50 minutes Conversation
with
Giampiero Arciero
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Part I

From Psychiatry , to Postrationalist Psychotherapy, to Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Aníbal Henriques: Giampiero thank you so much for your willingness to have this conversation. Your training as a psychiatrist started with a focus on severe disturbances, like psychosis and schizophrenia, correct?

Giampiero Arciero: Right.

A.H.: And how did you come to embrace the Cognitive Post-rationalist Therapy theories and practice in the nineties?

G.A.: Well that was the eighties.

A.H.: The eighties, yes. Late eighties.

G.A.: Early.

A.H.: Early? I'm sorry I'm misinformed… The eighties, ok.

G.A.: The eighties, ok. I went to Switzerland to work with psychotics because at the time we didn't have psychiatric hospitals in Italy, they had been closed by law. But I already was at University of Rome doing an internship in psychiatry, and there I met Guidano.

A.H.: Ok, that was the eighties.

G.A.: That was the eighties. Guidano and I began a philosophical conversation about Kant – because in the meantime, during my medical studies, I continued to study under the direction of a philosopher , most of all phenomenology. Guidano and I started a friendship over our long lasting discussion about Kant and about Popper – everyone read Popper at the time. So this ongoing conversation was, of course, not only about epistemology and psychosis but about human being more in general – Guidano was a thinker. So through this conversation I ended up in Santa Barbara,California, where I met and worked with Mike – Michael Mahoney – and Oscar Goncalves. It was part of a wider conversation that took form in the summer of '88, in the first summer school here in Portugal. I was supposed to go back from the US to join the group but I had green card problems and could not leave the country. You too were part of this conversation.

A.H.: Yes, this conversation in 1988.

A.G.: I was supposed to come here in Portugal that summer. Everybody was speaking about constructivism. There was a great excitment. This same year I

met Les ,Bob,Jeremy, and a lot of other people … all the people that were trying to be part of this new movement that was constructivism. But my personal development took shape most of all in the conversation - during the nineties – with Vittorio and Michael. It was a conversation where I maintained my philosophical position – the philosophical position and tradition that I was trained in – hermeneutical phenomenology. So I maintained also a critical stance towards constructivism and its cognitive basis in terms of a much more experiential focused – using term that…

A.H.: 'Experiential' is a risky term.

G.A.: Well I'm using here a term that for example Les Greenberg likes a lot but also , and for different reasons, those cognitivists that practice the so called Experiential-Focused Cognitive Therapy. For a phenomenologist the attempt to go back to the lived experience is the real theme of the research and of the analysis. The Philosophical maxim is "Back to the things themselves". Of course experience is cognition, experience is imagination, experience is body training and so on ,but the task of phenomenology is to bring lived experience to language - not as an object of knowledge but in itself, ok? And the… I think that at the core of our conversation – most of all with Mike and with Vittorio until the last years of their lives and often also with Les – I think that the basic drive of our conversation was not a desire for a technique, not a need for a theory but a deep curiosity, a strong passion about the mystery of human experience.

A.H.: That was emerging…

G.A.: Yeah that was also the big drive for all of us ..

A.H.: Ok, good. Time passes, and we finally meet and I find that you also moved a lot in your thinking, in your way of conceptualizing our practice. How much distance are you feeling nowadays from Cognitive Post-Rationalist Therapy main distinctive features and principles? Or in what direction did you moved?

G.A.: Yeah. I think my first book was my last attempt to conciliate phenomenology – in terms of hermeneutic phenomenology – with theoretical approach to psychology that was basically the mainstream for Guidano, a theoretically, biologically oriented approach to psychology. And if my first book was the last attempt in this respect it was also a failure because it tried to reconcile two traditions that cannot be reconciled: the tradition of natural sciences and the tradition of historical-social sciences . They are two different postures, two different positions of investigation; they can speak to each other but one cannot be reduced to the other. They are supported by, they are based on two different ontologies so that they cannot be reassumed in one theory. The awareness that emerged from that book changed my direction of research. The Constructivist World Congress of 2003 in Bari, organized by the Institute co-founded with Guidano that I direct, was really the public exposition of this transformation and the definition of the difference with Guidano's Constructivism. In Bari I took a very clear position. The Post-Rationalism of Guidano it's now part of our history, the history of the school, but does not inspire our conceptual research or our scientific research, it's just an historical step that is part of our tradition.

A.H.: Ok, so you developed, you moved.

G.A.: Yeah.

Part II

My Clinical Practice Distinctive Features.

Caring ,treating and effectiveness

A.H.: Is it possible for you to describe the main distinctive features of your practice?

G.A.: Well I think that in a nutshell, I think that the basic attention in my clinical practice is to the first-person experience, and when I say the first-person experience I mean the experience of the client or of the patient. That means that only the client can offer testimony of his own experience, can have access to his own experience. Therefore as therapists we should be at the service of the story of the client in terms of helping him to re-interpret his own experience through a science that is capable of giving him fresh access to his life without forcing it in pre-established theories. This science and the methodology that comes with it can not be based on a theoretical attitude but has to take its own categories from the client's story. This means: "Back to the things themselves" and this is the main difference with other approaches. Typically theories have an observational point of view and understand a person's story in the light of theoretical principles and categories related to them.

A.H.: Ok.

G.A.: What I'm proposing is exactly the opposite. You are at the service of the story of the client and your science is finalized to make the client more capable to access his own, her own, experience. We call this science hermeneutics.

A.H.: Hermeneutics. And how effective is this science – hermeneutics – with the variety of clinical experiences you have?

G.A.: Well I think that … I can underline two points, ok? First one: this science is a very old science, it comes with the Bible, so it's a science that has developed conceptual tools to deal with human understanding – the first point. Second point: it's possibile to access different kinds of disorders. If the client has the capability to appropriate his own experience - that is not always the case! - and has the possibility to open himself to the world and to the other through language, then hermeneutics can be effective. So, of course, there are pathologies where that is very difficult - for example psychosis, schizophrenia, ciclotimic disorders in the acute phases – but I would say that in all the disorders that we usually work with in psychotherapeutic practice this methodology is effective.

A.H.: From the point of view of either the therapists or the client?

A.G.: Well I think that… you know, when we speak about effectiveness there is a lot to say, but I would say one thing, one basic thing. I think that everybody knows

that philosophy – antique philosophy – was first of all not a theoretical discipline but a practice of living,a way to take care of the self. So in the Letter Number Seven of Plato – it's not sure if it was Plato's or from the school of Plato, but let say that it's Plato's – speaking about care, Plato says something very precise: he says "in order to take care of somebody in terms of therapeutical care – this person has to be ready to change life". So the effectivity of a therapeutic encounter is always… I would say: it takes two.

A.H.: It takes two. You don't treat people, you care for people as a therapist? Would you say this, as a therapist you don't treat people, you don't treat patients, you care for them?

G.A: Ah… ok, this word care it's a… in German we can say *sorgen* or *bekümmerung*, that means being preoccupied, attentive, taking care in a much wider way. The Latin roots it's *curare* – *cura* – it's something that you bring to, that you provide for, but it means also a worried search,ok? And you… when you take care of somebody that means you enter in his life and you try to relieve from his life the suffering he is unable to take care of himself.

Part III

Acceptance and Empathy

A.H.: Acceptance is one of the common factors in psychotherapy. Would you talk of acceptance here? As you talk of caring…

G.A: Acceptance in which terms?

A.H.: As the facility, the way the therapist works to turn his patient more acquainted, more comfortable with himself, with his experience.

G.A.: Well… for me is not really that.

A.H.: Because is a more common factor…

G.A.: Yeah. But what I mean about… because here, of course, care, the care process goes with the hermeneutical method, ok? This is my way.

A.H.: Yes. Is different, it's a different way from other phenomenological ways like Rogers or…

G.A.: Yeah, yeah. This is a phenomenological hermeneutical approach ok? And this is a very clear distinct ontology and methodology of interpretation, ok?

A.H.: Ok. Empathy takes a role there?

G.A.: No. No, no.

A.H.: Not in the way Les or others…

G.A.: No, for me empathy it's a phenomenon but it's just that. I mean I can put myself in the shoes of another person but I'm always me. And one of the great scholars of empathy - Edith Stein - used to say that "not even for God the experiences of the other can become its own ". So, it's a… when I put myself in the shoes of the other person I am always with my feet in those shoes. So my

point about this…

A.H.: Difference.

G.A.: Yeah and this is also the link between *bekümmerung* and *cura* and… and hermeneutics ...it is that one of the basic problems underlying the suffering – the suffering that we face – is the fact that the experience of living get separated from the ability to account for it , of giving sense to it. So I have a particular experience that I cannot give words to , that I cannot recognize ok? Or maybe to this experience I give a completely different meaning; a meaning that is not in consonance with the meaning of the experience itself. Of course,this separation implies both , that Selfhood takes form at every moment of everyday living as the determination of oneself and that Identity is shaped through language as the narrative reconfiguration of this pre-reflexive meaning. All that implied, suffering arises when there is a break between these two levels:a separation between Selfhood and Identity. This is where interpretation comes about. It is exactly in between these two levels:between the pre-reflexive meaningful experience and his configuration through language.

A.H.: Oh, very well. So you have just finished to describe a central part of your methodology.

G.A.: Yeah and a central part also of my way of conceiving the problem of meaning. This is an elaboration that goes… overcomes the neo-Kantism of the beginning of the nineteen-hundreds, phenomenology –husserlian phenomenology – and arrives to linguistic, through the general linguistic of Benveniste, through the philosophy of Heidegger and through the elaboration of linguistic in Paul Ricoeur. The relationship between emotioning-acting and speaking can be also articulated in terms of neural underpinnings – but this is another story…

A.H.: You put the central process much more inside, between patient and therapist.

G.A.: No.

A.H.: No?

G.A.: No. The story of the patient is of the patient. The process, I say the encounter of the therapist with the client is the offering by the patient of his own story in order for the therapist to make something from this story, but the story is of the client. Of course the process – that is the encounter, the hermeneutical encounter – I would say takes plays as *logos*, in the sense of the ancient Greek way of saying discourse. It is something that arises in between the two of us but starts from the story that I am at service to as an interpreter and that gives me the categories to be interpreted. The *logos* exhibit a matter in such and such a way and the matter thus called addresses the questioning and therefore the possible interpretations. In this sense *logos* is access.

Part IV

Facing other Models

A.H.: Good, interesting. Giampiero are there models which you consider in accord with your methodology?

G.A.: I don't think so, although I have a lot of good friends in the field. Just for a very simple fact that the ontology that is at the base of contemporary psychology and psychotherapy is a completely different ontology than the ontology that I'm implying, that I'm speaking about. The ontology that is at the base of contemporary psychology and psychotherapy is an ontology that utilizes the categories of understanding of a "thing" to speak about the person, so… my… – and I cannot elaborate on that because we would go far afield. The ontology I am speaking about has at the center the *Werfrage* – the question about the "who" – rather than the question concerning the "what".

A.H.: Even in the humanistic schools, aren't they closer to this…

G.A.: Well, in reality I think that maybe in some remote way Gendlin and maybe… maybe… Medard Boss a Swiss author that studied with Freud,Jung and Heidegger, developed an approach that is close to what I'm speaking about.

A.H.: Ok… Let's speak about effectiveness, could you say what effectiveness or an effective session or an effective process means for you nowadays?

G.A.: Well it's that, it's… give back to the client the possibilities to be, the freedom to be.

A.H.: As they experience themselves…

G.A.: Yeah because if suffering is always the reduction of the possibility to act and to feel it is always a loss of freedom. So … for me effective process in therapy and an effective therapy in terms of successful – I would say an happy therapy – would be…

A.H.: An happy therapy?

G.A.: Yeah.

A.H.: You wouldn't think of submitting your methodology to the empirical terms that are nowadays the mainstream?

G.A.: I think this is an incredible mistake, it's an enormous mistake because there is the pretense to measure the embodied soul with the parameters of "well being". I will not even venture on discussing the definition of "well being" because for me one of the most important points here is that when we do psychology we cannot mix languages. When we do psychology we cannot mix the psychological language with the biological language or with the statistical language. When we do psychology we can speak with the neuroscientists - and we have to speak with the neuroscientists, with the biologists, with the psychiatrists , with the statistics- but I'm defending a new age of psychology where the central theme should be the discourse about the soul - as the old word says .The term Psycho-logy comes from the greek *logos psuches,* It means

the conversation, the discourse, the access to the embodied soul. An access that should have as the royal road the first-person experience instead that computers or machines or mathematical systems as models. We have forgotten that after Wundt, psychology has been turned into a branch of biology. So I think that with the arising of neurosciences time has come for psychology to reflect on its own origins to find a new impetus for conceptualization and research .

A.H.: You don't fear that psychology again lost itself in this openness to every discipline?

G.A.: I think that it has lost itself because it never was at home before.

A.H.: Never was?

G.A.: At home.

A.H.: At home.

G.A.: Because… yeah with Wundt ,psychology has been invaded by the methodology of the natural sciences transforming itself in a theoretical science. So I think that a theoretical psychology is totally useless for psychoterapeutic practice.

Part V

After constructivism

Neuroscience integration, and Psychotherapy training

A.H.: Ok, interesting. Tell me how difficult is it to train young therapists in this methodology. How complex, how difficult is it for comparison to other models, from the simplest to the complex.

G.A.: Well, I think that we have to reflect on that because for a lot of people doing therapy is to perform a technique. Already *Mike (Michael Mahoney)* and Vittorio *(Vittorio Guidano)* also, but Mike most of all was against…

A.H.: Against this training…

G.A.: Against also to reduction of psychotherapy to performance, to techniques ok?

A.H.: And yet, young people are eager for these techniques…

G.A.: Yeah, because young people -but not only them - want to have a few tools to feel safe ..

A.H.: To feel safe…

G.A.: To feel safe when they are faced with the client. So, the concepts are relevant only if they can be easily applied.You can see where the eagerness for techniques comes from.This is the core of the theoretical approach.The client is an object of the application of the theory that I have in advance.Therefore what makes a theory

popular and a trainee happy is often the ready to use possibilities that the theory offers;it is its translatability in a technique that can be applied and re-applied.

A.H.: He's happy, he's safe than he can do something…

G.A.: He can act in a way that is effective for itself.

A.H.: And you dare to counteract this? You dare?

G.A.: I think that – and I'm sure that every therapist that does his work with science, consciousness and understanding knows that - you must have a sensitivity, a capability that has to be worked out in time. It's a practical science that you have to learn from the everyday praxis that exposes you to different concrete situations and calls you into play. Everyday you make your instruments more refined, more acute, and your instruments are your sensibility to the personal stories of human beings. So this is something that you don't learn with technique and I'm against this way of teaching, as a way to – I don't have the exact word in English but – as a way to pass to the students just techniques as..

A.H.: Like a map…

G.A.: Yeah, like a prepackaged map , where instead the personal responsibility is at the stake.

A.H.: But, anyway you have to teach them and you teach them what principles, kind of principles?

G.A.: Well, I teach them - my training is a four year training - and I teach them, first of all I deconstruct…what I do, I deconstruct the teaching from universities …

A.H.: Some aspects…

G.A.: Some aspects…in terms of giving critical and alternative perspectives of the same issues and then we start to analyze clinical cases and then we start to do personal therapy in the group.

A.H.: Oh interesting and they are available for that?

G.A.: Oh yeah, we are small groups of fifteen people, so this is along the four years. So when they come out from our schools they are being trained conceptually, clinically and also personally.

A.H.: And there you can find a lot of resistance and difficulties on your trainees or are they open to this experience?

G.A.: Yeah, there are people, trainees, that need a one to one therapy – some of them – but to the majority of them, the encounters during the training are enough.

A.H.: Do you believe guiding principles and change process fundamentals will take place over schools and models as an evolution of psychotherapy as some our fellows believe?

G.A.: I'm not sure about it.

A.H.: About the belief…

G.A.: …I think that the great curiosity about the soul – and when I speak about the soul I intend something akin to what Aristotle called *kinesis tou biou ,* the incessant ,meaningful movement of the human life as embodied by each of us , this great curiosity, it's a constantly renewing duty. Every generation I think has to take the burden and also has to embrace the destiny of bringing forth an heritage received as a gift and as a debt from the past generations.The responsibility and the duty of every generation is not only to deconstruct antique principles but to rework them out. So, let's hope that what I'm saying tonight the next generation of students that I am training will be able to transform and to create new openings, new perspectives.

A.H.: Let's hope.

G.A.: Let's hope.

A.H.: You have entitled your Lisbon workshop first day as *After constructivism the new conceptual frame of Post-Rationalist Psychology*. Could you tell us in advance what will be the main focus of this theme, the new conceptual frame of post-rationalist?

G.A.: Yeah ok…in reality I'll try to show that constructivism in all different declination today it's just a remake of what Natorp – the conceptual father of constructivism - wrote at the beginning of the last century. The conceptual father of constructivism was a neo-Kantian philosopher from Marburg University and he wrote a very important book: *Allgemeine Psychologie* (General Psychology) never translated into English.The principles that define the different schools of constructivism are just declinations of this extremely advanced form of neo Kantism. So tomorrow I will try to show that there is another way to understand constructivism certainly different from the Neo Kantian approach - and of course this other way will bring us also to a new perspective on post-rationalism very far from Guidano's.

A.H.: Yes. You recently published a very interesting article integrating psychology and neuroscience about individual variability in emotion processing, mapping individual differences, results showing new light on the variability in neural network of emotion - right? What could be the main implication in clinical work? Is there any implication?

G.A.: This last fMRI paper of our lab shows that the difference in the partner's perception of the loved one's pain is associated with a predominant way of being emotionally situated. Moreover, it opens up the possibility to explore the fascinating hypothesis that different ways of feeling pain can be associated with changes in brain anatomy. But beyond the clinical and the research interest this paper is a clear example of how a new way of understanding psychology can open a new conversation with neuroscientists .Through this study we basically bring within neuroscience the problem of inter-individual differences of the personal reaction to a loved one's pain. Of course we are confronted as therapists with this kind of problem on a everyday basis but usually this is not the main focus of a neuroscientist. So I think that bringing first person experience to the party we can open a very interesting dialogue with the neurosciences that will be helpful for psychology.Infact, on the one hand the neurosciences, throwing new light on the neural underpinnings of human experience, will force psychology to a rigour that psychology is not used to.On the other hand psychology bringing real life to the fore will push neuroscientists to face the humanity in flesh and blood beyond the reduction of humanity to a model.

A.H.: To a model…

G.A.: To a lab model…that is to… Well, subjectivity it's plurality of subjects, it's not reducible to one normative subject, to a model of subjectivity.The methodology of neuroscience, of the natural sciences, is obliged to do so.

A.H.: Yes. we are used to hearing about crisis in psychotherapy, you yourself are not so happy with developments that we see around. What's your best hope for psychotherapy?

G.A.: Oh well, my best hope it's that psychotherapists leave forever theory and start to understand that their science – and I underline science – is a practical science that has to develop a methodology of a practical science. *Metodos* means the way forward,the right path to deal with the matter,and the matter at core of such a science is the first-person experience.

A.H.: Ok, that's you best wish, your best hope.

G.A.: Yeah.

A.H.: Thank you so much Giampiero, I'm happy now. Maybe we could open to some questions of our fellows…

Part VI

Participants Questions

Teresa Alfama: I can go first. Well, I…You respond to many of the questions I had, so there are not so many now. I would like to ask you about your recent book *Selfhood Identity and Personal Styles.* It says, *"the hidden dialectic between sameness and ipseity, only discloses itself with vibrant clarity in the experience of novelty"* - and I would like to ask you to comment a little about these concepts of *ipseity*, *sameness* and how *novelty* brings clarity to them.

G.A.: Well I try very… – well that's a hard thing, that's a hard question because of the difficulty in giving a concise answer.

T.A.: Ok.

G.A.: So if we understand *ipseity* as the process or as the experience of being always and every moment oneself, ok? always and at every moment we are in the state that we are. This is true for me and this is true for all the persons, ok? Everybody at the same moment can say myself. Ok? This is the concept of *ipseity* - so *ipseity* happens at every moment - and we are, all of us, at every moment ourselves: of course everybody in his own way. The Latin word is *Ipse*, *Ipse* means, *soi-même*, myself, myself at this moment. Ok? So, in this happening at every moment of myself, along my life span I can sediment experiences, that means, way of being can be sedimented. Imagine for example to learn music, to start with the…how do you say?

T.A.: Piano…

G.A.: *Solfeggio*, and then the *solfeggio* is sedimented and then start with something more complex. So the happening of our lives sediments in way of being, in tendencies to be.We call that, *Sameness*.In everyday life you are exposed to what happens - that means that at every moment of your life you are exposed to the encounter of the world and of the other, but at the same time you bring forth your history - so, you have this dialectic between your historical dispositions and your happening, between *Sameness* and *Ipseity*. This dialectic is not exposed, it's not clear,it is not manifest because the happening of Self - *Ipseity* - is at the same time coinciding with the historical disposition to happen in a certain way – *Sameness.* But is never the same.

T.A.: Ok.

G.A.: Ok? It's a repetition that is never the return to the same. This is a concept of Kierkegaard -Kierkegaard was the first one to focalize on what he called *repetition* .Now, in the moment of novelty, the extreme novelty - you can just imagine one of

the most common, falling in love or a death, a sudden death of a loved person. This novelty, shows you the *ipseity* without the support of the *sameness.* There is nothing in your story that can function as a basis for this *ipseity*, *ipseity* is naked ,exposed. Ok? In this moment "*the hidden dialectic between sameness and ipseity discloses itself with vibrant clarity".*

T.A.: Yes thank you. I think I understand it.

G.A.: Ok.

T.A.: I would like now to ask you in short to explain to us what are the main distinctions about the *Inward* and *Outward* inclination just to explain to the colleagues and to introduce the concepts of *Inward* and *Outward*.

G.A.: In reality…let's start from… again *ipseity*, ok? So *ipseity* – that means being oneself – it's never confined to the body, never confined to the organism. My organism – different from the organism of biology – doesn't stop in the skin. My eyes are on the door, on your face; my possibility to reach is on the table. Ok? So, of my *ipseity* it is part the world and the other. I could never have being in this state of being without you being here...

T.A.: Yes…

G.A.: You are part of this state of my being, so this state of being emerges because you are here, if here there were other people another state of being emerges. Ok? So, the central focus here is that being is always being in the world. Now, I can orient myself in my every day life focusing on the world, or focusing on my flesh, ok? If I focus on the world that does not mean that I don't have access to my flesh but only that I focus in a predominant manner "outside" - on the other or on the world - in order to situate myself. I have called this inclination *Outwardness*. Ok? The other way around it's *Inwardness* .But when I say *Inwardness* that implies always an *Outwardness* too, and vice versa. It's like *Yin* and *Yang* if you want, just to give you a metaphor…

T.A.: Ok…

G.A.: They are not categories in the usual sense, but predominant ways of situate yourself in everyday life and they can change during the day and during different periods of life.

T.A.: Even the inclinations in the people can change?

G.A.: Of course, yes because it's *Yin* and *Yang*, in this terms. Because it's not an absolute thing, everybody have the possibility to utilize one or/and the other.

T.A.: Yes but one could think that has the main inclination to, towards…

G.A.: That can be in a period of life, but then in another period of life can change.

T.A.: That's…

G.A.: Imagine for example, you were very inclined to orient yourself related to the context and to other people, and then your boyfriend dies and then after six month your best friend dies and then again after six months another person that you loved dies. This is life…I'm talking about nothing special.

A.H.: Nothing special…

G.A.: I'm emphasizing but I'm talking about a very common experience. The encounter with death and the being affected by death: *the Pathos*.After this encounter it is difficult to go around without feeling crucified to your own sadness: the "outside" disappears. You don't see people, you don't see the world, you just walk around with *fado*. Do you understand?You can say the same things about the coming in your life of a newborn. *Pathos* is: being affected, being e-motioned, it is active and passive at same time. Originally *Pathos* means a determination of beings not only with the character of harmful but more in general with the sense of alterability. In *Pathos* is implied alterity.E-motions ,*Pathe*, are modes of being taken with respect to the possibilities of situating and of orienting oneself in the world. We can designate it as "becoming-otherwise".Therefore in this perspective our way of being emotionally inclined is transformed in the course of the lifespan.

T.A.: The last one, and it's about Guidano and your opinion about an idea that he presents in his late book.

G.A.: Which is?

T.A.: *Self in Process*, that book.

G.A.: We don't speak about the all the… I don't want to speak about those useless books published by some people utilizing Guidano's name after his death , with the only aim to get some kind of visibility.

T.A.:No,no.The *Self in Process.* Guidano mentions how in the therapeutic process the focusing on other aspect of the self, along with the reorganization of the perception of reality, can increase a sense of ambiguity in experiencing the self in the world, and he quotes a Portuguese poet – Fernando Pessoa – saying that as the poet told us this can lead to the recognition that "each of us is more than one, is a manifold, is a prolixity of oneself", and how it can result in the diminishing of the sense of immediacy in experiencing the self and the world. And I would like to ask you how this resonates in you and what do you think that we as a therapists should be cautious of. What I understand Guidano as trying to say is that when you promote consciousness in the person, in their experience and in all of this, that can be diminishing of the immediacy of the experiencing…

G.A.: Well, we are far from that, extremely far from that. Because for Guidano the only possibility to create meaning was through reflection, so the more you create meaning the more you are removed from the immediate experience. For him immediate experience without explanation – as for Maturana – is meaningless, is a perturbation. In the moment in which you have a sensation, an emotion etc. (and more in general a perturbation) this sensation, the Me (the empirical of Kant), becomes meaningful only if the I (the trascendental of Kant) explain it.Therefore it is only through reflection that the immediate experience acquires meaning. That means that consciousness is basic, it's fundamental, the place where meanings are constructed. In fact it's not random that Maturana speaks of the world between parentheses .The world is not significant to him; everything is reduced to the internal dynamic of the system that for Guidano is the persistence of the personal meaning organization through the explanation of immediate experience.The only possible change along the lifespan is the level of abstractness of the explanation. So, the more you develop the abstract consciousness the more you are removed from the sense of immediacy of experience.

T.A.: Thank you.

A.H.: We are all happy now. Thank you so much.

T.A.: Thank you, very much.