, division, war, etc. Hence, there can't be goodness out of fear, or completeness out of division. Any action out of selfishness, ambition, or fear will eventually lead to misery, from the inward to the outward because fear breeds violence out of conflict. Ridiculously, one is violent and fears violence, pursues the idea of non-violence, while simultaneously building up towards more violence; one becomes a hypocrite and lives under the banner of ideals. In a war, one thinks that one must defend oneself, kill the enemies, and win to reach peace. In truce time, one's afraid of the other, wants peace to last but still builds up for war to prevent the other from killing one's family and friends. By becoming something to escape fear, one evades from oneself and shuts all doors to the understanding of oneself. Becoming separates the thinker from the thought, deceiving oneself under the pretense of a separate entity, which is nonetheless irrefutably part of consciousness. But that which has a cause must have an ending and the understanding of fear, from its origin to all its working is the freedom from it. Freedom comes from perception and not courage, it's not an ideal, a hope, a will, an escape, an illusion.

And to inquire fear, one must inquire pleasure as well, be-

cause without one, there wouldn't be the other. All of one's motives take root from the principles of fear and pleasure, conscious or unconscious. One sees a marvelous clothing, enjoys the sight of its design and the touch of its fabric and there's pleasure in that; it seems quite orderly and reasonable. But when one sees it on oneself, even if it's just a thought, at that moment, desire arises as thought comes in with self-identification. First, there's the sensation which is part of sense perceptions, including smell, sound, sight, taste, touch, etc. But when the pleasurable sensation is memorized and recalled, thought identifies itself with it. Self-identification happens because thought wants to reiterate the pleasure for oneself. If the sensation is painful, thought doesn't want to identify itself with that. But, the memory is still recorded anyway, one might struggle to deal with it, and that's why there are traumas. When thought wants to repeat the experience, the yearning for continuity of pleasure is attachment. Thought wants pleasure to last permanently, it wants continuity. Of course, with attachment comes fear because deep down there's always a concern that the experience might end. Beginning with the pleasure and joy derived from simply witnessing beauty, thought, through memory and the culmination of the experience, establishes a self-identified abstraction of pleasure. This abstraction sustains and intensifies desire. It's the conditioning of thought happening. Fear and pleasure operate through desire, and desire is the establishment of the pursuit of pleasure. In this way, money, prestige, fame, knowledge, and power among other forms of desire belong not only to the domain of pleasure

but also fear. But to understand desire, one needs to put all social morality aside. To judge pleasure and desire with all the prejudices would naturally stop the inquiry and there would be no perception, no insight. If one already condemns pleasure beforehand because one's religious or moral authority declares so, one would shut the door to its workings, and so its understanding. In desire, there's always the anticipation of gratification taking place. There's a feeling of excitement when one awaits a satisfying result and an immense satisfaction when the anticipation is fulfilled. There's also a character of urgency in reaching it as well. The expectation of fulfillment of one's desire concerns all aspects of one's life, whether it's about possession, knowledge, fame, power, or even spiritual achievement. Ironically, god, heaven, and nirvana are considered as the utmost forms of pleasure. Thus, desire leads to acquisition and the more one acquires, the more one wants because the stimuli need strength to sustain. It's like a fire, one needs to keep adding fuel to it. One wants newer, shinier, rarer objects of desire. When desire surpasses the need of appetite, which is the instinctive physical need, it takes on the form of greed and becomes psychological; that's the difference between being hungry for food and athirst for luxurious jewelry and self-embellishment.

Consumerism, promoted by the business people, dwells on this greed to stimulate desire by offering immediate fulfillment of one's desire through the exchange of money. Thus, money becomes a representation of power in a materialistic world and be-

comes the object of desire of the masses. Where the constant desire for accumulation in the past concerned only a few powerful and rich people, it has now become an amusement of the masses with the advent of capitalism. The extreme pursuit of pleasure has become the norm, in opposition to the religious teachings that promote its restraint. One overindulges in the following of pleasure, becomes insensitive to the problems that it might generate, exploitative of others, and fears its interruption, its ending. Mass consumption, overproduction, and excessive exploitation have caused many problems to the world. They affect all living beings and the environment in which one lives and depends on. But, in opposition to this consumerism, there's self-discipline, and self-control which is particularly prominent among the religious communities. The monks want to renounce worldly desires to dedicate themselves to god, to enlightenment, and to be free from society. But fundamentally, discipline is a form of suppression and control of desire and the annihilation of desire is in itself another desire, an ideal. So, all the processes that want to achieve this goal are just another disguised pursuit of power. Desire in this case takes the form of repression of thought and here detachment from an attachment is just attachment to the opposite, to something else. One spent one's whole life, controlling oneself, even torturing oneself to try to dominate desire. In that sense, one wants to experience god or nirvana, a power so supreme that can suppress desire, a pleasure so ultimate that hasn't yet been realized. That life is not much different from the life of a suited clerk in an office cubicle. The process makes the mind simplistic, insen-

sitive, and dull. But deep down, fear still operates, the disciples are so afraid of the temptations of daily life that they have to isolate themselves. Many, seeing the meaninglessness go back to the worldly life, some, more stubborn keep on tormenting themselves, while the rest still cling on the ladder of spiritualism. By isolating oneself, but absurdly still grouping up with like-minded people, one becomes insensitive to everything, unaware of life, and torturing oneself for ideas and ideals. Those people are not that different from the over-indulgent ones after all. The objects of desire may vary, but the nature of desire is the same. In the attachment to a pattern, one finds the illusion of security and protection, and so there's a desire for it to last. And, when there's a hindrance to the realization of a desire, there's frustration in its many forms, which comprise anger, sadness, despair, and other negative feelings. Frustration, as an emptiness that is not fulfilled, acts as a superb incentive to self-becoming because one doesn't want to stay in disappointment. And if one's honest with oneself, in the case that some desires are somewhat fulfilled, there will always be a deeper desire to escape from the emptiness, the nothingness of oneself; one never seems to be satisfied with the achievements that one has accomplished because there's always something out of the reach of one's hands, something more that one wants.

And so, motivated by pleasure and fear, one lives on ideas, on images. Relationships become self-interested; one has an image about another. In that image, with all the expectations, one finds a feeling of security. But, the image is not the actual person, just

like the word is not the actual thing. That fact will eventually lead to discrepancies and then conflict in life. It becomes the struggle between husband and wife, parent and child, neighbors, colleagues, factions, nations, etc. It's like two mirrors that can't reflect off one another because there's an intervening image. Thus, there can't be any understanding of each other and where there's no understanding, there can't be care, compassion, goodness, and love. Is goodness just a positive thought, a sort of wishful thinking? When one's attached to the form, there's a hindrance to the observation of another. Thought brings forms, shapes, ideas, prejudices, and judgments to the observed. But inherently, thought is limited and reality is much more than that; there's no image, the other is not part of thought, just like the cloud floating across the sky, water streaming down the river, the leaves faltering, etc. No form, no shape can fully apprehend what's happening. One has always considered thought as the inner. Yet, is it really the inner? The movement of thought with its actions and reactions might make one think that there's an outer to be overcome by the inner. One feels the need to become courageous to overcome fear. One might think that fear is the outer because one's usually fearful of something and courage is the inner. But escaping from one's own reality which is fear, one can't see that courage is actually instigated by fear. And so the inner which is fear creates the outer which is courage. Then the outer, which is one's ideals, shapes the inner; thought has carved the inner to the outer demands. Thought, by creating an abstraction of reality makes the inner become a slave to the outer. As an idea forever in conflict with one's

own reality, it forces the fearful to be courageous. It goes back and forth like the waves lapping and receding on the beach. And so the movement of the outer coming in is the flow of the inner going out; both are of the same restless movement just like the ebb and flow of waves carry the same water. This has been going on seemingly forever and that process has created society, with its morals, laws, and all the pressures from outside. Yet, thought seems to not realize its own activity. Can thought be aware of itself, of its doing? Thought is a powerful tool as it can materialize itself with effort or through mere will into real consequences that can affect the outward world. One can see the danger of it, the limitations of it because it brings division. So why does one accord such importance to it? No matter how strong the effort, belief, hope, or will, it never seems enough to bring about freedom from it. Is one doomed to suffer? Can there be any insight on the nature of thought? Can one see the common aspect of one's life with all others?

C starts to realize that thought is more shallow, and superficial than what one believes it to be. Even with all the delirium, grandeur, and recesses of the mind, thought is still limited; whatever imagination is still the activity of thought. And there can't be any perception of the immeasurable with something bounded. Thought, which stems from memory is fixed in time as the past is a dead thing. A mind that lives in the past, with all its conclusions, is a conditioned mind, even with its projection of the future. Thought can't seem to return to the beginning of consciousness when there was nothing. It can't give up pleasure which is

something that it knows because it's painful to give it up. Also, because then there'll be nothing else and one's fearful of that. The brain has been conditioned through millions of years by this process; one might think that one's body is new, but it has inherited a lot of conditioning with all the time that it has been shaped, which one can't even trace back to the beginning. For example, as one of its instincts, which has been shaped by many years of living in the wild, when the brain confounds a rope for a snake, one's heart beats faster, and one's mind is confused. But when one realizes that it's just a rope, the state of mind changes, the brain quiets down and activity can resume because fear is not encompassing anymore. In the same analogy, can one live without fear? How does one realize that the snake is just a rope? For that, one has to dig into the origin of fear. Not the many forms of fear but what constitutes and makes fear possible. Fear can't exist without thought and its contents, so, the origin of fear is the origin of thought. And knowledge, experience, and memory, which constitute thought involve time. So thought can't be without time. It's only conceivable for consciousness to grasp time as a collection of events, past or projected. Those recorded events are at risk of being subjected to distortion or misinterpretation. In that way, the knowledge of time is delimited by one's perception of the changes, which is one's conceptualization of the process of change. Hence, is thought time? Commonly, one would think that with enough time, thought will find a solution to all problems. But, if thought through time is the key to the question of division, long ago one would have found the solution to all of one's problems. Mankind

has already existed for so long, one has had a lot of time already, yet the same existential issues remain, not solved in any way contrary to the belief in progress. One needs to see the fact that it's an illusion to think that with time, all solutions will come. Time can't be the ground of being. Ultimately, one must be asking oneself what time is, because if thought is related to time, how can one be free of time?

TIME AND THE REALITY OF NIHILITY

What is time?

Is knowledge part of time? One requires time to learn to walk, to talk, to play the piano, or to learn any skill at all. The psychological accumulation of knowledge requires time. Alongside the advancement of technology, which began with the materialization of thought through tools, one may perceive themselves as superior to their predecessors because they view knowledge as a continuum, much like time is perceived as continuous and linear in their habitual perception. With thought, one starts to be conscious of the past, the present, and the future. The continuity of time is present in all of one's life, from birth to death, with all the experiences, all the knowledge that one has acquired; the continuity of generation after generation, of tradition, of the things that man has known and remembered. Everyone seems to crave continuity. Because without it, what is man after all? With time, to be is to continue. Death may come, and there may be an end to many things, but there is always this desire for continuity and man goes back to find his identity. Religions, ideologies, traditions, opinions, values, judgments, and conclusions, all have their continuity. Even a tree, a dress, a book, or a person can have continuity in one's mind. There is a continuity in all the things one has remembered.

As such, memory has a continuity, that of the remembrances of that which has been. The whole psyche is memory and man clings to that desperately. And so, with more knowledge and technology, the illusion that the man of the present must be superior to the man of the past has always been the prevalent feeling. As a simple perception, knowledge is synonymous with the unfolding of time on the human scale; without time, knowledge would be impossible. Knowledge seems to give meaning and historicity to time. Man even digs into the remnants of the past to find more knowledge for that matter. The human life has been marked by the glorification of the past, of knowledge, which of course is of time. Human thought has become more and more sophisticated and complicated with the accumulation of experience through hundreds of thousands of years if not more. Alongside, cultures and civilizations are formed. Now, putting knowledge aside, is there an objective and independent thing, outside the human psyche called time? Unlike the psychological time of mankind with its self-attributed meanings, chronological time has a real continuance in the natural world. It is the change in nature. Time reflects the change happening in the distance between two positions in space. So time is because change is. In physics, because things move, there is time and so if a system is unchanging, it is considered timeless. That perception of time also concerns a man's life because one's life is bounded by birth and death. There is change in one's life, both from physical and physiological standpoints, and growing towards death represents that change. A common saying from Ancient Greek philosophy that has depicted fairly this fleet-

ing essence of time is: *no man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river, and he's not the same man.* Does this constant change have a beginning and an end?

To grasp the reality of time, one must inquire into what finitude and infinity mean. In the course of one's life, time has a direction, can't move backward, and seems to be finite as it has a beginning and an end. By conceptual reasoning, life is finite on a personal level. But from an existential viewpoint, one's existence seems to be unbounded. One's atoms basically come from the same atoms as those of stars and maybe even those atoms have a more fundamental level underneath. In such a way, one's existence seems to be the continuation of something quasi-infinite if not actually infinite. If one pushes the reasoning one step further, then one will be faced with the reality of the nature of beginning and end, and so time itself. So the essence of the finitude of one's personal life lies in the infinity of existence, of time itself. Physical existence here doesn't just mean the existence of a body as a medium for an individual consciousness but the existence of what the body itself is composed of. It seems like an endlessly recurring finitude. One's atoms take on many forms in this endless voyage through time. So, out of one's subjective scope, which is related to one's consciousness, the essence of one's existence seems unbounded, above any personal subjectivity. As paradoxical as it seems in the realm of human reason and logic, the essence of one's finitude might actually be infinite. It becomes less of a headache when one understands that rational cognition is not separate from

thought and is part of one's self-consciousness. Beyond the mere rational phenomenology, one arises to existence as an infinite finitude and that's why the essence of human existence goes beyond the conceptual thinking of the self. In this sense, the essence of man belongs to all the forms of existence that have led to one's existence. Biologically, a good deal of scientific research tends to converge on the theory that all species on Earth seem to evolve from a common ancestor. One's origin seems to go back to the ape, the reptile, the fish, the single-celled organism. The history before the cell structure is still uncertain, maybe it's the right mixtures of elements under the right conditions which were initiated by the forming and the dying of stars and galaxies, as the cosmic recycling of the elements. Though as fascinating as the subject is, it's not crucial to regress infinitely for one's understanding of the nature of time. No matter how much progress is made in the scientific field relating to the knowledge of the universe and its beings, such digging into the past pushes backward endlessly and opens up perpetually into the future, without ever being able to reveal the fundamental secret of its beginning or end. The realization that one's not that separate from other forms of existence should loosen the grip of the cultural determinations of what it means to be human. Thought, existentially, devoid of any meaning, struggles to find meaning in existence simply because when there's no ground in sight, there's only restlessness and despair. Some describe it as the abyssal nihilism which gazes back at the one who stares into it, this deep feeling of emptiness. One's floating endlessly in time. In succession, time as history in thought becomes

an anchor for man to cling on to. Time has become abstract with history. And because history is knowledge, time becomes psychological and turns into thought. If history is meaningless outside the human scope, what is then history in one's life? It seems that the insight into the nature of history might help in understanding more about time.

History doesn't mean much but events that affect one's consciousness as a consequence of the past and the history-anticipated future to be shaped by will through becoming. Effectively, the linear conception of time as history in the making leads to a will to power. One has a will, a deep desire to change one's condition for a better future. In a society, one might think that positive change can happen outwardly through the organization of society and lures oneself into believing that eventually problems will be solved in a collective manner, as a society or as a species. Doing so, one delegates one's thinking to the state, the leaders, and the institutions that shape history for its interests. The ambitious ones are those who pretend to know under the cover of the image of a savior and yet don't have a clue about life. It's like searching for an imaginary solution to a self-inflicted problem: bringing peace through the organization of power and society, just like using the past to shape the future. It participates in the delusion about the evolution of the mind by ranking systems on a scale of better society. Fundamentally, peace and power can't coexist, one is without the other. If there's ambition for power, there's no possibility of peace because power is divisive, and there will always be losers in compe-

tition, lesser in comparison. Measurement exists in one's psyche, it's not just the mathematical measure by the rule which measures the speed of light or the height of a tree. This comparative process has existed seemingly forever with human existence. One's always comparing and from that, there's always competition. It exists in all aspects of one's life, whether it concerns one's family, school, university, job, neighborhood, country, or faith. From the better son, the better student, the better employee to the image of a patriot, a martyr, a saint, a god, etc. One's trapped in wanting to be something more, something better because of one's own measurement. Measurement, which seems pragmatic for each man, like a rat knows its sewer, conditions the brain to comparison, and it has been going on for centuries upon centuries. By trying to measure time, man, with his limitations, has artificially given time a meaning through historicity, as his interpretation of time. That's why knowledge and history have become important subjects in man's life. And, by that, there's a competition between the countless interpretations of time and history, and it translates with the rise of tribes, nations, dogmas, ideologies, etc.

Trapped in illusions and ideals, the politicians, the political thinkers, and their followers don't understand their own thinking and still promote ways to organize society and most of the time, based on ideologies invented by another. It's depending on another mentally or in other words, trapped in the past. For the most virulent ones, it can lead to all kinds of extremism with severe consequences. For the pragmatic ones, it's a quick scheme

to get rich or build a reputation while trying to make gradual reforms. For the idealist ones, it's a way to assemble the will of the repressed to fight for a new order. All of them are not that different and in all cases, it's a way to keep the people, the possible opposition in check or in chains, or organize a revolution against the power in place. In the end, both lead to division and conflict because it's self-interest at play, one group against another. It's no less dangerous than the division caused by organized religions which is simply just another kind of political thinking. In most religions, for instance, the ones with the Judaic heritage, historical time is linear and is determined by the will of a personal god. There can be neither real infinity nor real finitude in such a conception of time, it's open-ended on both sides, and yet infinity is boxed in as a personal and limited entity, with its own will. Neither infinity nor finitude is truly grasped as a reality. One's life, like a tragedy, has a beginning, a plot, an ending, and in between, all sorts of crises, hopes, struggles and meaning happen. History is then related to the self acting itself as a personality shaped by circumstances. From the man to the god, the underlying mover is still the will. Ironically, the will of man is to be negated, and abandoned but comes back resurrected as the will of god. God is then just a projection of man, and that's why it's still a personal God, even though they might say that man, here Adam was made from the image of God. In such a case, history is set up as something that contains meaning within itself, something inherently anthropocentric. In the Bible, the beginning and the end of history are described as moments of divine punishment and ultimate judg-

ment; where punishment and judgment are simply forms of the divine use of power. And so, political actions present in all power systems are just political allegiances, opinions, or ideals of a person, party, or group of people in operation towards a goal, which sets the structure for the social relations that lead to authority and power. Under the cover of the pretended best way to govern or to organize society, it's still linked to each one's relationship to power. All that energy, wasted and corrupted by the pursuit of power, has done more misery than any good, if there is any good at all.

The corruption, or the contamination of man's purity is commonly considered as evil by the morality of society. It's often looked at as the opposite of good, going against god, which is itself the ideal of goodness. But it is precisely the pursuit of ideals that corrupts one's actions. One's desire to do good is then directed by thought and one identifies oneself with certain ideals. And, as thought is limited, due to its self-centeredness, evil is actualized by one's divisive actions and conflicting thoughts. Any movement of energy is a dissipation, which means that corrupted energy is also to be dissipated. This process not only depletes one of liveliness but also spreads like gangrene, a disorder originating from within oneself. Some reject the faults of that disorder on society, but at the bottom, society is simply an expression of oneself. One has created society by contributing to it; it's the structure that in turn conditions oneself into idealism and so into evilness. It is there, one has made it, and then one is shaped by it. And so, so-

ciety can't be changed unless man changes. One's responsible for the mediocrity, the stupidity, the vulgarity of tribalism. It's an illusion to think that through the bringing about of certain laws, regulations, reforms, and institutions, whether in a totalitarian or democratic way, a better society might change mankind. And so, the psyche has produced the laws, the morals, and the institutions of society and in turn, the very same agencies are shaping the brain of each man. One's not that different from the other on the opposite side of the world; one suffers the same despite the different appearances and the cultural backgrounds. The only reality is that one is evil and one wants to escape from it. There's indeed evil, but that evil is not absolute as many might always have believed it to be. Evil stems out of disorder as a conditioned evil, a mess that one has made for oneself, and thus, it can't be absolute. One's afraid of that ugliness and one escapes into the conceptualization of evil, blaming on something external. Going to kill in the crusade for god is such evil that wants to achieve goodness. It's all the same whether it's by the will of god, the loyalty to one's nation, or the dedication to one's family. Goodness just can't exist where evil is; no goodness can come out of the actualization of evil. Evil has to cease for goodness to be. The delegation of one's irresponsible act to an imagined absolute evil is equivalent to the blind trust in the illusion of goodness, it is dualism and hypocrisy on full display. When one has created the ideal of goodness, one has also invented absolute evil as well and in that contradiction, that disorder, one becomes evil by wanting to do good. The disorder is real while the ideal is just an illusion. If caught in that illusion of good-

ness, one suffers from one's being in disorder throughout life, becoming both the victim and the perpetrator of evil while desiring to do good.

And so, politics is like a ranch where sheep lead sheep to the slaughterhouse for their own self-interest. Any political system is just the reflection of the people it represents, with its division and fragmentation. The power lies where the people think it is. Thought which is the past at work, plays a crucial role in the making of the structure of power because the affairs of the state have an impact on the affairs of the people and vice versa. And so, the period of so-called enlightenment in Europe is not that different from the dark medieval ages of blind religious dogmatism; it's just a matter of opinion and is still human-centric where the will to power, to change is at play. Human self-centeredness seems at the core of the concept of will. If it exists, a substantial change is radical, and doesn't come from a superficial change of political leadership, structure, system, or regime; it must come from within each individual. It doesn't mean any of the political revolutions that have caused a great deal of bloodshed, but the real change which takes place from within each person; a change in the nature of thought or a psychological revolution in oneself. This requires an insight into the nature of oneself. The power in place distracts the governed from understanding themselves and controls them through indoctrination, conformism, and even entertainment. It seems now so irrelevant to talk about democracy, capitalism, liberalism, socialism, communism, nationalism, fascism,

and all the rest of it. As long as it concerns power, the only real benefit of political philosophy to one's existential inquiry is trimmed down to the insight that fragmentation leads to conflict. And, in that respect, the honest study of all human stupidities in history would be a more beneficial subject than the study of politics and history. Yet, sadly, people still chant praises about emperors, conquerors, and leaders, who have sowed much calamity throughout history because of the thirst for power. The distractions and ambitions of politics are a wastage of energy where focus is misdirected. One can realize that human societies come and go in history regardless of whether one understands oneself or not; the nature of time makes that changes happen anyway. Can one see the danger of not understanding oneself, of living in ignorance while trying to change the world, and possibly under the authority of another? Again, can one stop for a while to question one's actions and thoughts? Can one see the constant repetition and renewal under different forms of what drives oneself into action? Is one doomed to be making the same mistakes over and over again?

With its unbounded nature, time is totally linked with all things of past, present, and future existence in this world. With either the perception of reason or belief, which are both merely part of the intellect, infinity is just a mere concept, something totally abstract. As a concept, the best that one can approach infinity seems to be a theory of circular and endless process of finitude at play. Simply because, in the field of reason, for the finite to drag on infinitely is a contradiction in logic. For time to repeat

as something infinite without beginning or end, time has to be perpetually anew. Anyway, that's just a theory, not reality. Many eastern cultures have played with this theory and come up with theories of reincarnation that think that man possesses an eternal soul that transitions from one life to another. The danger is that, combined with thought, such an idea can lead to many ludicrous interpretations of life, and becomes an impediment to the perception of one's own actual life. So, to perceive the reality of infinity, where time seems meaningless, one needs to question one's life existentially. One needs to put on examination every ounce of one's existence. So what is it to be really finite? Without any speculation, belief, hope, or fear, what does it really mean when one dies? Physically, it's the ceasing of the function of the body. But more deeply, it's the ending of all attachments; with one's death, one's separated from everything that one holds dear, everything that one fears, hates, despises, envies, or cherishes: the body, the parent, the child, the husband, the wife, the enemy, the friend, the dog, the house, the toy, the painting, the ambitions, the achievements, meaning all possessions of one's mind, all thought. Death is the ending of thought, the ending of everything that one knows. Without any guess, death is the ultimate ending in solipsism, which posits that only one's mind is sure to exist. One can't argue or discuss with death. At its basis, death denies all meaning to one's existence, and so negates psychological time, which is one's conception of infinity, thought itself. And so, death is the ending of time. Everything that one knows which is the past and everything that one aspires to be, all are nullified. The

essence of finitude is only revealed in one's very own existential investigation of one's ending. Through the insight of death, one's faced with the reality of nihility, which is the reality of finitude, of impermanence; the very ending to every form of the known. And if death is the ending of the known, then it's unknown, the actual new.

Through thought, one can barely see a mirror image of this reality projected onto one's intellect as a concept. And through images, which do not reflect the entirety of reality, one is bound to fear death, the unknown, the nihility, the annihilation. One's life is empty and one tries to give meaning to it. One denies the reality of one's shallow life and builds an ideal to live by. One tries to give life a reason to live and by that one wants to prolong, to eternalize oneself through the idea, and so, one deeply desires to be immortalized in one's heroic effort to reach an ideal. That is false infinity because desire which is part of thought can't escape the limits of time, and also the pursuit of ideals even through one's descendants can never reach anything substantial. Its duration is constrained by the limited existence of humanity. Something that arises out of infinity, is finite in existence yet keeps on delaying its inevitable cyclic completion becomes illusory because it doesn't want to be finite, it wants continuity, yet can never reach infinity. It's something incomplete, fragmented, divisive. Man has kept remnants, edifices, and artifacts of dead gods, which only reflects one's desire for meaning, for infinity, for immortality out of this world of impermanence, of meaninglessness. It's when reason

is driven to its limits, when life seems utterly unbearable, the irrational, the absurd, and the meaninglessness appear and reveal themselves as reality. It's the turning point where life is without a reason and in this sense, it transcends all the meanings that one has clung onto. And just like that, because life doesn't have any pre-established meaning, it might actually be open to meaning. Paradoxically, life is beyond all meaning, and yet all meaning is constituted in relationship to it. Nihilism is not that far from one's life, not far like the god that one has created as an abstraction, not far as an idea or an ideal beyond this reality. Nihilism is related to existence itself even though it negates the meaning of all existence. While it renders everything that one clings to meaningless, it also frees oneself from the determinations that condition a man and thus offers man the possibility of real existence, beyond the forms. One can see the nihilism of nations, of religions, of filial duties, of mores, of traditions, of cultures, of fame, of wealth, etc. And if this nihilism is actually perceived, one can exist in the world free of self-imposed limits. Through nihilism, only when one is aware of one's irrationality, one starts to apprehend reason.

As one has seen, thought finds comfort in ignorance, which is the not knowing of oneself. Ignorance is living without the understanding of one's thoughts and thus of one's actions; so it's living without understanding life or living without actually living. Such living limits life itself to the known, and it's a calamity to limit something immeasurable, the real infinity, the unknown. Ignorance exists even with an immense pool of knowledge, a well-

groomed education, a sophisticated cultivation, a massive fame, or a monumental amount of wealth. Essentially, ignorance is the blindness to the reality of nihility, which is the reality of one's existence. Reality here should not be understood as a mere quality of existence but as a perception of truth which sets the tone for existence. All forms of ignorance spawn from this blindness. Through conditioning, one cultivates thought with meanings to become ignorant of nihility. It's the tragedy of mankind because nihility is the only assured reality of man's being in the world, and it can be perceived in the field of existence. One might invent some kind of monism or theism to try to solve the problem of dualism and make up for the lack of explanation for the existence of things when confronted with meaninglessness. But those conclusions of the human mind derive from one's own consciousness which is limited to the domain of the known. One can't find truth that way because the search for it is a self-projected activity. One's waiting for a result in this quest, and the pursuit of an unreachable goal through effort would lead to nowhere but facing nihility. So the metaphysics established on the kind of reasoning which desires to find truth is ultimately bounded by human consciousness. It's doomed to be incomplete as consciousness needs time to grow and with the boundlessness of time, its process to completion will never be completed. So many thinkers have fallen into this trap. If the concept of origination comes down to the oneness or singleness of monism, this oneness where all existing things and possibly their essence return to a source that is distinct from them is just an abstraction because it doesn't exist, it's like a concept or an

illusion of the human mind, not the reality of what is. One can try to push this intellectual reasoning to the extreme: if there's a *monad* at all then the ultimate monad, if it exists should be eternal, both uncreated and self-existing but from which arises everything that has been and will be to the end of time and beyond. In that case, it seems to be the ground of being. But in reality, there's no such thing, because if it is then it is not uncreated. If it is then it cannot not exist. One might amuse one's thoughts with theories because of one's desire to invent or perceive such a monad. But in the end, one's still confronted with the nothingness of life. Defining this monad seems contradictory, as it involves radical equivocation in logic, where an entity takes on two opposing characteristics. This may lead to illogical conclusions. This is an antinomy that gives birth to a fundamental paradox: how can there be something non-existent yet eternal and existing on its own and is the origin, and yet independent of everything? Surely, one can't perceive such an entity using logic in the field of reason. Or does it exist at all? So, instead of fixating an idea to this ground of being, considering it as an ideal, or saying that it is, or it is not, rather does one need first to understand the nihility of oneself?

And, entering into a detailed study of Western philosophy won't necessarily help in understanding oneself, as it may simply establish more mental authorities. It seems to be a waste of time to dig into and explore the complexities of the minds of some guardians of western thought. Most philosophical books devote a big deal of it to negating somebody else's ideas. It seems

that many of its components are just unnecessary verbiage condensed into complicated abstract concepts. Doing so won't help one's mind to grasp further awareness of itself and complicate even more life, making it subject to more possible conflicts when ideas are misunderstood. So, both old ideas and new ideas are misunderstood. Making languages more complicated for a semblance of being richer, of progress. Many dualities were invented, and many separations were added. Many books were rants rather than actual inquiries into the roots of the problems. Understanding doesn't seem to be the main priority. The search for originality, for fame, and the need to deny predecessors seem to predominate, especially in academic circles. There's a culture and tradition of debates which can only lead to more cleavage. The same problem exists with ancient eastern philosophies where words are becoming ancient relics of complications. Worship, rituals, hymns, chants, and ceremonies are repeated through millennia. While the understanding is no longer there, some people are designed to preserve the rites and to produce commentaries and interpretations to explain the meaning of these ancient rites. All these are passed from generation to generation, those canons, vedas, sutras, etc. But again, many interpretations, and misunderstandings in language would ultimately lead to conflictual interpretations. Whether they contain the truth or not is ironically not the crucial issue here, the ancient scriptures have become an impossible task for the orthodox followers, a subject of philosophical debates for intellectual entertainers, and a source of greater authority for the lazy ones. How irrational is that, the word has become more important than

the actuality. While the essence is yet to be seen, humanity is somehow caught up with the concepts, the abstract, the shades, the remnants, all can be qualified as illusions. Words are thrown around without any sense of actual perception of the thing beyond the word, becoming empty phrases and sentences where the shallowness reflects the lack of honesty, of earnestness. It's like a faith of *bad faith*.

There's a reality of life that rituals cannot grasp. And, without this insight, rituals become instruments of mass hypnosis, the drug of illusions, used for control through the exploitation of superstitions, mindless activities which will cause further imprisonment of the mind and consequently engender more misery. Still, as a concept, there seems to be in eastern philosophy more attention put on approaching nothingness than in western philosophy. The concept is just recently imported to the west by the nihilists and then existentialists. A few thousand years late for such an intriguing subject one might think. There's a common apathy and even antipathy toward nothingness in the western world. It's due to a generalized fear of nothingness and impermanence in western civilizations imprinted deeply by monotheistic faith which tends towards becoming something more than no-thing. The idea of heaven and hell after death is made up to fill in the void, urged by the fear of nothingness. The absence of substance or meaning was inconceivable because it would discredit the essence that is god itself and so considered as nonsense or even heretical. For millennia, one has looked up at the night sky and seen the dancing of

celestial bodies in heaven, such a majestic, dignified and divine sight. With frequent observations, some patterns were noticed. For millennia, humanity has interpreted shapes from these arrangements, creating meaning from their placement. These constellations have captured one's imagination. But, the elegant complexity, mystery, and beauty of such huge clusters have been reduced to ludicrous interpretations relating to one's psyche. One's problems, one's disorder, fear, and hope have been cast off to external entities, outside of one's agency. And so heaven has become a mere ideal for human refuge from itself to escape from one's reality. Inventing a man-made meaning for the many billions of stars and galaxies with millions and billions of light years away and across from each other. The superstitions of the conditioned mind of organized religions have impeded the observation of the scientific mind which inquires into the beauty of the outward. In certain cases, the concept and use of the mathematical *zero* was forbidden by the church because it denies the omnipresence of god. Nowadays, in contemporary times, with globalization and the advance of technology, one lives in societies which tend toward becoming and being nothing is considered marginal, poor, or excluded. As such, the scientific mind has been again hindered by its desire for meaning in technology, which is a reflection of the will to power. The homeless, the vagrant, or simply the ones without ambition are chastised by practically all society as failures in becoming. All countries and their masses now believe that progress can only be made through technological advances and incremental societal changes.

Having read quite a bit of philosophy, C wonders why is it that some philosophers have rendered nearly everything meaningless, and yet they still struggle with the gazing back of the abyss. Failing to shake off the absurdity of life, some went crazy trying to rebuild an anchor to meaning, others renounced their humanity to find themselves in loneliness, some conceptualized suicide as an escape, others deeply desired a grain of ataraxia while despising the wisdom of a life free from contradictions, some revolted against absurdity with activism, others secretly searched for the inner fire of passion in sorrow, some hid behind the artistic pursuits, others fancied the curse of insomnia with pretty words, etc. Nihilism usually designates either the non-existence of something or the abyssal void. Life is seen as without any objective meaning and reality is merely a constructed illusion. As such, the nihility of nihilism and existentialism is just a *relative nothingness*. In all corpus of nihilistic philosophy, the philosopher has rendered almost everything meaningless except one thing: thought itself. One might confront the nihility of most aspects of life and yet is not aware of the nihility of one's consciousness. And that's why, one still fears this nihility as something to escape from, through sheer will. It's the trap of solipsism, thought is considered as the permanent anchor in a turbulent sea. Nihility stands over against existence, which means it's situated *alone by itself* and seems outside of existence. So nothingness is no-thing, no feeling, not a dependent entity. Yet, based on one's own consciousness, it can be represented as a feeling because of one's reaction to nothingness. That's why many attribute it to the existential feeling of boredom, nau-

sea, jadedness, loneliness, etc. It's not an object of existence, and yet there remains a sense in which nothingness is still viewed as an object of consciousness. By that qualification, nihility, which is rooted in the absence of meaning is still considered as a burden, a curse cast upon one's existence rather than a radical reality at the basis of all objects of existence. If there is a radical reality, it would negate any illusion of reality. Thus, it has always been counted as something far from reality; an abyssal nihility, an abstract concept, sometimes largely misperceived. Time is a perfect illustration of the reality of nihility; it's always vanishing, and displays a constant pull to nullification of any enduring existence. That characteristic is impermanence. With change, there's a constant origination of new things which pushes one ever forward, one feels the need to be in time, to have some sort of anchor in a vast sea. Even in resting, change is in action, the body still ages, and also one might still dream. The urge is fuelled in intensity by one's fear of the idea of finitude and thus one's trapped in time. Time becomes an interminable burden, it becomes a Sisyphean task to act. While one has annihilated nearly all references, one still troubles oneself in deciding on what to act, and in more existential words on how to live. One's condemned in time to be doing something incessantly rather than nothing and thus time shapes one's being as a ceaseless becoming in existence. However, there's a gap between thinking and action, between the thought and the act; essentially a gap in living because with time, which is distance, the act becomes premeditated with certain anticipations. When one does not see the nothingness in oneself then one's bound to be disori-

entated, nauseated by existence. Fear is the origin of the separation between thought and act, death and life and its deepest form is the fear of being nothing in a world seemingly full of things, yet without meaning. It's like an empty existence in the abyss of nothingness. By one's fear of death, of finitude, of nihility, and specifically through the idea of death, one's conditioned to fear life itself. And by that, one's clinging on to the illusion of life with a fake sense of security. Time as change seems ambiguous with its opposing characteristics. Impermanence describes the fleeting nature of time, but also because of the fear of it, because of not understanding it, there's endless repetition, a circularity because of the desire to exist eternally. Why does one repeat one's past? Can one live in the present without the shackles of the past?

In the present, lies at the bottom an infinite openness, something without beginning or end. Being can't be grasped within time, no matter how far one steps back into the past or how far ahead into the future, one can only perceive the past and the future from the present moment. The essence of time is the present. Past and future don't exist actually but only as a concept in one's mind. The present of time is simultaneous with each and every point of the past and future. In the present is enclosed all possibilities of all pasts and futures; it contains an endless number of possibilities. Whatever knowledge from the past one can acquire is forever incomplete and by bringing it into the present, all is subject to erroneous judgments. And what the future would be is totally unknown if one honestly puts aside all the speculations of con-

ditioned imagination. If one wants to predict the future for one's interest, it only means that one's caught in the past; one desires to repeat an already-happened experience, a memory of the past. Behind the experience, which is the source of knowledge and the basis of any positivist or progressist doctrine, there lies a deep desire for autonomy, essentially a self-identification with the idea of progress and a goal to be reached. The past seems to be considered as a basis for further advancement. The positivist desires progress through knowledge derived by reason and logic from sensory experience. And, if one adds the theist, or even the atheist existentialist among others, this idea of progress is still limited to the root concept of will: absolute will, divine will, will to power, will to live, will to persist, free will, etc. Deep inside, in spite of everything, it's a will that forever wills to see its own way out of nihility through progress, freedom, salvation, etc. As such, any idealism of progress is subject to delusion; deluding oneself away from reality and into illusions. And when this idealism is spread to become the main paradigm or the majority, it becomes blind conformism. Not only in superstitions of organized religions, this desire for independence is also present in the secularization driven by human reason. Fundamentally, scientism is just another form of dogmatism. Because a will is never free, it's an antinomy in logic to call something *free will*. There's no freedom in a will as the latter rests on the shoulders of desire, though it can provide an illusion of freedom in choosing. When one depends on something, choosing a different form of it doesn't mean that one's independent of it. And so, one prefers to lure oneself into believing that

there's free will in order to get comfortable with one's decisions. Any idealism of progress is basically a form of delusion of one's mind, an unreachable utopia because at its basis is a self-centered effort to reach an impossible and imaginary freedom. And so is the way of looking at time and history of most western societies, and is now globalized, linked to the idea that the ground of being human is the will. In all the mainline ideologies of western philosophy, whether religious or not, the issues of time and eternity always come back to the concept of will, an illusion of becoming.

With the open-ended interpretation of time, with neither actual beginning nor end, life is an infinite burden, idealized as a human project with meaning or more individually as a way to the fulfillment of emptiness; a bottomless pit with an inexhaustible pile of tasks waiting to be filled. One's existence becomes a process of unburdening oneself. But, one's reminded all the time of the need to preserve one's life. That's why one's afraid to let go because of the fear of a real end, and as such reinstating the burden itself. It's the tying up of oneself with one's own rope. The nature of incessant becoming makes it so that each of the deeds that remove the debt reinstates another debt. Becoming through action renews oneself in existence while reestablishing one's being in time. And again, one's trapped in time. Even the people who go around the world and seem to do all kinds of conventional good work, reinforcing morality, and telling others on what to do and what not to do, will eventually get caught in their own miseries if they were to stop their doing. There's this constant doing of something related

to other than understanding oneself. One has produced transitory time to serve one's becoming without understanding the nature of neither that becoming nor time. And so, one lives like a machine or a corpse without really understanding why. Thought as a self-centeredness that rises to self-consciousness, is the forward drive of time which dictates one's being and doing. Everything coming out of thought is subject to the same vanishing nature of time; impermanence defines the frailty characteristic of becoming. In the end, from ashes to ashes, dust is still dust. And that's one commonality in all human beings. Within time, one's existence is determined by other things. One's determined by one's father, mother, beliefs, possessions, knowledge, nation, and more. Yet, one clings to those as part of one's identity that justifies the meaning of one's existence. And that's why thought is time, as being in time. In other words, one's existence is conditioned into determinations. From another angle, for each point in one's life, one makes time to be psychological time since time is made meaningful through thought, as landmarks on the span of time. One brings the past to be actualized in the present and to be projected into the future. As such, time is thought. With both perspectives in mind, from the universal to the particular and vice versa, thought is time, and time is thought. That is, in order to be, as to be in time, one's obliged to be relating to something other than oneself, like a debt unto itself, a sickness unto death. Some use the term *bad faith* to define the self-deception that makes oneself evade from reality; meaning the belief that one's existence is determined by one's determinations.

One's life becomes a burden with attachments and there seems to be no way out. To accept or reject something implies both an attachment to it, and one's still attached to the image of it, whether it's an image that one likes or dislikes. One keeps on deceiving oneself for comfort rather than truth. A comforting belief easier to sleep with as a form of the false security that one clings to, is always in time, which means temporary and at all times at risk of being taken away. The non-permanent nature of being in time will keep fear and sorrow nearby. In such a mode of being, there's no freedom as one's conditioned to think and act in a predetermined way. One's induced into sleep, into self-hypnosis of comfort rather than to see oneself for what one is. In existentialist philosophy, there's a *self-will* that is "truly" self and if one evades from an authentic existence, one's doomed to despair. In the case of christian existentialism, the philosophers still attribute the negation of the self to the abidance by the will of god. Transcendence of the self, under the form of the will of god or the self-will, is used to describe the relation of the self to the world outside the phenomenon of consciousness and thus the self again is at the center. The self's relation with something, as a self-determination, is the self's exercise of free will. But again, one comes back to the will. Without any delusion, out of a sense of deep honesty, there is no way to avoid becoming aware of nihility. Aware of the corrupted relationship to life, there has been a clear intent by existentialism to step away from the mechanization of man, an effort to climb out of the pit which man is slipping into. But nihility cannot get rid of nihility itself. Where the self is at the center, action is still lim-

ited by thought or by time, and the nihility that ensues from *good faith* which is a form of will, is just a mere concept of a *relative nothingness*. In this scheme of things, one's being in time is essentially ambiguous, a juggle between bad faith and good faith, between existence and nothingness, again dualities are in sight. As such, there's no real freedom but only spontaneous freedom of choice from an incessant becoming. Is that an authentic being? The only pragmatic insight from this is the realization of how deeply rooted self-centeredness is. The concept of nothingness of such philosophies is just a relative nothingness where the self still is, even if it's hidden, concealed as the will of the self. One still thinks back to oneself as a center. It's still a very self-centered vision of reality, where man is still in the center of existence. Nihility is still viewed from the side of existence, with nothingness as an opposition to being or phenomenal existence and that's why it's a relative nothingness. One desperately transits in time in search of what one is, but an existence in time will never reveal the essence of oneself. Here again, human reason is pushed to its limits with the paradox of nothingness where essence is emptiness.

After all these investigations, C sees that mankind has been repeating its past over and over again. It might be under different forms, but the source of the contents is the same, which is the self. Man has been struggling and still struggles with life. Faced with the reality of nihility, C recognizes a great delusion about man's ideal of goodness. Everything seems pointless, and for a period of time, he's just drifting on with life, distracting himself with oc-

casional moments of fun. Joy just passes right through without sticking and afterwards, it feels like it was never there at all. C has gradually lost his sense of purpose. But, with all his heart and mind, which means *alone*, he feels that there's something much more to life than all this shallowness, this despair. The word *alone* etymologically means *all by oneself*. This seriousness urges him to ask: what does it mean to be good if it's meaningless? He asks himself: who is C after all? C is after all just a symbol and there's nothing special about that. C is just a way to lead the story. And, this story is not the story of C or a grain of sand, but the story of mankind. So, who is the experiencer of those feelings of nihility? Is the thinker separate from the thought? What if the thinker, the experiencer, C is to be no more? Nihility, for each phenomenon, is the point in time when the existence returns to nothingness. It is the essence of finitude. Existence is only possible in relation to nothingness, saying that something actually is, equates to the negation with its nothingness. Something does exist means that it's not no-thing, it does have a form, a causal relationship with other entities. But, it is to return to nothingness, and that also means that a thing is empty of an inherent existence. There can't be a thing with a truly independent existence, and time makes sure of that with its non-permanent nature. An independent existence must be out of time, eternal, and permanent, simply because it is its own cause and has no other causal relationship. The only thing, if one can call it that way at all, that can have an independent existence or a cause in itself is *absolute nothingness*. But nothingness is no-thing, which means, in the conceivable grasp of

logic, that there's no-thing that can actually exist on its own. And so, existence is no more put in opposition with nothingness; it is grounded on nothingness. Absolute nothingness goes beyond the conceptual opposition between existence and nothingness. While the reality of nihility is as real as one's existence and can be perceived on a phenomenal level by consciousness, the reality of *emptiness* or absolute nothingness is a transcendental reality of truth above the limited grasp of consciousness. Reality here is the perception of truth and not just the determination of existence by consciousness. It cannot be seen on the field of vision or any other field of sense perceptions, it cannot be accepted or denied on the field of reason, and the darkness of ignorance hides it. Emptiness goes to the point of self-emptying, the negation of the self. It's the realization that there's an emptiness in all phenomena, including one's own self-consciousness. It is to realize that the ground of existence is the ground of nothingness. With absolute nothingness, all things are empty of essence. It goes beyond the feeling, the sensation of despair of nihilism, which is still a view from the side of existence as a relative nothingness or a nihility. Is it possible to die to the self, that which one knows about oneself? Can one live with something that one doesn't know? Or else, one's doomed to be repeating the past, the experience, the known, the memories. In that, there's no real finitude and infinity can't be grasped. It's crucial for one's existence to know if it's possible to die to the known while living. Because only free of the known, truth can be perceived. Only then, one can truly look at oneself, without any prejudice.

EMPTINESS AND THE FREEDOM IN BEING

What is to be?

As one digs into emptiness, since nothing has an independent existence, there's nothing that is not empty of essence. The conditioned origination of things stems from a ground of emptiness. With emptiness as ground, which translates as groundless, it suddenly seems reasonable to grasp that the absence of origin is actually one's own original condition. Though emptiness is not something that one can turn to, it's simply not a *thing*. And emptiness as a concept is itself empty. It defies any representation, as binding it to something transforms its reality into a mere abstract intellectual concept. Emptiness does not just mean the abyssal nothingness of nihilism, which is a relative nothingness. It's not a self-centered sense of desperate meaninglessness when one's ideals are confronted with the absurdities of life. In this modern life, relative nihility is how one feels being like a cog in a man-made machine, created to manipulate the surroundings for the ideal of collective benefit; man has lost his purpose in becoming a mere component of that man-made structure, without any substantial freedom. To escape that feeling of nihilism, one pursues many desires to forget about the absurdities of life, and yet the feeling never really goes away. It's also not the struggling rise against one's con-

dition through a will to power. It's neither a self-centered observation of nothingness as a concept of the will to power but rather a genuine and irrefutable realization of nothingness as a reality of oneself. That means that being is being with emptiness. Because in emptiness, in which there's no division, lies a quality of creation at the bottom where a thing can come out of nothing into existence. It might seem absurd to a dual mind, even the most logical one, but such a mind is limited by knowledge while emptiness is the domain of the unknown. When that mind is still operating, the other cannot be perceived. In the abyss, the nihility denies any continuity to existence; each thing is finite, appears sole, isolated from the others. That's why such a mind would only feel despair. In this framework, nihility is an idea of nothingness, there is always a fear of this abstraction of emptiness. And the desire to escape from it is only the exercise of becoming. Once again, one sinks into the idealism of nothingness. If there is no continuity, what is there? There is nothing. One is afraid to be nothing. Its characteristics of desolateness and bottomlessness create distances between things; distances, which means time, that can never be overcome if there's a center. With a center, one's always isolated from other beings. That's why there's despair in this self-centered loneliness. Yet, with emptiness, things, because they are all related on a bottomless ground, are open to the most intimate encounter.

In the secular and temporal view of becoming, which is of consciousness, nihility is viewed as a negativity, which means a lack

of something. Viewed that way, always empty, one's burdened to constantly fill the void with meaning even though it's bottomless. In the realm of reason, a thing represents the form in which it appears to oneself who happens to be thinking about it. As such, things are often related to their purpose in relation to one's thoughts. One can see the significance of thinking and that the worship of knowledge shapes the meaning of things. However, thought is limited and so is reason, which at the bottom is simply a part of thought. Even in its most objective view of things, the reality seen in terms of its materiality through reason is still related to the subjective in one's thought as a limitation of knowledge, disguising it as the objective. So, all again is self-related, and self-identified and the mode of being of things is defined through its appearance to the limited perception of the self. Ultimately, all domains of consciousness, whether concerning sense perceptions or reason, are related to the subjective of self-consciousness. In the depth of each human mind, if one's honest with oneself, one sees that no-thing can last forever; the impermanence of things is a fact. The possibility of existence is forever evasive with time and collapses into an impossibility of eternal existence. Mountains, rivers, oceans, planets, stars, and of course all inventions of thought have emptiness as its ground and are devoid of a phenomenal origin. But when emptiness is the absolute negation, including the negation of the self, where there's nothing left to negate, then the negation of the lack, of the negativity, of emptiness itself as a concept takes on a dimension of affirmation. It's an absolute negation of not only the will that lies at the ground of self-

centeredness, but of the abyssal nothingness as well. Nothingness is emptied of all its representations and isn't set anymore in opposition to being, unlike the idea of the abyss. Emptiness appears as one with being because it's the original condition of all beings, a commonality in all phenomena. In other words, emptiness is all things as all things at the bottom are empty, and thus it takes on a whole different meaning. Emptiness is the falling of leaves, the blossoming of a flower, the rise of the sun, the rain falling from the clouds, the flight of a bird, the leaping of a frog, the eruption of a volcano, the waves in the sea or the breeze of the wind, full of enchantment yet free of inherent purpose, with no fear, no escape, and no seeking. It's also man's tragic culmination of regret and remorse in the doomed quest for meaning through ideals; tragic and regretful because of his ignorance of emptiness. In the end, any ideal is doomed to die in the vast sea of meaninglessness.

When one watches an object, one recognizes the existence of space. There's a tree, and around it, there's space or there's a house, inside it, there's space and outside it, space is too. It means that there can't be recognition of space without the presence of the object. It would be just empty space, here as a vast vacuum. Like an emptiness in one's mind, there's space for an object to be. If one sees the observer as one's center, all of one's activities are conditioned by that center; the space between that center and the observed is the distance, which means time, the separation in space between them. Time comes with its limitations and as such the actual knowledge of the observed is always limited by

the thought of the observer. One's mind has always functioned within the limits of this center; it's self-centered, self-concerned, and self-interested. That center creates the distance or the surrounding space, which suggests that if a center exists, there will always be time as a separation from the observed. One looks inwardly the same way one looks outwardly, bringing many abstract things into one's mind, cluttering it. Psychologically, time can only cease when the center ceases which indicates when the observer, the thinker, the judge, or the self is to be no more. Then there's a totally different meaning to empty space; a space without the center, a space without limitation, empty of things, which fundamentally represents a timeless state, without any division. There's no more distance as the observer which is also the center of reference is no more, then there's no more separation between the *should be* and the *what is*. One needs space, one needs emptiness which implies a quiet brain to observe. Only then, one can understand that the self is not only empty but emptiness is one's being. Absolute negation becomes an actual incarnation, an affirmation. The perception of truth guides one's being or more accurately it's the perception of truth that acts. The understanding of the fundamental nature of oneself is the ending of all actions as the outcome of one's reactions, which means all judgments, prejudices, likes, and dislikes. It's only then that there can be an awareness that's not caused by any center and consequently not bounded by any image projected by that center. One can truly look at each of one's relationships to life without the defective glasses of conditioned thought. This unbounded objectivity is one's actual subjec-

tive being as the self is no more. Just like essence lies in emptiness, the actual being beyond the conventional understanding of the self emerges from non-self. There's a character of transcendence in the perception that non-self is being, just like by being meaningless, life is actually meaningful because it's free and beyond all meaning. A thing appears again as substance, free and encompassing its infinite beauty, contrasting with the limited sense of purpose of self-consciousness, that of utilitarianism. A thing is absolutely unique when it has lost any point to be reduced to, nothing more to depend on, it becomes impossible to be substituted for any other. In thought, one does not see a chicken for what it is, one sees a chicken with knowledge about it, as a food, as a purpose, or as a mere animal among others with limited representations by consciousness. With reason, the chicken is unknowable in its entirety or completeness to oneself. One can't see all the depths of that chicken, of one's neighbor, wife, children, or any other being; with a purpose, one would hinder one's perception of things. A thing appears as what it is, in pure objectivity, without prejudices, and where the unknown manifests itself. Emptiness sweeps away any illusory theory of origination, and thus all ideals as well, unshackling any conditioning of thought. Thought can't reach where there's no cause. It's not the mere cognition of an object by rational knowledge but a realization of the emptiness of one's mind which sets the ground for attention and awareness, reflecting the freedom in observation. Without that realization, there would be no perception of beauty because there's no freedom in witnessing. It's a being beyond existence, a timeless state,

which makes it transcendental. And without freedom, one would be forever fragmented and thus there would be no goodness. Being is only *true* in accordance with emptiness, above all determinations. Does one exist at all if one lives by thought's determination of purpose? And if one behaves like a programmed machine, what does it even mean to do good? Is goodness merely premeditation? Can there be any goodness at all if there's no freedom?

So, rather than choosing what to do unconsciously, while being constantly driven by one's desires, one needs to question first what really is doing. If doing, which implies the constant actualization of being, is creating more misery and reinstating all kinds of debt to life with its incessant becoming, is it really doing at all? By putting more restrictions and limitations on life, that doing is actual non-doing because life becomes more burdened; with doing here understood in a phenomenological manner as a necessary step towards freedom. Becoming through incessant doing is actually not living life but merely existing because, in that way, there's no freedom in doing. Though one might think that the experience of doing is what defines one's life. By becoming something other than the reality of oneself, one's actually not living but following the authoritative footsteps of others, who probably have done the same thing. The brain becomes systematic, dull, and inactive; one might be physically active but psychologically, one's become dead, chained to the past. What is then doing, hence being? It takes on a whole other meaning when life is not a means for anything at all. In ignorance, there seems to be a curse, a debt beyond one's

control as one's behavior is simultaneously the self's doing and not the self's doing. With the ignorance of the nature of emptiness of the self, one's doing is always justified with a cause outside of one's reach. One must bear the responsibility for one's actions, yet one's actions are linked to one's conditioning. One's demanded to rise above the circumstances and thrive in expansion, hoarding the deceitful freedom of choice. Existence becomes a continuation of something that seems outside of one's determination and yet one's drawn into sustaining that predetermined purpose. Some call it fate, destiny, circumstances, etc. Yet, it's all part of thought. Contrary to one's belief, one's thinking is not enclosed to oneself. The beginning of one's thought is the beginning of the conditioning of one's mind. Like time is always out of reach, the self is forever elusive. One's condemned to be constantly doing but where nothing is really complete. On the contrary, what seems to be inaction reveals more about life than one might think, where one can understand and be truly responsible for each of one's actions. Inaction is the source of any effortless action, like a spring is the source of the consistent and natural flow of a river. Inaction is the complete doing without a goal and the non-doing of divisive action. This actual doing of non-doing is neither an unconscious doing without awareness of the consequences nor a result of a calculative and cunning mind. It has a quality of consistency through the absolute negation of any doing with an aim. Like a completely empty mind is in a state of inaction, where inaction is action. A mind which lives with beauty and not get used to it, not to distort it, not to imprison it in the cage or in the past. Even a single leaf

or petal of a flower demands one's attention. One can know the name of a plant in several languages, yet do not know the plant at all. Just like a person who knows all the meals made of chicken, yet doesn't know anything about the chicken because that person has never seen a chicken without any purpose. Only with attention, which is caring and has to be dissociated from any focus, the beauty, uniqueness or freedom of things opens up for the perceptive mind.

In uniqueness lies an impossibility to substitute one thing for another. Only in emptiness, when a thing is devoid of any purpose to be reduced to, only when it has nothing to rely on, it's unique, all by itself, with its completeness enclosed. No two things in this universe can be the same in existence just like every snowflake really is different from one another. Physically, the position of any given thing illustrates this uniqueness, like any point is on the surface of a piece of paper. In a universe without a center, each thing is a center to others. All things are related to each other, in one way or the other. Not a single thing can come into being without some relationship to every other thing. Only with a ground of emptiness, there can be absolute relativity of absolutely unique beings. With *absolute* here as free from any limitation. The relationships of a thing define its dependence but also its uniqueness. Which is, that its relationships with all other things encompass its completeness. Existence as a whole is grounded in emptiness. Much like the story of a carambola tree on a summer day. The trunk and its crown can reach up to many times one's size. From

the outside to the inside of the twigs, the leaves' colors darken in shades, fully grown ones leave room for the young leaves to reach out for more sunlight. Like a spectacle of gradient colors, from the light reddish tip of new buds into a yellowish tint, and to finally settle in the persistent green backdrop. Each leaf is different in form, shape, structure, and size, yet follows a certain pattern of self-similarity. Deciduous leaves fall off to the ground as if their purpose is finished, trampled on, brushed aside to turn brown, and then dissolved into part of the soil. Among the branches and the twigs, pink fruiting spurs or clusters of flowers meddle in this crown of green, like a beautiful brooch with purplish pink pearls of tiny flowers on a jade-colored coat. Drops of water sprinkled over from the last rain, in equilibrium above the resistant folioles. Gentle breezes of fresh air after the precipitation caress all parts of the tree, like the ocean waves lapping at the shore. Star fruits dangling on the woody branches, like pendants and pretty ornaments. Birds chirp on branches, bees buzz around, and butterflies flirt with the leaves and petals. Little to bigger fruits, all waiting to ripen, to be eaten by the mouse, tasting every single fruit for the juiciest and most nutritious ones. Without the bees or butterflies, there would be no pollination. Without the fruits, there would be no mouse. Without the mouse, there would be no tree, as the seeds from the fruits need to be disseminated elsewhere to find more room to sprout and grow. Without the butterflies, there would be no caterpillars and there would be no birds flying and tweeting. Without fruits, there would be neither insects nor worms which makes the soil fertile for the roots to thrive. With-

out the leaves, there would be neither shelter from the intense summer sun nor the heavy rain of monsoon. One can't fully grasp with one's mind all of these relationships; everything is infinitely complex and moves in harmony with the immensity of interdependence. No word can fully encompass this diversity, complexity, and infinity; a vastness of abundance that is incorruptible. A carambola tree is not just a single entity that one can conceptualize; it is what it is not, which means everything else. For it to be, it has to be in relationship with other things. Its relationships form its being, with its beauty and freedom.

And there wouldn't be existence at all if things were not empty of an independent existence. If a tree can exist on its own, without soil, water, or other things, which means it has an inherent nature, would there realistically be a tree like that? That *tree* would definitely not exist in this universe; the nearest possible thing would be a painting of a tree and even that is related to other things for its origination. All things exist only through their dependence on other things. And so, the absence of an essential existence without dependence, reflected as an interdependence in nature is the absolute premise for existence; each thing that arises is new and unique on its own, affirming itself with its particular idiosyncrasies. There wouldn't be any existence if things were to be on their own, as fixed and static things; there would be no new things in such case, and there would be no life. The circumstance of creation is only possible when things are unique yet defined by all others. This means, that its distinct peculiarities are enclosed with

its relationships with others. It's an absolute negation which even negates the negation of nihility, which is a negation of meaninglessness, and thus becomes an absolute affirmation, an affirmation of all things. In philosophical terms, it's the negation of negativity or to simply understand, the negation of the intrinsic incompleteness of something. Absolute autonomy manifests itself through a complete subordination to all other things. By making all other things be what they are, or in other words by holding up the being of other things, like a flower is to its tree, the bee, the sun, or the human eye, a thing is unique and in being so is emptied of its own being. Only when the being of all things is at one with emptiness, it's possible for all things to gather into one, even while each retains its uniqueness, permitting the possibility of constant creation. Only with emptiness, there's the possibility of all things gathering together, no matter how distant in space or in time, and constituting as one. The universe is the unifying order of all that is. This order is to be dissociated with the disorderly order brought up by thought for control, for optimization for one's own interest, or whatever other reasons. That kind of order that one usually knows is not absolutely necessary, it could be changed, it could depend on something else, and it is contingent on the group, the state, on something. Is order something imposed? Is order discipline, conformity of thought? No, it's an absolute interdependence of unique beings unified in emptiness, not limited by preferences and conformity to a pattern of self-consciousness. All that seems too abstract, one might say. Would it be more helpful to ask: what then is disorder?

One might think that disorder is chaos, the latter commonly understood as a condition of orderless confusion in opposition to order. In the metaphysics of monotheistic religions, the concept of *creatio ex nihilo*, which means *creation out of nothing*, suggests that matter is not eternal but had to be created by a divine creative act. This leads to a dual opposition between *order* which is a creation by god and *nothing* which is chaos. Again, it's a gap between existence and nothingness. In that scheme, god is mentioned as the creator that transcends such dualism, the originator of creation, the one who brings order to a disordered state. They have said that god is that ground. It seems to be a personal attempt, to put such immensity in the concept of god. The illusory emancipation from dualism emanates from the ideal of a personal god, and yet, such immensity cannot be personal and has to go even beyond the universal. So, isn't that god a projection of one's own thought? Maybe that's why, nothingness is such a taboo in those religions. Chaos, in its greek etymology, is that which is empty, and it has no real contradiction with an order of existence where things are themselves empty; there is no duality here. The ending of the personal is emptiness, and in that, there's no division, it is universal, and it is order. In the ground of emptiness, even the universal or even the emptiness of space dies to it, there's even no separation between life and death, no separation between existence and nothingness; it has no beginning and no ending. So, is chaos really disorderly because one doesn't grasp the unknown order behind it? Because one doesn't know all the initial conditions of a complex system, it doesn't mean that there's no order. Such qualification of disorder

is just an abstraction. Many also think that disorder is the divergence from the collective order of a society built on discipline and conformity. That is an imposed dictatorship of the masses and such order, no matter how rational it may seem, is always limited by thought and as such can't be complete. If there's conformity to something, there's always obedience and there's no freedom. Can there be order without freedom? If one conforms to a certain order invented by thought, one's creating disorder. Disorder is discernible because its presence is felt existentially through sorrow. Sorrow does not spare certain cases, it concerns all of humanity. By itself, sorrow isn't merely just a consequence of behaviors deviating from the collective order; it's the consequence of the search for meaning itself. As changes happen in nature, there's a biological evolution happening. With the practical and scientific knowledge, there's also a technological evolution occurring. Hence, one gives importance to the ideas, the theories, the philosophies, the ideologies, etc. Alongside this biological and technological evolution, one has to justify the importance of knowledge with a self-made meaning that corresponds to the evolution of one's psyche. But, has one really evolved psychologically at all?

The continual presence of suffering from old times until now is the fact that one has not evolved psychologically at all. The disorder is to think that there's a psychological evolution, a continuity of thought. The desire to fulfill, to reach a goal, or to have a meaning procures a feeling of satisfaction, a sensation of meaning to life, to oneself, and yet, its endless struggle for achievement

through becoming is generative of sorrow. One has invented the idea that eventually, through all the endeavors, one will reach the ultimate goal, a meaning of one's life, whether it's enlightenment, nirvana, god, paradise, success, or whatever one aspires to. One's so used to all of these, and it makes this illusory search for meaning a done deal in life. That's why the qualification of disorder is conventionally and socially reserved only for the crazy ones in asylums or for less civilized people. But, it's exactly through the purpose brought up by thought and the sorrow it generates that one can discern what really is disorder. One wants a self-tailored order in which one's comfortable and secure while avoiding the pain, whether physical or psychological. But, the brain is always in contradiction because sorrow is always present in whatever self-imposed order. As a fact, disorder is a pattern of inconsistency in one's psyche; it's a confused mind that leads a confused life, unconscious of one's actions and their causes, yet thinking it's orderly. The whole point of order is not to have a contradiction, and disorder is where there's a contradiction, like when one says a thing and does something else. It's a gap between thought and reality, where there is a division between the ideals and what's really happening, which is a division between the outward and the inward. It's the pursuit of ideals psychologically where one easily gives oneself up to the authority of others. The inner fragmentation affects one's actions outwardly. As such, there's a movement of disorder, and it coincides with the movement of thought. That's the reason why a corrupt and destructive society can exist, it has been created and maintained by each and every member who has taken part

and contributed to it, measuring, comparing, and conforming. It isn't a disorder that is dead as one keeps on giving continuity to the past; it's a living disorder, moving, corrupting, destroying. Inwardly, the building up of the ideals translates outwardly to the incessant attempt to become something else other than what one is. Becoming is escaping from the reality of oneself, it is the movement of disorder. One is fear, and one wants to move away from fear to become courageous. The unconscious following of ideals in the form of becoming has established a pattern of attachment in one's mind. Disorder is the escape from the sorrow that is oneself and such escape causes utter confusion in the mind. All the tears of pain, sweats of anxiety, trembling of fear, or suspense of hope constitute sorrow, and it seems to exist in every day of one's self-conscious life. Where there is attachment, whether to an ideal or a person, there is fear, suspicion, possessiveness, jealousy, anxiety, and hatred among other aspects that constitute the symptoms of disorder; it's a reflection of egocentrism. Disorder is when one forces oneself to live in conformism with the morality of the mass and in opposition with one's uniqueness and as it is, one's always susceptible to comparison. One's whole life has become a continuum of measurements. Generation after generation, going on for millennia if not more, one has produced the same pattern of disorder repeatedly. Why has one accepted that pattern despite all the misery engendered for so long? Why is it so difficult for one to face the emptiness of oneself?

Maybe, it's the building up of values and meanings through

measurement, passed down through generations, which is the process of fragmentation of thought in operation. It has become common food for each human being, one has conditioned oneself into the patterns of thought. Comparison between a cultured mind and a primitive mind is an example of such fragmentation; it leads to discrimination, judgment, and conflict. Disorder has made the brain mechanical, repetitive, dull, without sharpness for insight or radical breakthrough. Certain strong symptoms, such as hatred or violence can scar the brain; traumas are formed and in turn condition the brain to be fearful. Of course, it's a totally useless and meaningless waste of energy to get involved in such activities. Such conditioning only grows in strength. One has conditioned oneself to be fearful and to reach for assurance, something that one can cling to or can hold on to. Though, it can trigger hatred or anger when challenged. The brain has become lazy, and it seems easier for oneself to look for examples in others and to reproduce what others have done. It's easy for the brain to take refuge in the past, though the past is imbued with disorder. The insight is that the past, brought into the present and projected into the future is the cause which maintains disorder. The past here is the known, with all its self-imposed meaning. How can one get through the ending of the known, of the past, of time? Because only with the ending of the known, one can break that pattern of disorder. Only in the understanding of the disorder, there can be order. It's not about searching blindly for an order, to then impose that order to get rid of disorder. Can the mind realize that it's the movement of disorder, not to judge, not to fix, not to conform, but

to observe and understand?

Everything seems to be in order, the trees of the forest, the whale in the ocean, the flowing of rivers, rains wearing down mountains, the sun rising and setting, the phases of the moon, the moving of planets and stars, the sprouting in spring and even something so destructive as the eruption of volcanoes. It's the endless order of birth and death as the essence of the universe. The universe is in order, whether it is destructive or constructive, it is still order with its character of being absolutely necessary. The condition for man's existence is based on that order. Only man lives in confusion, in contradiction, in disorder. Order can't be created by thought and can't be brought about by any kind of effort, any kind of struggle to achieve, any kind of ambition. It's not through one's suffering that one can reach such order. The flowers know neither order nor disorder, they just are. The trees struggle to exist, to grow, and yet they know neither sorrow nor fear. And even if the hot sun or the big storm might destroy them, their dying is also their order. No matter how intense and prevalent is one's disorder, it has absolutely no impact on the encompassing order of reality. Even though many things have arisen in existence due to a relative origination caused by a disorder, those creations are still subjected to the order of interdependence of existence grounded in emptiness. A tank, even made for killing in a war is empty in itself, no matter what purpose one has attributed to it, and as such it knows neither order nor disorder. Though it's unique, related to the materials and the human factors under

a certain set of dependent origination, even when being used to kill, it still has no inherent essence. The tank, the killing, and the war are part of reality whereas peace, god, and patriotism are ideals. Yet, the existence of those is not in opposition to order; the tank is still empty, the killing still meaningless, the war still impractical, divisive, and all of them are subject to certain laws of physics. With time, its existence will still sink away, like any other thing. Order is not disturbed in any way and nature will recalibrate. What is disorder here are the ideals; from the abstraction inwardly, it has spread out outwardly, to the point of killing each other. The ideal for peace has created countless wars. Disorder only hurts oneself, only man is sorrowful. One taints beauty, pollutes one's environment, kills one's neighbors and by that one destroys oneself. The debt is forever more; one's always making life more burdened. Does one have to suffer eternally for an unreachable ideal?

All for the ideals, and yet those ideals will never come to fruition because there's disorder. And the things that are derived out of one's disorder, like the tank, are still essentially empty, and by that, it's still inconsequential to the order, minimal to the diversity of the cosmos. It's not a transcendental disorder that can disrupt the order in place; it's so limited, just a mere psychological disorder of one's thought. One's sorrow, as painful as one might feel, does not impact the underlying reality of things. It's an order beyond one's conception, not related to the pattern of one's thought. Does it suddenly seem pointless to ask god for help

through prayers to ease one's suffering? Disorder is when one runs away from one's reality, which is sorrow, and just like that, one can never solve sorrow. It's not an opposition, a duality with the unifying order of all there is. It's only possible as a psychological state which is the denying of reality and by that, sorrow comes with thought. Because, if disorder is in opposition with a certain order, then that order is not complete. Anything born out of its opposite contains its own opposite. So, the order of reality has no relation with one's disorder. Only the ideal of order comes out of disorder and is opposed to it. In the same way, goodness isn't the opposite of bad, love isn't the opposite of hate, and freedom isn't the opposite of conditioning. And so, a desire to do good is nothing but a pursuit of an illusion. And disorder is that one constantly lives cunningly, for one's own interest, yet pretends to do good. This has been going on for a countless number of years because one keeps on living with ideas and knowledge, not facing the facts of reality. There's total isolation in the mode of being of egocentrism, where selfish ambitions are disguised as ideals. The nature of the disorder is that it brings loneliness in a world full of things because one has isolated oneself, and there are no relationships but only attachments. It's like going against the innate uniqueness of each existence and yet can't escape that fact. When one sees the deception of all illusions of one's psyche, there might be an understanding of the disorder of oneself. To be aware of disorder, which means to be aware of one's own inattention, is to attend. The relationships with other things then come naturally to one's attention through the most intimate meetings.

The understanding of disorder is the enlightenment on sorrow, it's being one with it, to see through it, to look at the end of it. To live the beauty and the ugliness of it in all its depths without any expectation, any judgment, any reaction. One might get carried away by one's infatuations, be attracted according to one's desires, or show intense tenacity to one's ambitions, but in all of that, there's an effort to divert away from one's sorrow. There's no motivation to do the work without a goal. One's scared to face one's sorrow, one's emptiness, so one's constantly in search of something else. When one gets carried away by one's endeavors, there seems to be a sensation of ecstasy, which is a feeling to be outside oneself, but this standing out of oneself is founded on a will, still part of oneself, to be something else that one is not. It's a psychological becoming with a cause, a goal, an ideal based on a psychological demand for security. For pity's sake, some even seek immortality. But, essentially, this ecstasy is just a self-deception, a self-alienation to the ideal, intense yet somehow the aimed goal is not existent. One has not really gone out of the conditioned self, it's just its continuation, its desire to find meaning. One desires ecstasy because one wants to escape from oneself, yet one's unable to. In such case, the word *ecstasy* just reflects one's desire to be outside oneself for a greater experience. If the prophet in the mountain, who is disorderly, willful, full of desire to dominate, in search of god, is overwhelmed with revelations from god, then that god is only but disorder. As order isn't the opposite of disorder, it can't come from disorder and there's neither insight nor revelation, neither salvation nor deliverance from sorrow at all. Is

the drug of self-hypnosis really insight and understanding? One doesn't want to look into one's insecurities yet wants the security. Through the escape from sorrow, which is one's reality, can one find an ending to sorrow? The constant craving for security, actualized through an incessant becoming which is the escape from one's reality, renews one's insecurities as each step of being that concerns achieving a goal also involves anguish, fear, or doubt. One feels stuck because there's no value in seeing or doing something without a purpose, one feels wary of life, and it becomes a burden. There's no passion in doing anything, all is for something else, something to gain. The relationship to things is self-interested. And if one doesn't get what one desires, one becomes cynical and misanthrope while still being ambitious. There's no enduring at all, there's no patience at all. One devotes one's energy to an ideal to deflect from one's sorrow yet passing over the beauty of life. Beauty here doesn't mean the conditioned preferences of one's desires but the freedom without purpose, without condition. Only with the freedom of observation, there's a life free to witness the beauty of things, where all is passion.

It's not just a matter of freedom of the will, which is the subjective freedom based on coerced and conditioned choices, and even the freedom of atheistic existentialism falls into that category. Beyond personal choices, when there's nothing to rely on, one's free to perceive things, and actions that arise out of that perception are not subordinated to any purpose. Etymologically, the word *passion* is to endure. Life with all the glory, fame, or wealth would be

lonely and empty if there's no passion. Freedom is not to be found at the end, like a treasure at the end of a quest, it's the freedom for the passion in all things to be without any prejudice of thought, as a passive awareness. In that way, the word *passive* rekindles its etymological meaning as the state of being affected by something or capable of being acted upon. Only with passion, unconditioned love is and can kindness be. Hence, passion is not the projection of oneself in the flower but the flowering of the flower in oneself. There's no more disorder, no more dependence on psychological knowledge, which in itself is just the thought of reality and not reality itself. It's through the understanding of sorrow and its causes as the nature of disorder, that it comes to an end, and only with its end, there is passion. There's an overcoming of thought with its self-centeredness, egotism, and anthropocentrism, sometimes disguised as humanism or theocentrism, and when thought sees the end of itself, the mind allows the *what is* to manifest itself in all its fullness. Only then, one starts to see things as they are in themselves, in their suchness. Not just to look to immediate things out of necessities or for one's pleasure as one's so accustomed to. It's looking without choosing, without hope or expectation, beyond the conceptual boundaries of human ideas, ideals, and attributed values, which none can possibly encompass the immeasurability of reality. It's the immediate perception of the nature of disorder, which signifies its end; no longer carrying it continuously or accumulating it day by day, even shedding light on the unconscious layer of self-consciousness. By the perception of the disorder, it's the emptying of the conditioned knowing of

the self by the self and as a consequence the negation of any pretended truth of knowledge. It's the absolute *catharsis*, the cleansing of one's own disorder. In that perception, one sees not only the nature of disorder, but with its understanding, one is open to the state of order, of the naturalness of things. It is a quality of being just as it is by itself, a trait of nature. The light from the sun, the waves of the ocean, the blade of grass, and the sound of the sea are such naturalness; each thing simply is, where there's no thought involved. The naturalness of each thing is its truth of being, which is order. In that order, in that absolute freedom, there is a total immersion in being with its fullness, out of the scope of time, not like a temporary ecstasy, trance, or entrancement caused by a self-induced drug for some greater sensation that one's so used to. It's the understanding of the finitude of the self that opens one's mind to the insight on infinity, on the immeasurable, on reality. Just like a joy of living to admire beyond all measure a single morning, that which can't be repeated, that which has never been before and could never be again, something timeless.

Where thought sees the end of itself in emptiness, which is when the mind touches base with the ground of emptiness, there's a realization that there's non-consciousness at the roots of any consciousness. Consciousness is what it is not, implying that non-consciousness forms the fundamental existential potential for any form of consciousness. One can see that clearly with a child coming to life, empty is its own consciousness, where memories are yet to be recorded, ideas are yet to be formed, habits are yet to

be shaped, where there's no looking at itself in a self-reflective way. The conditioning of oneself is the self-consciousness building itself up from a ground of non-consciousness, yet denying its emptiness, like writing on a blank piece of paper what life is supposed to be, where one records aspirations or fears and sticks by that. But, this non-consciousness transcends both the conscious and the unconscious parts of self-consciousness; it is free and unburdened. There's a state of incorruptibility once at one with emptiness, so it's limitless and where no thought can touch. Yet, all essence exists in relation to it, and by this fact, it's complete, whole, which means holy, eternal, beyond all transitory phenomena. In it, there's no fear to live life and death. With fear, one makes death the cause of corruption and by that life is to be a corruption as well. As such, death is just the ending to one's meaningless and miserable life; the fear of the idea of death conditions one's life. If one lives constantly with the past then does one really live at all? There's no vitality in it as one prefers dealing with dead things rather than looking at life in the present, to look at one's sorrow. Fear is the origin of the gap between death and life; it creates the idea of death and by that creates its own idea of life. Death is not at the end of one's life as one might think, it's one with life. Only when one dies to the things that one clings to, one dies to one's disorder, and only then there can be life. To live means to live with death, to die constantly to the contents of one's consciousness, and to be free from the known. It is the annihilation of any illusion. Death has become one of the most feared problems for man because it has become an idea. But, what is dead

is of the past and that is not death because death is a living thing. Only free, one can see that death and life are incorruptible. Being free, one lives life and death and because one's at one with emptiness, groundlessly and with nothing to rely on, the pure and incorruptible uniqueness of one's being then manifests itself as a reality in nature. And, this subjectivity implies being the subject subordinated to all things, not the conventional self-personal subject. It's without sorrow because in which there's freedom, all such relationships provide shelter to the subject. And the force of the subject's own ability to be, as the light of things coming to one from all things, which is its naturalness is the same force that makes nature or the universe be what it is; a reciprocal existence in each other. Only empty and free, order is in oneself. The ending of thought here is not the cessation of all cognitive activities but the ending of the influence of all thinking as a reaction to one's past, which are memories and beliefs. Where the brain is unburdened and sharp, where thought sees itself in emptiness, it becomes a simple tool, a medium for the perception of truth to use and act on the field of existence. A mind with such awareness is a sensitive, intelligent mind where thought is still, operating only when it has to; a mind with an extraordinary quality of attention. Only with such a mind, passion is encompassing, beauty can be perceived anywhere and so art is everywhere.

When emptied of predefined meanings and preconceptions, one is confronted solely with the realm of creation; a world untouched by the intervention of thought. It is freedom where the

perception of things is no longer subjected to the personal and cultural theories of man, which means the relinquishing of all views, and all theories. Then, one's only dealing with what is, one accepts whatever may come. No matter how acquainted one may be with something, each thing remains basically unknown and new to oneself. One still wakes up to the day, with the sun rising and then fading into the horizon, not wary of its diverse beauty. With no illusion, no deception, no desire for a certain experience, one is not asking for anything. It's a passive awareness that makes action effortless. Only with passion, all works of labor become play and without a cause or reason, life is not a means for anything else. It's not just play as a distraction to the burden of life, not as a play for the gratification of divertissement. It's totally different from the constant and incessant doing in which nothing really comes to completion. That which has continuity desires for permanency and thus, it wants the experience to last, to repeat. And, because it awaits a certain conclusion, a certain result, it ceases the enduring, the experiencing. Yet, without continuity, every stroke of the brush, every note played, every word written, every row hoed, every fruit harvested, every meal cooked, every action has an honesty that manifests itself as a certainty without a glimpse of pretension. Because it has an end on its own, there's neither judgment nor expectation. Without continuity, there's something where time, which means the past, present, or future, has no meaning. In having an end on its own, which means being finite and complete, there is neither yesterday nor tomorrow. It's beyond effort and without sorrow, the body might be tired, but there's no dam-

age done to one's mind, no more disorder. There's no need for expression, the action is already the expression where passion is and thus love is. Any such doing is complete and perfect in itself. When there's honesty and passion, its completeness lies in the effortless action and not the result. When, empty of a purposeful existence, action lies in the experiencing and the enduring rather than the result of the experience. Where action has its end, with no ideals involved, no attachments, no expectation, no matter the result, there's the intelligence of passion, of love at play. Like a vagrant snow goose migrating, following the sun, effortlessly flying across oceans and continents, without fear, passing through countless landscapes, yet leaving no trace behind its path.

The lightness of being and of doing expresses itself with humorous traits. Self-mockery and humor have a character of forgiveness which is only possible with emptiness. As a clemency towards oneself, it relativizes all weights on things. Yet, not a thing is taken for granted, the microbe, the leaf, the ant, the sound, or the atom demands one's full attention with true spontaneity and without aim. With passion, the play strips off one's self-identification with a purpose, there's freedom in one's inquiry into life itself. An inquiry without angst, without direction, without personal goal in mind, without self-centeredness. It's not that the burden has disappeared, but the bearing of the burden has become seamless. When each action has its own end, without any expectation or demand, one's truly responsible for one's action through its enduring. This enduring without reaction be-

comes a leisure, with endless time to observe, to learn, to see reality revealing itself. Each action is truly new and creative, there's no hindering caused by the heavy baggage of the past. In society, where the past dominates, one might play a piece of music perfectly with regard to the technicality of the composition, but there's no creation in that; one's just a very skilled recording machine that reproduces the technique of a piece. The composition when considered as a fixed knowledge or a standard doesn't give any freedom and when there's no freedom, there's no joy of music and the obsession with technicality and originality becomes torture. But, the joy is essential, and being empty, it's the ground of creation and when it's there, the technique can be overcome with the creativeness of passion and the ingenuity of understanding. In that creation, in that passion is the cessation of all seeking and asking, and one's only playing for the sake of music. When the joy of music is the joy of living, when the self is no more, there's only the music of life with its unique beauty. Such joy can't be bought, no amount of training, sacrifice, prayer, or money can bring about this delight. If there's any ambition, music becomes second-hand, what comes out are reproduced sounds, vain and plain, always a mere and inferior copy of something dead. The urge for the repetition of an experience, however beautiful it was, is always under the shadow of sorrow, with the constant fear that one's ideals are never attainable. In that, the attraction for sorrow or power is always shallow because there's no earnestness, no love. From this suffering, Christianity worships sorrow, not passion, and they have given the word *passion* the meaning of the mar-

tyrdom of god, and around it, power is built up. Because one can't see joy, love, and beauty, one rather have sorrow and idealize it. It is so pitiful, even under the sublimated form of the idealized passion as the suffering of god for mankind. There's no real care for the other but only the desire to subjugate the other to the will of god. There's no passion where sorrow or power is. Passion only comes with the ending of sorrow. It goes the same for any other artistic form of expression or any other act in life. Beyond and inspired by all artistic endeavors, the greatest source of art is life and the ultimate art is to live, where things are to fit together.

COMPASSION AND THE INTELLIGENCE OF LOVE

What is to live?

Whatever composition, invention, book, or edifice, grandiose as they are, none of these touches true creativeness, the ground of creation. The flower of joy blooms out of passion when sorrow ceases; it doesn't need to express itself, its expression is in its being. It's above all cultural expressions as those always remain in the domain of thought with its preferences, while passion is raw. The requirement of expression only happens in a state of contradiction. Some might like western classical music, others eastern folklore music, it's all still a matter of conditioning and the preferences are the reactions of that conditioning. Also, lust is commonly mistaken for passion, the former is often understood as a physical passion with an overwhelming sense of craving. But, while passion is empty, without a cause or a purpose, and with no contradiction, lust is a desire for the experience to be repeated, to continue, to last forever. There's intensity when desire identifies itself with the ideal. As it becomes lasting in one's mind, lust for an ideal can be extremely intense. Hence, god is often considered as the ultimate desire where a lust for something greater and eternal wills to suppress all temporal and ephemeral desires. Yet, a desire to end desire is still a contradiction, a disorder, and through

suppression, one gets wary of the small joys of life. On the other hand, to delve deep into desire is not another desire, for it has no motive; it is like understanding the beauty of a flower, to sit down beside it and look at it. To not get wary of life, which means not getting used to its beauty and not deforming reality because of one's fear of its ugliness, there must be passion. It's a passion without any ambition, any direction, and yet infinitely intense. One can't perceive truth without passion. Only when the self is emptied of all its contents, of all illusions, of all lies, when its centeredness ceases, then compassion, which is the passion for all things, can be.

Contrary to common knowledge, psychological disorder is not a particular case of marginal individuals or a specificity of a culture but the state of the whole of humanity itself. Everyone will eventually be reminded of the nihilism of all ideals by the waking call of the reality of daily life. Like a second-generation Egyptian migrant of Muslim faith being pulled between his idea of goodness as a constant test of God and the reality of his other worldly desires. The more good he tries to do, the more misery is done, the more he's lost. Like a Protestant pastor torn between the teaching of the Bible which says God will destroy the destroyer of earth and his own church which accepts donations from wealthy industrialists whose businesses cause consequential pollution to the environment. He harbors an intense will to punish the destroyer of nature. Like a politician divided between his ideals for progress and the reality of how the corridors of power work their way. So many

temptations and compromises he has to abide by while having to proclaim the ideal of change. He keeps on saying one thing while doing something else, muddling himself with words that don't have any meaning to him anymore. Like a judge at the high court who condemns the corrupt criminals while realizing his cluelessness about justice. He can't go on with his job and flees. He goes wandering to find out about truth, yet he can't find none even after twenty years. Like a detached teacher affected by the tragic suicide of his mother and the impending death of his grandfather who is suffering from dementia. He's ruptured by his own struggle with a life devoid of answers, yet he still must teach disoriented and fragile students in an underprivileged area. With the suicide of a student as a mystery all insoluble, the school becomes a ghastly ground of desolation for him. Like a once hopeful korean immigrant broken by the constant skirmish for survival in a foreign land while still aspiring to the ideal of the american dream. He and his wife have to work many jobs to cover the expenses of life. The family, including the children, has to sleep on the floor, often collapsing from the fatigue of daily life. By his actions, he suggests that success in this new land is more important than the stability of their family. And yet, he says he's doing all of it for the sake of the family. Every time he tries a new venture, it always seems to fail somehow. Like a norwegian woman troubled by the image of an indifferent, negligent, and divorced father. While in a marriage with a man, she still feels the need for a quest for love and meaning and entangles herself in a romantic adventure with someone else. She then becomes pregnant, and

the secret lover leaves her. Her husband is diagnosed with cancer and later dies of it. She's left with no one by her side. Like a talented heavy metal drummer severed by his hearing loss which disrupts his purpose in life. Putting so much effort into becoming an expert at something like drumming only to have it all taken away. A substantial amount of money is put into the recovery of his hearing through surgery, yet he's unable to regain the sounds that he's so used to. Like a robber from a multigenerational family of robbers, who hears a sermon about not stealing, then becomes fragmented between his livelihood and his sense of morality. He keeps the words in his mind but continues with his life as a robber. And he lives in pain and inner conflict for the rest of his life. Like a father haunted by the deaths of his children in an accidental fire caused by neglect. He's constantly reminded of his mistake, loses all the passion for life, and decides to take his own life as a way of relieving himself from the inner and unbearable agony of a life full of regret and guilt.

One navigates the troubled waters of life and struggles to find a clear path; it's the struggle to find meaning in the madness and the absurd. Clinging to hope amidst the turbulent life, one tries to find peace in disorder. When one is confronted with the absurdity of life which crushes all hope and has to face the nihilism of one's ideals, there's no turning back. Either one blindly escapes into some other ideals to forget about reality or keeps pursuing the lost ideal in despair. Either way one will everlastingly be in conflict, which is being completely dishonest with oneself. And this

state of forever being in conflict is suffering. It expresses through the kind of emotions that weigh on one's consciousness and shape one's relationships with the world around as if one has to carry the whole burden of existence. It's beyond sadness, disappointment, excitement, or longing, it's despair where all hope is demolished. One feels that some things are not resolved and yet it ends and that's just it; the end feels empty. It's utter disillusionment, disenchantment. It's an achingly and frighteningly portrait of man's existential crisis, a crisis of purpose. There's a high cost of denial and self-deception in the face of hard truths, and it's sorrow. And with the constant cultivation of sorrow, for days and days, one loses passion for life. Is life just a series of sorrowful events? Is life just it? Born to live in sorrow and then die? Is that all? When there is no passion, life is empty, without joy. When there's no passion, one becomes insensitive to all things. Everything seems meaningless, yet one can't stop thinking about one's miserable existence. Why? Without a cause, one seems lost in despair. When one's vulnerable, one can get hurt. Yet, because of one's reaction to hurt, one builds a wall around oneself, making oneself insensitive. Life seems hard and reacting to it, it makes one cruel, unkind to others, insensitive to things, and heartless to beauty. The sorrow never goes away, it has become despair; a miserable existence of a martyr for a lost cause. One has been so used to living with a cause. Even when one loses passion, one still wants to cling to a cause because one can't let go of what one has built for oneself inwardly. One's afraid to be nothing. Sometimes, when the agony is too painful, many decide to take their own life, dying in desper-

ation for a lost cause. Is life as meager as a few doomed ideals? What is there for the man without a cause?

Only with the ending of sorrow, passion comes. With passion, sensitivity is there without regret, without expectation, without cause, without hope, without remorse. It's not training to be sensitive like the study of arts in academia. In training, there's a mere cultivation of discipline, which is to conform. While being vulnerable and sensitive, there would be no mental wound because hurt is not recorded. One's still vulnerable to the world and by that one's open to the immeasurability of existence. That's the quality of innocence which etymologically comes from *innocere*, and it means *free from hurt*. And that which is free from hurt is free from fear. It's a spotless mind, empty of the corruptions of conditioning. It's a mind in which observation is without a center, where the self with its contents realizes its ending, where thought becomes aware of itself. Only then, the truth is to be perceived beyond words. And with that perception comes complete action, integral to all parts of living. It's the sharpening of all senses, without exception. It's not just the fragmented and causal perception of the ones who call themselves artists, scientists, politicians, or philosophers, each being isolated in their own domains. There must be freedom to love, and if one sees love as an ideal, an abstract concept, as the opposite of hate, then one's trapped in that duality and will go on killing. Even with the highest intention to not kill and not to hurt another, which is commanded by certain religions, love would just be another desire or a remembrance of

the past, just like the ideals of goodness or peace, and in that misery is to ensue as well. The shadows and the footsteps of man with their machines have been dreaded by countless living beings. Man, being the most dangerous animal, has been killing for millennia upon millennia. A man not only kills another man but also other forms of life. One man shoots another or is shot by another for ideologies. Some kill for pleasure, as a recreation, or a sport, others kill out of anger, jealousy, fear, or hatred, and out of those, most kill without knowing through the delegation of their own authority to the organized murder brought about by the nations with their ideologies, their borders, their leaders and their armies. Can one see that ugliness? The ugliness which is oneself. The one who kills the pig for the bacon, the rhinoceros for the horn, the man for ideals, and even big and majestic animals like the elephants and the whales. It's rather primitive one might say. Indeed, man is always concerned with his livelihood, and his survival not only because it brings food to the table or some protection, but also as a moral escape or justification for one's ugly actions. Man hides behind the group, the nation because he's afraid, and to escape that fear, he tries to justify it with ideals. Man has the ideal of love for the family, the children, the parents, and the nation. But, does one really love or does one think that one loves? One thinks that one sacrifices oneself for the sake of those ideals. Yet, in love, there's no sacrifice, simply because love doesn't have a cause. Love is not an ideal. And so, for man, livelihood is one thing, the ugly part, and life outside of work is another. One feels like one has to work in an insensitive manner to survive, to get ahead, to thrive,

hoarding up assurances for a certain illusory security. As such, most mankind have never seemed to really love what they are doing. Their actions seem to contradict their ideals. And sooner or later, each man will be confronted with the nihility of it. Because, without passion, there can't be sensitivity and joy, and work would always feel empty and meaningless.

If one lived by the work one loves, it would be a very different tale, one would maybe understand the wholeness of life. Not to separate between the artist, the scientist, the businessman, and all the rest of it. But even that is just an imagination, not the reality of mankind. The reality is that man has become hypocritical, doing something ugly, and corrupt, in the daily world and then coming home to pretend to live peacefully with the family; this breeds conflict and hypocrisy, a dual life, always divided. Man seems to have lost touch with love. Despite all that, love is as real as life, as strong as death. It has nothing to do with imagination, sentiment, lust, or romanticism, and of course, it has nothing to do with fame, power, position, and prestige. Love is as still as the grain of sand, as powerful as earthquakes, as calm as a tree, as lively as the forest, as clear as water, as vibrant as the sea, endless, without a beginning or an end. Love is the flower that blooms, the sun that rises, the moon that shines. It's the substance of the soil in which the seed of goodness grows, for life to be lived. With love, there's no prejudice, no judgment, no direction, no purpose, no binding, no attachment. Love is order, it dispels all illusions. Love is a living thing, not of the domain of the dead past, not bounded

by time or space. It's the passion for life as a whole, indivisible. In love, there's care without ambition, this liberty granted to do something, to care. It's the grace of life. Love is the care for all things, even for the one who suffers, from oneself to the rest of humanity. It's the insight that reveals the nature of sorrow and by that its end, dispelling the darkness of ignorance. Love is the *reason* for existence, the *cause* which is not a cause, the debt which is not a debt. Only with love, there's the freedom to observe, the freedom to witness beauty, and the freedom to live happily. Love is dying gracefully and only then there's peace, the ground for creation.

A nightingale is to fly and yet man keeps it in a cage and feeds it. Bouncing around the birdcage where the wings can't really flap, it wants to fly so much, yet it can only cling to the wooden bars and then go back to the standing stick. Back and forth, again and again, repeating that movement, battling its wings. There's no such calmness of a free bird on a branch of a tree, even under the big gray clouds when the rain is about to fall down. There's this intense yearning for freedom, yet not the yearning of ideologies but the manifestation of what is. Two birds calling each other from two separate cages, they need space, they need freedom to reach each other, space for the flight, a seamless flight where no trace is left behind, going with the wind, migrating to unseen lands with no borders. Each screech is a call for freedom, faint, feeble yet piercing, not like the sound and the song of the free birds; it is trapped in loneliness and all the joy has gone out of it. The

caging of the bird is a reality; one traps oneself by imprisoning the bird. The bird knows how cruel man is, and it doesn't want to wait. It wants to be as far away as possible. It will eventually lose its strength and die gracefully, even in a prison from heaven. Love is for the bird, and in that perception, love is for mankind. In that watching, the thoughts arise and then fade away, and thought is becoming aware of itself, where the thinker is no more, only thought. In that watching without waiting for something to happen or without expectation, there is no end, only learning. It's not the mechanical accumulation of knowledge which is always limited and shallow because it's just remembering, and that can never perceive the immeasurable. It has the quality of alertness and sensitivity of vitality. To see things without the word or name, without any reaction; in that watching, there is a great passion for life. Watching so, one becomes aware of one's inward activities, where thought is observed to the very end of it. It's to see that which is false is the awakening of intelligence. When one is attentive to all, to both the inward and the outward, choiceless yet alert, then out of that comes insight.

While memories are usually described in terms of mental concepts, expressed as the ways things seem to oneself, they are materialistically reducible to the workings and characteristics of the ever-firing cells of the brain. As a process of matter, the brain has been shaped for millennia, going through countless waves of mutations in one direction. It's the direction of the patterns of memory, experience, and knowledge which is the repetition of a satisfy-

ing experience and the escape from a sad one; in other words, it's the mechanism of pleasure and fear. And it has functioned in that area for so long that most think that's the only way it works. As such, knowledge has become of supreme importance and the cultivation of thought has become the norm in modern societies. Can that material process in the brain bring about a radical change in itself? If that material in itself can change, it will still be a material process. It's what humanity is trying to do with the incremental idea of progress. Such change is no radical change in the nature of the content; it's still directed, self-interested, and ultimately is still part of memory. Insight is not part of thought, not part of memory. The material process, as thought, has a cause because it's a process of the matter, a movement. Unless there's some mutation in a totally different direction taking place, inside the brain, one may think one has changed, from a pattern to another pattern. Yet, it's not a change in depth but a superficial change, a modification. The whole movement is set in a certain direction and along that pattern, one makes reforms and thinks that there's a possibility of gradual change. It's a movement that involves not only the brain, and the body, but also the whole of society, which is the rest of humanity, and to some extent the environment. And so, one realizes that if the change comes from the material process that is thought, then it's the same thing continuing. The more one inquires into oneself, the inquiry remains the same without radical transformation. And if there's any change, it is forced change which is no fundamental change at all. Inventing and then pursuing the ideal of non-violence, while the reality is that man is vi-

olent, is such change. Is there an activity that is totally independent of the content of the brain? Is there an activity that is not a result of progressive knowledge, not the progress of time, not a remembrance of the past? This insight may be the real activity of the brain, not through any exercise of will. Is there in the brain an activity that is not touched by consciousness?

So as long as one's mind is within the pattern of thought, it must be a movement of matter. Thought is a material process just like any other movement of matter, with action and reaction. One gets irritated, it's the first reaction. Then the reaction to that, the second reaction is to deny the anger. Then the third reaction is to try to control or justify it. And as one can't control, one goes back to being irritated. And it lingers on, taking different forms; one thought is not finished yet many others plague the mind. It continues to build up until it explodes, or until one loses all liveliness due to exhaustion. So it is constantly action and reaction, just like the physical law of action and reaction. The oppression of a tyrant or the revolt of the oppressed is such action and reaction as well. Can one see that this is a continuous movement that drags on forever? When something seems to have ended in a deceiving manner, another thing appears as a new movement. So, is it possible for the mind to go beyond reaction? If still under the shadows of thought, one thinks that there's a part of the brain that's not touched by the content, then one might think that there's a god within, something superhuman operating in spite of the content. God in such case is an imagination of the content, an ideal

reflecting one's desire for something beyond the content. Also, it's not about the idea of annihilating the movement of matter; the notion of thought wanting to terminate itself through suppression is rather foolish, and naturally, it cannot succeed. All of those still belong to the process of action and reaction. Can one revolt against thought? The content is tricking itself and this is similar to many of the old tricks that thought has invented, nothing actually new. In sanity, one is aware of all the tricks it has played, but otherwise, there's obviously immense danger if one's caught in those illusions, thinking that the imagination of god is revelation or that thought has to be exterminated. It does nothing except reveal the same content whereas insight is not dependent on the material process of thought. Such a revolt against thought is still subject to thought and so is still reaction. Insight is a flash much encompassing than the movement of thought, and therefore that which is orderly can act on thought, but disorder has no significant consequence on order which has no cause. In the same manner, love doesn't respond to hate and hate has no action on love; they are independent. Where there is hate, the other cannot be. So when this material process is in action, drawing its force from the content without realizing itself, the other cannot exist. Can insight, which reveals that the thinker is the thought, trigger a fundamental change? Can insight, which has no cause, act, influence, and operate on the very content of the brain?

That which has no cause or that which is empty may operate on that which has a cause, but the inverse is not possible. What has a

cause cannot act on that which has no cause, because if it is so then it would have a cause, and that would invalidate that which has no cause. That which has no cause is incorruptible and that which has a cause is always limited and can't possibly touch the other. Apparently, the action of insight has an extraordinary effect on the material process. It is a flash that alters the whole pattern, uses it, in the sense that it uses the components of its language such as logic or reason to operate. It uses the same tools without fragmentation, without direction, without reaction. It's the total and complete human activity, not just the partial insight of either the artist, the scientist, or the philosopher. Insight is never partial. It illuminates the brain and there's a complete change in its material activity; the brain itself begins to act differently. Insight which is the source of this illumination is not in the material process; it has no cause. It is an energy with no cause, and by that, it is pure energy, not bounded by time, as cause implies time. The material process which is thought acts in ignorance, in darkness, which involves time and knowledge. The content itself is darkness, always limited. Nevertheless, the very existence of light is to change the process of darkness. That flash is not a light that stays on or goes off because that would involve time. Insight dispels that darkness; intelligence wipes away ignorance. And thought, which is the material process, no longer works in darkness. Therefore, that light has ended ignorance. It has dispelled the center of ignorance, the thinker behind the thought, the source of fragmentation, and the creator of darkness, which is the self. It would be a wrong question to ask how to get that insight, it would imply a cause and be-

come the ideal of enlightenment and the moment one says it is there, it isn't. That center, that content which is a certain set disposition of the network of the brain cells and that in some way alters. The psychosomatic organism is attentive, which means both the mind and the body. Therefore, the brain cells are exceedingly quiet, alive, alert, and not responding to the old. Otherwise, one could not be attentive. And, in that attention, the brain is not cluttered and can function sanely. That attention is silence, emptiness, not a focus on something particular, not a preference. Out of that silence, there's innocence and the brain can operate without a center; the thinker seeking in his pattern is no more. Then what happens to the brain cells? They are registering, but there is no self, no *me*; the part that is *me* of the brain cells is wiped out. It is not of time, as remembrance or knowledge, that insight is complete, total. From that completeness, there can be a perception without any shadow of doubt, and thus it is sanity in action. Only then, can there be the awakening of the brain, only then, one can have a complete relationship with order, and only then, the seeds of goodness can grow. Is love that insight?

It's the flash of insight, the etymology means the sight from within, from the inner. Why isn't it natural for everybody to have this insight? Why is love not natural to everybody? Why is it that man has no insight at all? Why is it that it doesn't start from childhood? Why is it not possible for everybody? Many people would say it's because of the animal instinct that man fights back. All the scientific, historical discoveries and all the archaeologists ex-

plored, and they have said that biologically, man began from the ape. Some say before the ape, were other animals and before that, the cell, and before the cell, the atom, and further, whatever. The animal responds with kindness if one treats it with kindness, but if one treats the animal with hate, it's going to fight back. If the beginning of man is the animal then man has that instinct highly cultivated. The animal instinct manifests itself clearly in young children, and it seems only natural for them to respond with the animal instinct. But, man's behavior is also complicated by thought. The animal instinct has now become entangled with thought, and it's getting in some ways worse. The child depends on both the parents and society, who themselves are in darkness, and so, the child is born to be raised in darkness. The cultivation of thought that tries to cover up that animal instinct has counter-intuitively sped up the mechanics of reaction in intensity. A man kills another because of ideals, using or threatening with arms that can probably destroy an entire city or even planet, and it is much worse than a wolf killing a hare. As the animal responds to love and to hate, as man, one responds instantly to hate with hate, just like a natural reaction similar to the reaction of matter. That reaction seems so natural, but is it really? One still wonders why there's no love in the cultivation of that instinct. And, one has invented the ideal of love out of that. An example is the practice of philanthropy, it was created, from the idea of the love of mankind to the christian virtue of charity. Nowadays, philanthropy is giving back to the exploited a tiny piece of what the philanthropist has ruthlessly exploited from others. One uses the ideal of love as a response, a reaction to hate.

So, is hate and the idea of love just one and the same? It can't be otherwise because, where hate is, there can't be love. That instinct of reaction is cause and effect whereas love doesn't have a cause. And in that reaction, however cultivated it is, is nothing but hypocrisy and division. Why is it that the whole of society has cultivated this idea of love? This idea is expressed as giving back to the family, the community, the country, humanity, and even to other living beings. One goes on in life through will, effort to accumulate, to exploit, and then one shares a few crumbs of bread for the poor, the victims. Maybe, man thought that, as human beings cultivated to respond to hate with hate, why can't the other be cultivated as well, right? As another example, non-violence is that cultivation, the personal practice of not causing harm to others under any condition, that systematic reaction to violence. One responds to violence with a cultivated idea of peace, and it is still a reaction. It's like the man who cultivates his humility, surely such a man is not humble. Therefore, can love be cultivated at all? It's not cultivable to respond to hate with love. There is nothing one can do, love is not a reaction, not causal. It can't be because the whole process of cultivation depends on a cause. Cultivated love is just idealism as an abstraction of love, not real. It's just like a desire for peace while violence is. And, the cultivation of that non-violence is violence itself because it's a challenge to be either imposed with that ideal or to react with violence. As, with any other product of thought, it stands until it breaks.

Of course, insight has nothing to do with all of those super-

stitutions, religious piety, and dullness. Because wisdom does not have any ambition, even if that is what drives people in spiritual matters. Everyone runs after the image of a monk with a robe, but that is a dull mind because it loses itself in the knowledge of Buddha and enlightenment. But that is just ignorance, the idealization of insight, of wisdom. Being a monk is still something, but having a career as a monk is even worse, from that it leads to the establishment of religions. Knocking on gongs, chanting sutras, preaching falseness, blind to beauty, a dull mind that only clings to images, knowledge, words, or chants. Western or eastern monks, even if they follow God or Buddha, are still followers. Follow a trail, a paved road that leads to the abyss. While truth cannot be a path, it is living, not knowledge, not the known, not a known path. The path to the heart is not outside, it is not something that can be pointed out. Looking back at oneself is looking back at something that has no form. Insight, a sight from the inner cannot come from cultivation, practice, or discipline; those things are just part of a process of conditioning. That can only be a career, an ambition, a will to power in spirituality, an excuse to make money, to build a reputation when promising something spiritual. The absolute truth is emptiness, which cannot be truly perceived when death and life are still separate, and it is still only a theory, conveyed through words in the scriptures, that people cling to blindly. We must understand that things do exist, but they do not have a self-nature, they all come together due to conditions. It is impossible to use thought to approach it in reverse. Because thus, approaching emptiness becomes the content of learning and cul-

tivating techniques, but the content cannot approach emptiness, absolute nothingness. One cannot use language or concepts to talk about emptiness. It's not an empty bucket. Insight is seeing life in nothingness, not living in meaninglessness and despair. Existence and emptiness are not different, existence is empty. Like light and darkness, emptiness is there when light is present, darkness is not. Or vice versa, if darkness is there, then light is not but emptiness does not change. All things are empty, they only depend on each other, and that is their dependent origination.

The dog is probably one of the very few remaining friends of man. Most animals are terrified at the sight or the sound of mankind. The dog has been eaten, maltreated, submitted, hunted, used, neglected, tied up, caged, and considered as a possession by man. Yet, the dog never seems to respond to its master with hate, it might defend itself when cornered, and it's natural, but it always has the deepest loyalty for its carer, its so-called master. That appreciation has no judgment. Is it so stupid that it forgets all the maltreatment? Is it because it doesn't have one's superior consciousness which can plan and do things for a cause? Is it because the dog is at the mercy of its master? Even when its master doesn't have a single thing left, not even food or any authority, and is rejected by society, the dog is still loyal to him, still without judgment. A true friend. That friendship which has the same etymological root as freedom and that root is love. And, love is free and undivided. One has a lot to learn from that friend that one's so used to mistreat. The mind of humanity has been responding

to violence with violence, knowledge with knowledge, and so on. This instinct seems so natural. Yet, *someone* comes along and says: is it really that way? That someone does not respond to hate, that someone does not respond to action, and so he's independent of it. And that someone says that he's not different from the others while the others, who respond to hate with hate say that he's different from them. The facts say that they are different and the presence of conflict and fragmentation is self-explanatory. But, that someone is part of humanity just like the others and so the others are part of that someone's conscience as well. How does it come about that one part of the mind says that we are different from one another? Why has this division taken place? If this is natural, that is, hate, what is one battling against? From those who respond to hatred with hatred, some nevertheless see that it doesn't make sense; they see that it is wrong. It's evident that conflict and division are highly impractical for one's survival. So, they say that instinct is natural and at the same time not natural, and it should be different. Just like the reaction of non-violence or that of pacifism, the belief that disputes between nations can and should be settled peacefully. Can one see the division? Indeed, they are still battling with ideas, with thought itself. If nations are the cause of disputes, how can there be peace in their existence? It's like a politician, competing all day long, going home at night, exhausted, taking a drink to be quiet, to calm his nerves. Conflict will not bring about tranquillity or peace. Conflict will bring about exhaustion, and the exhaustion may be translated as silence or peace, but it isn't and is only a reprieve. Or, when one is exhausted, looking at the

beach and the sea, there's great beauty, and it absorbs the mind for a limited moment. One thinks that is silence, but it is still artificial. Silence is not something outside. Any form of inducement to bring about silence is artificial and thus momentary. That silence or stillness is but the temporary ending of the chattering of a disordered mind; it is still a silence touched by time. Time is memory and if one gives continuity to this reprieve, because of one's desire to make it last, then, it simply becomes another toy, another trick of thought. Tranquillity is not the acceptance of sorrow, but the ending of sorrow.

Why isn't insight present for everybody from the beginning? First, it seems natural to most people that the animal instincts would take over. Because they can't see anything except their own darkness. And, the sun doesn't choose where to shine. In the dark, pointing to where doesn't matter because one can't even see. So, do they want to get out of it? Do they actually realize the state they are in, and deliberately want to get out of it? They can't help it, they can't escape that pattern. The truth does not interest many people. Most people refuse to see further than the experience of the senses. They could infer only as much as their consciousness allowed. So, they coin conclusions to experiences and what they want is to be entertained. The whole life, that movement is a constant accumulation of knowledge or whatever, and that accumulation is darkness. It means that they are constantly taking the wrong turn, again and again, all the time. So, as one lives in darkness, one has created the division in one's thoughts. And, the movement that

wants to live constantly in a state in which there is no division is still the movement of darkness. Can it put away division as long as it is divided? No, of course, it can't. So what is one to do? It comes to something which is: can one listen with one's darkness? In the darkness, which is constant, can one listen to that *someone*? If one can't, then, one is doomed. One's perpetually living in darkness, and there's a voice in the wilderness, and listening to that voice has an extraordinary effect, even in darkness. The voice is similar to the whispering of a grain of sand. Listening reaches the source of the movement. One has played all kinds of things in one's life, one has done everything that human beings have invented or are inventing. As one observes and listens to oneself without reaction, one sees there is only one thing, that there is this constant darkness and one is acting in it, whose center is the self. One has seen it logically, intellectually, scientifically, and philosophically. In one's whole life, one's movement is a constant accumulation in darkness. The funny thing is that some think that through accumulation, they can arrive at the highest places and can then step out of the darkness. Of course, that is still the movement of darkness, and such movement can never step out of itself. And so, one has seen the rationality of that statement, that voice, coming to the point that one can't even argue against it anymore. And, in this desert where there's no hope, a voice says that there is water. One must realize that this constant movement in darkness is one's life. It's not hope because one's left only with this enormous darkness and one is there, and that realization has immediate action, immediate effect. It is not hope, there's nothing left to cling to.

Yet, nobody seems to admit that. Because that means that one has reached the end of all hope, even one's hope is in darkness after all. That means the realization of that is the ending of becoming. And that someone says: that is natural. Does one listen to the silent voice or does one still cling on to that voice, to the words?

Silence is not the absence of sound but the beginning of listening. Listening not only to external noises but to listen to the center of sound production, to one's subjectivity as well. In that silence, listening reveals one's own sounds; the sounds of the heart, of one's breath, of one's thoughts. Those sounds are constantly passing by, dying as they live. They don't stay because staying is not something sounds do, they simply can't. Why does one give continuity to it? What makes the sound? Any sound comes from silence and leaves in silence. A sound needs to die, it needs silence. And, any artificial repetition of that sound is not it, it has gone already, only an empty shell of that sound. In that listening, there's no sound, because after all, listening can't be heard. Can one listen to the end of those sounds? For the mind that is disordered, silence becomes a means of bringing about order or escaping from disorder; an artificial silence then is imposed on disorder. The silence that is between two noises is not silence, just a mere reprieve. One's so concerned with the ideal of silence rather than be concerned with the real problem which is the agitated mind. If the basis for silence is harmony or order then when there is the understanding of disharmony or disorder, from that may flow naturally silence. Can one deal with what is and not with what might be?

Thought itself must be still, its sounds must have an end for silence to be. Then everything else will follow in time. Can one listen to the sounds of one's thoughts and not move away from them? Can one look at conflict? Because conflict is disorder. Conflict that is the contradictions of thought, the judgments, the killing, the wars, and whatever else. Can the mind, knowing what conflict is and what conflict does, end conflict? To be with that and watch it without expectation, listen with attention to those sounds because conflict can only end with its understanding. Ultimately, all is sound and one has his sounds. Silence gives the space to listen to all sounds. If one's mind has space, then in that space there is silence, and from that silence, everything else comes. One can listen and pay attention without resistance. In that listening, there's a seeing across the facts, and through the prejudices, there's completeness. It is the silence from which all thought can spring because it is not censored, judged, suppressed, or avoided; it has space for understanding. Silence is always now, and thought is not. Thought is always being of the past and cannot possibly enter into that silence. The new only becomes the old when thought touches it. All the religions have said this division exists: *god and son of god*. And, they say it can be overcome. They try to put that silent voice in a temple. But is it just the same pattern repeated, again and again? This ancient idea, likely present in Jewish and Indian religions, suggests that the manifestation of the highest occurs occasionally. Is it the privilege of the few, of the elite? If that is an exception then it is utterly silly, a childish game, like climbing a ladder. Caught in a room full of darkness, one can invent a lot

of images and silly games. One can see images, but one can't see beauty if there's no insight, no compassion, no love. The ones who pursue the career of spirituality are not humble. There is no other humility than true anonymity, out of silence. This is not an act to hide one's name, but that the name no longer has any importance. The vain are always vain, though they put on the garment of humility through cultivation. The so-called humble servant of god, the pope with his white clothes, being the head of a whole structure of power and worship is such an ingenious deception. The god that goes with all of this is disorder, a remembrance of an old idea, not the living thing.

In the end, it doesn't matter who said it. Either that *someone* or someone else. When there is insight there is no division. It is not "your" insight or "my" insight, it is insight. In that, there is no division. There is a perception that there is a different movement that is not dualistic, in which there's no division. In that movement, light and darkness are not divided, no darkness as darkness, no light as light, which neither is. That movement which is not of time, that movement doesn't breed division, that endless movement from the *ground of emptiness* that is not god or the son of god. That movement encompasses man, matter, and everything; only that movement is. Can the mind be of that movement? Because that is timeless and, therefore deathless. In that, physical death has no meaning because there's no division. If there is no death, there would be no life because life would be static. Living is dying and dying is living. To die gracefully is to live gracefully. Is the dy-

ing in division graceful? Is the living in division graceful? As it is now, for the ordinary man, life seems full of pain, sorrow, loss, and too short. And death has become difficult nowadays, man wants to bring with him responsibilities and ideals when he dies; death is now a problem. Yet, the grace of death is the grace of life. In that deathless movement, which has no cause, the greatest fear of life which is the idea of death is abolished, as the division between life and death is abolished. One has wiped away the whole sense of moving in darkness. There's this movement, everything emerges from it and dies back into it. What then is the significance of man with all his struggle, all his sorrow? It is naturally insignificant, nothing. He is in darkness and significance can only arise when the darkness is dispelled. The mind of the one who possesses this insight has dispelled darkness and gained an understanding of the ground from which a movement without time emerges. Thus, that mind itself embodies that movement. That would bring order to the brain, physically and mentally. That very perception must have an extraordinary effect on the brain. One has lived in fear, then suddenly, one sees there is no division and understands this whole thing. One has touched base with the ground, and sees this whole thing not just verbally or intellectually, one sees it as a tremendous reality, that of truth. How does that affect one's daily life?

When one is with sorrow until its end, action has taken place. A total action has taken place, which is the ending of that sorrow. The tranquility or silence is not something out there, somewhere

else, far away, but it is where the noise of the self is not. As one lives on this earth, one's daily life is constant aggression, this everlasting becoming, and all that has gone. What an extraordinary thing has taken place. That mind must be entirely different. Now what does such a mind do, or not do, in a world which is in darkness? Surely that mind does not do a thing; it does not enter into the movement of that world, which is the movement of darkness. And yet, there is a constancy that is not merely static, like an endless wave is. The ground movement is completely free, and it's not the becoming movement. The order of thought, when rational, is in order. But in contradiction, the order of thought breaks down, it has reached its limit, which is also the limit of knowledge. Thought works until it reaches a contradiction, and that's the limit. The mind being nothing, not a thing, and therefore empty of knowledge, is constantly pervaded by the quality of insight, which can't be limited by thought. So, if in one's daily life there is complete order, in which there is no disturbance, what is the relationship of that order to man's disorder? Can that silent movement of order, of that extraordinary something, affect the daily life of the rest of humanity, when one has inward psychological order? And so, the real question then is whether a human being in his ordinary life can be similar. Because if it is not then there's no point to the universal. For the ordinary man, living in this world, what is his relationship to that mind? Absolutely nothing, because he's living in darkness and in division and the other is not. So the relationship can only exist when he's no more in darkness. And so, there is no relationship. But, now there is division

between the ordinary man and that *someone* who does not look so different from anybody else. The everyday man asks that someone for compassion, the compassion in the darkness that he's used to; the man asks for contact, a relationship, however superficial, however slight. Yet, from darkness, he can't judge what compassion is. Thus, the question is: what does that man do to the other, to that someone? The man in darkness will probably react and respond either with hate or with his idea of love, which is basically the same, divisive. And so, man would probably worship, kill, or neglect him. All that is so foolish. The mind that has insight, has love and that passion for all things might manifest, that someone would not even call it compassion and probably the man would not be able to perceive it. That movement which is not of thought is beyond compassion and yet compassion might emerge out of it. Will the man, serious about his life, listen?

Because, other than that, there's no other relationship. There can only be a relationship when there is no division. And so, is the mere function of that someone is to try to awaken others by preaching? Because, the everyday man might take his time, but eventually, he will move away. That someone is not a function with merely writing, talking or preaching and those activities are such a small affair after all. That immensity which he is must have an effect. Man has reduced that someone to his pettiness and says: *you must do something; you must preach, write, heal, do something to help me to move out of darkness, it's your responsibility*. Does that someone have something much more than that, something immense? Does

this ground movement do something totally different to affect the consciousness of man? Since consciousness emerges from the ground movement, this activity is affecting all mankind from the ground, which includes the whole universe. And to reduce all that to these little activities is all too silly. Because he's blind in darkness, man has diminished such immensity, which includes all life, to a small thing. If it is a drama, it can only be a limited drama played by man, it cannot encompass this infinite life arising from the ground. The ground doesn't need the ordinary man or even that someone. But as that someone has touched the ground, the ground is employing him; he's part of the movement. Why should that someone do anything? That very doing nothing, may be the doing. Doing nothing for a purpose. Doing nothing makes possible the action of the ground. He's extremely active in doing nothing, he's that action which is beyond time. There's no result that can be asked from him, and he's not asking for any result. He's not interested in proving anything, it isn't a mathematical or a technical problem to be shown and proved.

For the man who is constantly operating in darkness, there's of course no significance. And so, the general view is that the universe has no meaning, things just happen and none of them has any meaning. None of them has meaning for the man who is in darkness, but that someone who has insight, says it's full of meaning, not invented by thought. He says there is something so immense, full of meaning beyond man's imagination. But the ordinary man is always translating it by wanting demonstration,

proof, or reward. That someone brings light and that's all he can do. Isn't that enough? Humanity sees immensity only as a very small thing and that immensity is the whole universe. The perception of it must probably have some tremendous effect on the ordinary man, and thus on society. Because mankind is on the course to its own destruction and if man doesn't listen to that immensity calling then it's all absolutely meaningless and utterly hopeless for him. So this immensity may divert the course of man. That someone, who is supposed to be an individual and as a single person who can't single-handedly divert the course of man, he says: *listen*. But man does not seem to listen. If man is serious, he will realize that whatever he does, which is sacrifice, practice, pray, renounce, even through starvation and torture, he is still operating in darkness. Then, that someone says: *don't act; you have nothing to do*. But that is probably to be misinterpreted as well by man, who does everything except cease the doing, wait, and see what happens. The tradition of various religions and their spiritual practices hasn't changed anything, the problem is still present and is becoming more and more urgent. It's so mechanical to simply transmit the knowledge or the practice of an old idea. It's also prone to a dangerous game of the old mind, a disguised will to power under the cover of religion. Wanting to impose a blind belief on others is something quite horrible. One doubts the veracity and by consequence the effectiveness of that convoluted and archaic knowledge along with its practices. How can that someone, if he has that intelligence, that compassion, that love, which is not of a country, a person, a religion, a savior, or an ideal, transmit

that purity, that pure energy to another? That question has never actually been solved because love is not cultivable. So, is that question even relevant at all?

Love is not something outside, such as nirvana or heaven, that which someone brings to man, that which is awakened in man, as a gift. Love is not “yours” or “mine”. It’s not personal and not something that belongs to anyone. Heading that way, thinking that there’s a how, man seems to have entered an alley where there’s no escape. And the ironic thing is that there’s a possibility of a real change in human nature. Yet that faculty for radical change is attributed to some outside agency; man looks to that and gets lost in that. If one doesn’t look to anybody, then solitude is common to everyone. It’s not loneliness, that feeling of total isolation, one is naturally all by oneself when one sees the stupidity and unreality of fragmentation and division. Intelligence says these are the facts, and perhaps some will capture it. That sense of solitude is not personal. Then, it seems sound to reason to go from the particular or the personal to the general and from the general to the universal, then to the absolute which means unrestricted, free from all limitations. Yet, as people, with a “how” in their mind, always want proof, reward, or any immediate effect on their daily lives, they think that the universal is so far off, that it’s of the most abstract, banal, and trivial generalizations. In reality, it’s the particular that’s the abstraction. In a particular man’s mind, he doesn’t know what love is, so he attempts to define it within the constraints of his limited knowledge, derived from his personal

experiences, and that's abstraction. Also, man usually generalizes his particular experience, which in fact is just the consequence of his conditioning. It's the generalization of fragments, not the actual commonality without fragmentation or limitation. A man may be married, have children, have a career, wear boastfully a certain attire, claim proudly to be of a certain nationality, and pray superstitiously to a certain god and that is all self-concern. That kind of concern implies a fragmentary activity, which then brings about social division. And so, the general is shaped by the particular. When a man is concerned with himself, it becomes a dividing force in the world, which is nationalism or any class, racial, linguistic, or religious division. That divisive society conditions man in return. It's necessary to see that thought has created both the particular and the general and moves between the two and in the same field of everyday existence. The problems of daily life, which are both particular and general can't be solved in that field. And so, it's to find out that the general and the particular are not divided at all: one is the rest of humanity. Only then, one can perhaps move from the general to inquire something deeper, which means all alone with all of one's mind, heart, and being, to touch base with intelligence, love, and compassion.

It's to see that compassion and love are universal, there's no division between "my" compassion and "your" compassion, nothing personal. And the perception of that is intelligence and without it, there would be no compassion, which means that intelligence is universal as well, not "my" intelligence and "your" intelli-

gence. Intelligence shows the facts and by that, it reveals the absolute, the ground, where there's no division. The particular is to die, the general is to die, and the universal, the universe is to die as well. Emptiness, which is universal, also dies to the ground. Everything is dying except the absolute. Everything arises and dies to the ground, which has no beginning and no ending. So, emptiness is a movement that emerges from stillness, from the absolute. It's not thought trying to bring about emptiness, it's not thought saying that the mind must be empty while sitting in a corner struggling to suppress its own movement. Only with intelligence, only with understanding, only when there's no division, there can be stillness. That emptiness has no center, no me, and all of its reactions. It has no cause and no effect, it's not a movement of thought, of time. This means, is the mind capable of that extraordinary stillness without any movement? When the mind is so completely still, there is a movement out of it. In that emptiness, there is a movement of timeless energy. This movement has tremendous energy, so, it can never be still. But, in that energy, it has a stillness and that is the quality of such mind. Is one willing to go that deep? If one is seriously concerned with life, with all the terrible things that are happening due to division, then there's a necessity for fundamental questions, not to be simply satisfied with superficial questions and answers of daily life. One must always be skeptical in these matters. In freedom, there must be a sparkle of doubt. In darkness, doubt is the listening to oneself, it brings great clarity. This doubt is an abomination for all authorities, all imposed gods. Can one live in this modern world with-

out belonging to any group, any nationality, to any religion? This means there must be freedom from reaction, from the limitation of thought, from all the movement of time, before one can really understand the empty mind, and the order of the universe, which is then the order of the mind. Are the universe and the mind that has emptied itself of all the idiocy, one? Is it the mind of the universe? That mind is the universal and absolute mind. Most religions have promised that the universal mind is always there. It's the desire for security and the idea that god is always there and with time, one must purify oneself to arrive at that. It's the mere projection of the movement of thought and of time that the eternal is in man. At present, there is no security in the physical world. Man is fighting all his life, battling economically, socially, philosophically, religiously, and as long as there's division, there can't be security. And that desire for security is divisive because psychological security is not real. Only when there's freedom, when the division has been seen through to its end, the human mind can be of that universal mind. There's complete security only in nothingness, therefore no fear. When thought is silent, it becomes an efficient tool for the mind to operate. Thought is necessary but trivial. When it realizes its own limitations, its own ending when it comes to continuity, when thought is still, there's observation, where no continuity is to be achieved. When thought is no more in conflict with itself, there are no more conflicting thoughts and each thought sees through its own end. There's only security in emptiness. In that complete security of a silent and empty mind, then one's activity in the world of reality is born of complete in-

telligence. That intelligence acts, therefore that mind is creating security in the world of reality. It changes the nature of thought and ultimately of action.

That is, to see the false as false, the truth in the false, and truth as truth. Such perception is that quality of intelligence which then acts. That action has no distortion, no remorse, no judgment. See what cannot be seen, hear what cannot be heard, and do what cannot be done. And that intelligence, through the subtle perception of the whole process of desire will always act sanely and rationally in dealing with desire. It doesn't leave a mark, a footprint on the sands of time. That intelligence can't be unless there is great compassion, love. There can't be compassion if the activities of thought are anchored in any particular ideology or faith, or attached to a symbol, an object, or a person. There must be freedom to be compassionate, to care. And where there is that passion, that very passion is the movement of intelligence. It's this perception which is always fresh because it has no past, no remembrance; it is intelligence born of compassion. And there is no freedom if there is no intelligence. Freedom, compassion, and intelligence, all come together with love. It's the flash of insight that illuminates the nature of darkness and by that, dispels it. It's the realization that there's no division, to see the nature of disorder and end it; the ending is the immediate perception, which is intelligence. Intelligence is inherent in compassion and love. All those are not cultivable, and yet they are real. Only the intelligence of love and compassion can solve the problems of

life. This intelligence can never be dull, it's forever new because there's an end to the known. Love can do nothing, it does not bring power or any kind of satisfaction, but without it, nothing can be done. Life would be empty just like a tank in a museum or a statue in a temple, like empty shells. Love is always fresh, new, young, innocent, incorruptible, and not contaminated by the past. Therefore, it must die to the memory of everyday experience, the past. So love and death must exist in that tremendous energy that is life. Then there is creation, that energy that has never been contaminated, it is not the result of effort. Love and death must be, for creation to be. The intelligence of love is a force as real as the force that keeps one to the ground. It's the force that gives rise to matter, to the conditions for life to be. It can't be bought on the market, in any school, or any church, and these are the last places where man would find it. Life in the blade of grass, life in the leaf, life in the tree, life in the bird, life in the man, life in the sea, life in the mountain, life in the star, etc. Life, the thing that lives, man may kill it, but it's still there in the other. That creation has very little significance for the man in darkness. It grows only when the mind is free and that's why there must be freedom to love, to care. If love is just a mere abstraction, caught and caged in an ideal, then man will die as a miserable human being, not knowing that immensity that is life. It is the most sacred thing in life, the immeasurable. The fullness of life is in the unknown, in the present, and only the mind that has seen the significance of time, death, and love can explore it. Only when emptiness is the mind, it is completely open, secure, and highly sensitive, only

then can there be creation, and only then can there be the joy of living. Creativeness is a state of being in which there's no sorrow, where the self is absent. It's to be in that state in which truth can come into being, not the mere act of artistic or inventive endeavors or even beyond that of procreation. Truth comes into being only when there is a complete cessation of the movement of thought. Unless all that is realized, and deeply understood, man can't enter into this world, into the world of creation.

Love provides shelter and that shelter is happiness. If one pursues happiness, life becomes very shallow. After all, happiness is a thing that comes incidentally, it is a by-product; when one goes after happiness, it eludes. If one is conscious that one is happy, one is no longer happy. The more one wants it, the more one searches for it, the more unhappy one remains. When one knows that one is joyous, surely at that very moment one has ceased to be joyous. So, happiness is something that cannot be pursued, any more than one can pursue peace. If one pursues peace, the mind becomes stagnant, and one's life becomes static in meaning. Because peace is a living state, understanding what it is requires a great deal of intelligence, inquiry, and hard work. It's not merely sitting down and wishing or praying for peace. Doing so is no different from the wish for peace of a schoolboy, beauty queen, or that of a leader or a pope. Similarly, happiness requires immense understanding, insight, and hard work. It's much more important than the hard work one gives to earning a livelihood, far more. But, if one is merely seeking happiness, then one might

just as well take a drug, it would be easier to forget momentarily about sorrow. Man wants methods, systems, and pills, to make him immediately happy; it is the immediacy that man is after. As in non-violence, a mind that seeks peace and establishes itself in the routine of the idea of peace is not a peaceful mind. It has merely disciplined itself, compelled itself to conform to a pattern, and such a mind is not a living mind, it is not innocent, fresh, and free, it acts like what a machine is supposed to do. Only the mind that is innocent and free to discover, is creative. It's a mind that is learning and therefore beyond time. Like a child, curious and eager, not yet conditioned and distracted, wanting to find out what the story is about, paying attention to it. It's not the mind that goes to temples, not the mind that reads books and quotes everlastingly or gives moral lessons, not the mind that says prayers that repeat endlessly; that mind is frightened at heart and blind with knowledge. It's the mind that has to be completely alone, because only then can it go beyond itself. In that solitude, it listens to all things, the whispers of the world, the chants of the birds, the song of the sea, the tunes in the winds. One must have an acute sensitivity to find out. In that listening is the greatest miracle because the very act of listening is itself action, and one doesn't have to do a thing. One sees without a shade of doubt what an extraordinary thing it is to live, with actuality, not with words and symbols, to live with death and therefore to live every minute in a world where there is always freedom from the known. It is only such a mind that can see what is truth, what is beauty, and that which is eternal.

On a summer afternoon, the sky looks like it is to crumble. Maybe the soil craves for water after the drought. Specks of rain and the breeze caress the skin. Sometimes there's a flash of light, then a gong from above. Is all of this a calling to listen? Listen to the sounds of the trees moving, listen to its leaves asking for wetness, listen to all its tingling yet calming glory. Everything seems to have a sound. That weeping willow near the lake, in its solitude, facing the rain pouring down. It must have seen many storms over its years, standing there alone in dignity. The heavy drops have a sound as well, a quality of silence, pulsating. And then the rain calms down, like a spectacle coming to an end. Leaving a taste of abundance and fullness, for all the living to cheer for fresh air. One hears the birds starting to whistle. Then the gray sky turns yellowish, as if the sun wants to shine again, covering the lake with its light, for the flowers to bloom once more, as if there was no yesterday. No picture, no reason, no virtue could ever reach it. It's an afternoon that has never been. Maybe only a silent mind can listen, following the melody of those sounds. It has this extraordinary quietness. Such distinction among all men's made noises. Strangely, nature's call seems gentler. Noises of people quarrelling, squabbling resume, amplified by their machines. Asking on what to do with the seeds of their souls. Babbling with knowledge as if it's life. Speaking in abstraction of things that just are. One wonders why so many are out of tune. Living blindly in the face of beauty, to the point of reducing it to a dreary noise, while disturbing the sacred harmony of life. And what if the seed needs water to sprout? Maybe the soul needs the care of quietness. In order

to see the reflection of the sound of oneself, in oneself. For truth is a land where the free wanders in emptiness. That emptiness which must come and not reached. That ground of emptiness is beyond love and existence, and thought can never encompass it. Even goodness emanates from there and the personal god has no place there. It is beyond living and dying. It is the beginning and the ending of everything and there is nothing beyond that. Yet, man is doing everything contrary to the ground. It is beyond the will of man, and blessed is the one to whom it is gifted. In nothingness, everything is. The universe is filled with sound. This sound has its own silence. All living things are involved in this sound of silence. To be attentive is to hear this silence and move with it. If one understands sound, in that hearing, there's silence and if one listens to that silence, in that, there's the sound. There's no separation, no division, they both go together. Only that mind can see the meaning of existence and understand that if there were no silence, there would be no sound.

EPILOGUE

Will man be able to live happy?

Like a grain of sand, man has had lifetimes. Conquering the seas, reaching mountain tops, diving into the deepest oceans, flying through the sky, exploring space, passing by countless sunrises and sunsets. Drifting through life, gone with the wind and carried by the waves, ending as part of the earth, to become a rock, and then to dissolve again into grains of sand. Ages of suffering and uncountable years of effort, supposedly to become wiser. In every man is a story of billions of years, just like the tale of the stars. Even the greatest myths, the grandest legends, or the most grandiose architectures ultimately fall back into nothingness. With time, everything invented by man will sink back into the abyss. Bringing the whole past along the way. And yet, why is man still suffering for those ideals? What will make man change? Man has had thousands upon thousands of years of suffering and man has not changed. More suffering won't make a dent in this problem of life. What will make you realize the appalling situation that we have brought about?

No system, organization, law, or any kind of external imposition can stop the division. No intellectual, scientific, or romantic

conviction can stop wars and the killing of man. What will make you turn your face against all divisions? Division only comes to an end when the rest of humanity sees the truth that as long as there is division in any form, there must be struggle, conflict, and pain. So, you are responsible, not only to your children but to the rest of humanity. And, how can we help the children to be alert and sensitive if we are insensitive and ignorant ourselves? Because being insensitive, you will make those innocent creatures that you have brought into the world conform to your petty beliefs, and once their turn comes, they will be doing the same things that you have done, which means repeating the same mistakes over and over again, suffering endlessly until the end of humanity. If there is to be any kind of social change, there must be a different kind of education so that children are not brought up to conform. But ultimately, unless you deeply understand the nature of conflict, not as an intellectual concept or an ideal, but feel this reality like the beating of your heart, in your way of looking at life, in your actions, you are supporting the organized murder which is called war.

The world is sick and there's no one outside you to help you except yourself. Man is slipping in our times through the perversion of his relationship to nature. By creating structures, mental and technological to help ourselves face the laws of nature, we have alienated ourselves from the nature to which we belong. Man is being dragged along by the machines, building arms that can destroy an entire planet, destroying one's own living environment. All because of the darkness of one's own ignorance. And, nowa-

days, the complex of machines, endowed with its enormous computing capacity, superior reactivity, and imprinted with human biases, would create its own god, and we might become its slaves unless there is a radical transformation in human consciousness. As long as you are in disorder, you will create the external prophet, and he will always be misleading you. Your mind is in disorder and no one on this earth or in heaven can bring about order to it. Unless you understand the nature of disorder, the nature of conflict, the nature of division, you will always remain in disorder, at war. You cannot find any solution outside. Any practices, like going to the church, the saint, the guru, the shrink, which provide temporary reprieve, are not it. It's entirely superficial. The atmosphere, the structure, and the scenery can make you feel quiet for a moment, but that is just incense and incense evaporates. This urge, this demand, this longing to be totally secure in our relationship with everything, this desire to be certain. Most of us begin with certainty and as we grow older the certainty changes to uncertainty, and we die with uncertainty. But if one begins with uncertainty, doubting, questioning, asking, demanding, with real doubt about man's behavior, about all the religious rituals, their images, and their symbols, then out of that doubt comes the clarity of certainty.

A book is just words and words are not reality. The word is not the actual, and no book can contain the truth because truth is a living thing. What we do not know, we try to understand and give it words, and make it into a continuous noise. And so, people

have been saying and praying using words that they themselves don't understand, a mere repetition. When religion is based on a book, you have people who are dull, biased, intolerant, and narrow-minded. The book says so and that's that, they just stick the words in their mind, like a program to be installed on a machine. They believe the book and the words contain the unalterable, fixed truth. Religions keep us in the bondage of ignorance, and if they allow doubt then the whole thing collapses. And so we clog our brain, with the past, something dead. We think the word or knowledge is psychologically of great importance, but it is not. You can't ascend through knowledge because there must be an end to knowledge for the new to be. The problem of creating something new, but is consistent with everything that has been seen before, is contradicting and is extremely difficult. Don't get caught in the words, be one with emptiness. Because new is a word for something which has never been before. And that area cannot be understood or grasped by words or symbols, it is there beyond all remembrances. Words cannot measure the immeasurable clear night sky full of stars above the mountains. Away from the noises and the blinding yet faint lights of cities. It is as if man has stolen the light from the stars to fuel his desire for light in darkness. Man, living in cities has lost that majestic scenery. We've lost the view of that immense sparkly sky, a view as if every night brings you to the edge of the universe. Yet, far away, there are these soaring mountains and above, the Milky Way among other galaxies moving in an orderly fashion in the heavenly sky. The immense night sky always reminds us just how small we are here on earth. That

silence can never be measured by words. We ourselves must be sensitive to beauty and to ugliness, not only the beauty that man has created but also the beauty of nature.

A good book, like a good piece of music, may have its peculiar vibrations of sound because it might resonate in one's mind and not invent new fetters for one; it has no other pretense. Read it again if you want to, but understand it, not to analyze or to memorize. Ultimately, what does philosophy mean after all? It's the love of wisdom, the wisdom of life to be perceived, the love of insight, the insight on truth, the love of truth, the living truth, the love of life. It's not the worship of books, words, ideas, theories, knowledge, academia, or debate. It's a living thing and philosophy is the learning of life. So, put down the book and its words, forget it, and start to observe, to live in honesty with yourself. Will you go beyond the word and work at it? Like a star, the size of a grain of sand in the sky, standing alone, shining from all angles, you, in darkness, have to be a light to yourself, and it is one of the most difficult things in life. Maybe the wisdom of a grain of sand echoes through the compassionate eyes of the dog, a dear friend. It is the companion who shares, the selfless contentment of enough. Maybe it is the cat, who comes and goes, like a breeze of fresh air, free from attachments. Maybe it is the tree, standing alone with dignity, enduring the storms of life, with such stillness. The world of creation, of life is the unknown, free from any knowledge and full of wisdom. One's eyes have not yet seen, and one's ears haven't yet heard all the wonders of life on earth, nor has one's

mind entered into the heart of man. Will you be serious about your life? Or, are you just a dream? Will the dusk of the ideals fade away like a dark cloud passing by?

Can there be a flowering of humanity?
Will you bloom out of this arid darkness?
Will you wake up?

*May the one who cares be happy.
With all heart, with all mind, this gift is for you.*