

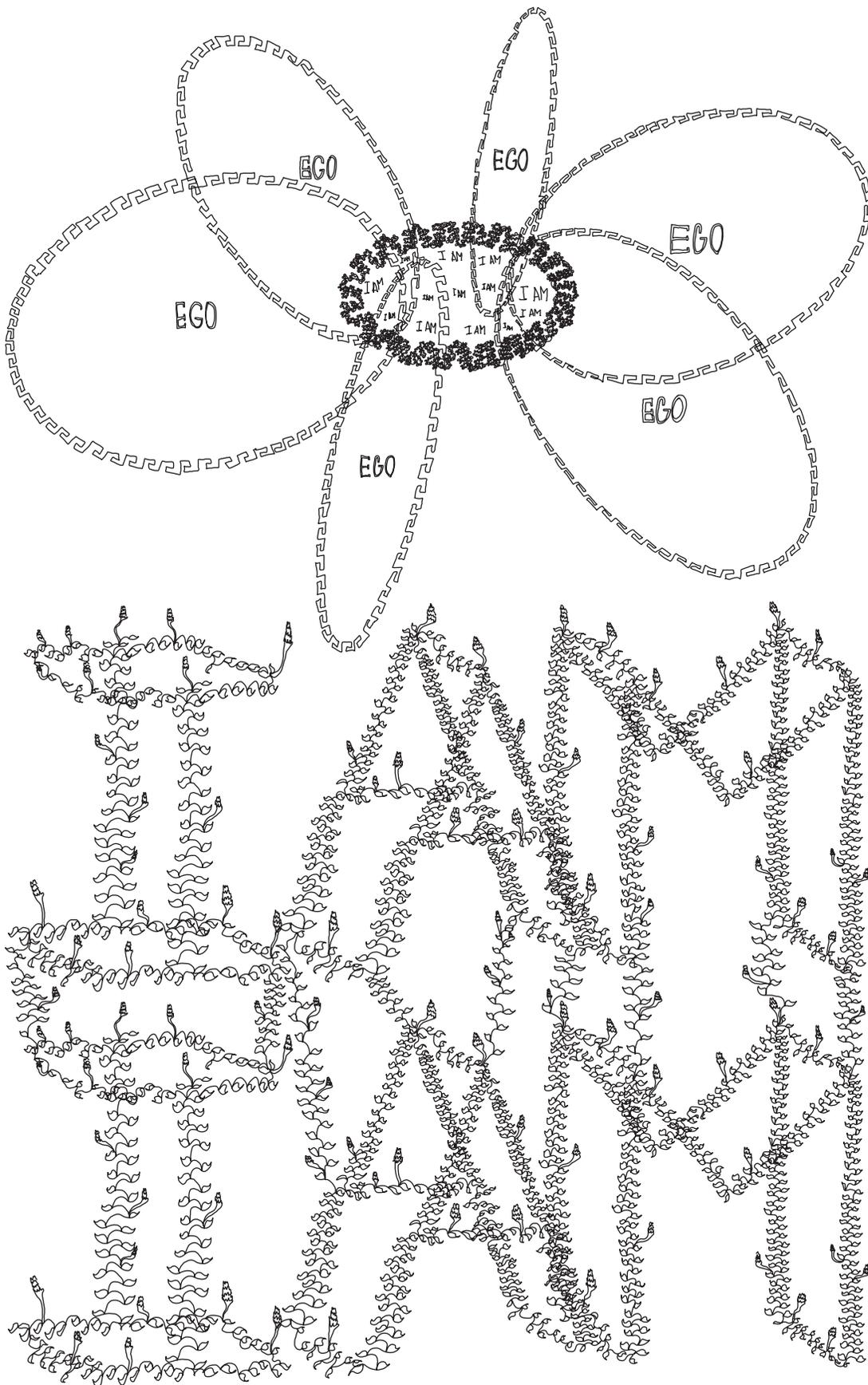
Bernardo Kastrup's work has been leading the modern renaissance of metaphysical idealism, the notion that reality is essentially mental. Bernardo has a Ph.D. in philosophy (ontology and philosophy of mind) and another Ph.D. in computer engineering (reconfigurable computing and artificial intelligence). As a scientist, Bernardo has worked for the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) and the Philips Research Laboratories.

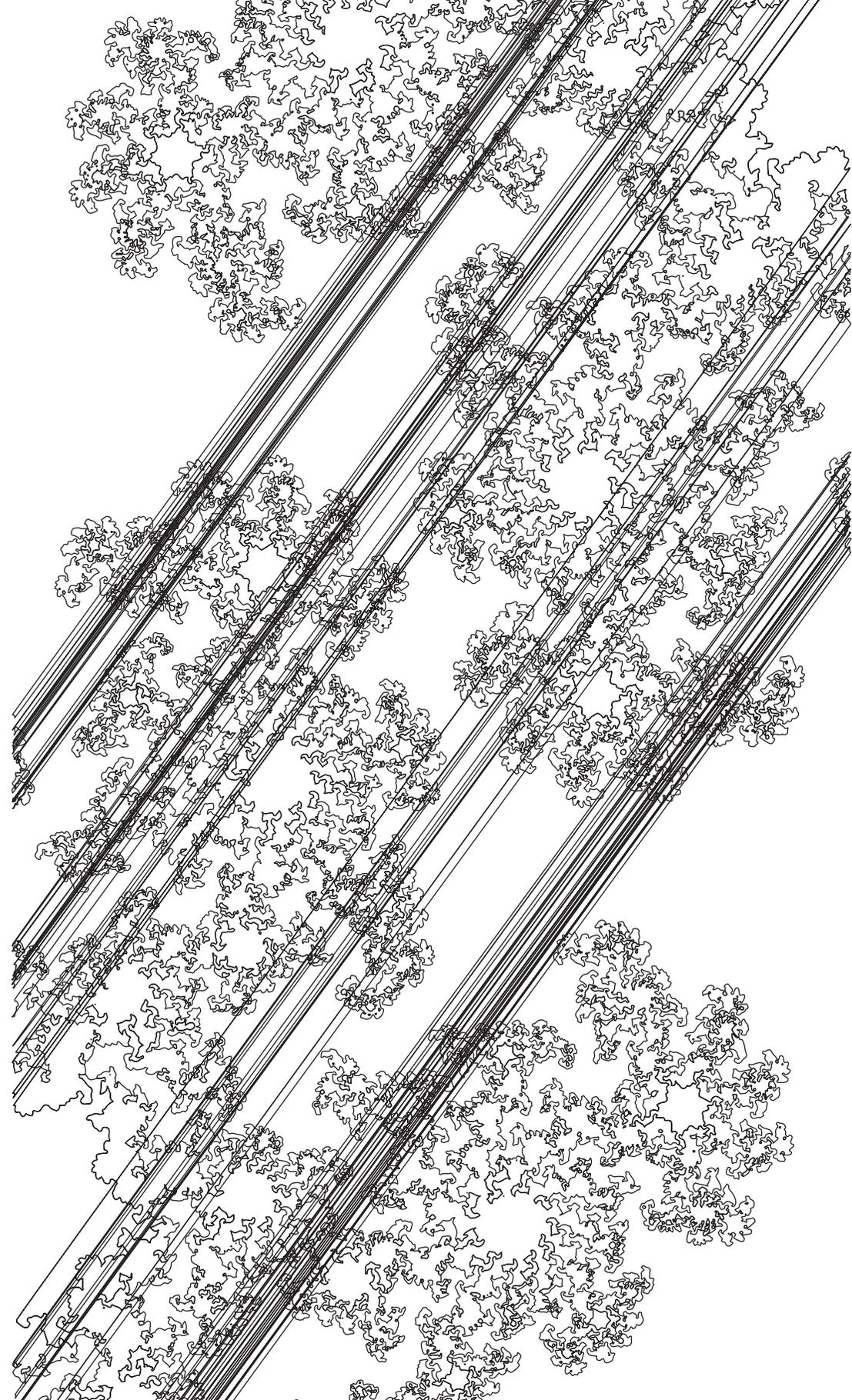
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O.G. Bernardo, for me, you are one of the most creative thinkers in our cultural intellectual tangle of today. Without ego-gratification you take on the most difficult topics and you connect everything to an overarching theory with an unseen and precise accuracy. Analytic idealism solves a lot of the anomalies we see in so many different disciplines and you set out the new borders for a renewed, meaningful and truer paradigm. I think that a science and a culture that is based on the felt experience that all reality is essentially mental is unavoidable. Your creative written output has an intuitive openness which for me *feels like art*. Also, I think the impersonal intention in your action; an honest intention *to make the whole better*; is crucial to be impactful. In a sense, you adapt the role of an outsider; you produce a lot of material which is always aimed towards truth, and as a consequence, towards a meaningful shift for the better. It is never about merely producing papers in an academic & competitive environment, instead, you live your philosophy. Can you relate with this?

B.K. Completely. I never worked in academia, so I've never had the pressure to produce peer reviewed papers. All my philosophy has been the result of trying to answer fundamental questions for myself; regarding life, identity, what am I, what am I doing here and is there a purpose to all of this?

I don't think the answers I came up with are particularly difficult from an objective intellectual standpoint. Nature shows you the answers every day. The notion that matter is not a thing in itself, that it is just the appearance of a deeper layer of reality which itself is mental. You see that every time you look at yourself in the mirror, e.g. when you are crying, the tears and the contorted face are the appearance of the sadness you feel from within. Matter is what mentation looks like from an external perspective and nature is showing us that all the time. It is not that difficult to come to this conclusion intellectually. The difficulty is more socio-psychological in nature. Most of us are deeply immersed in a paradigm, a certain set of assumptions, an artificial notion of what is plausible, so that we cannot regard the data and the reasoning objectively. We carry all kinds of culturally and psychologically induced biases. If there is anything that made me deviate from other intellectuals who are facing a wall, it is that I was never really vulnerable to cultural momentum. It was always natural for me NOT to take the mainstream story for granted and to NOT be intellectually impressed by the number of highly educated people who endorse a certain view (if that view doesn't work). Therefore, it is easier for me to regard the data and the reasoning more objectively and then the answers are not difficult to derive at all.





O.G. Beauty, in the broadest sense, is connected to the experience of well-being. Therefore, I think as a culture we should actively invest in beauty. It is an antidote for stress and disease. People are happier and healthier in beautiful environments. What is beauty for you? And, within an analytic idealistic worldview, what is the meaning of beauty or esthetics?

B.K. Beautiful things are evocative symbols for something very intrinsic, primordial and deep about ourselves and about nature. Because our intrinsic nature is the intrinsic nature of nature itself. We experience something as beautiful when a symbol in the world evokes in us a feeling that equals a profound truth. Plato already said that beauty is truth. And beauty being truth, a symbol of truth, is true.

Indeed, it is beneficial to be in intimate contact with beauty. But today, we are largely alienated from our relationship with nature and from things that evoke beauty in us. Yet, beautiful things, as symbols, are the antidote for this alienation. Beauty is a way to become more connected to the roots of our being. Beauty makes us realize there are less reasons for stress, nihilism, despair, depression and anxiety than we normally think there are. We think there are good reasons for all of that because of this alienation from the primordial root of our being. And beauty brings us back in contact with who we truly are.

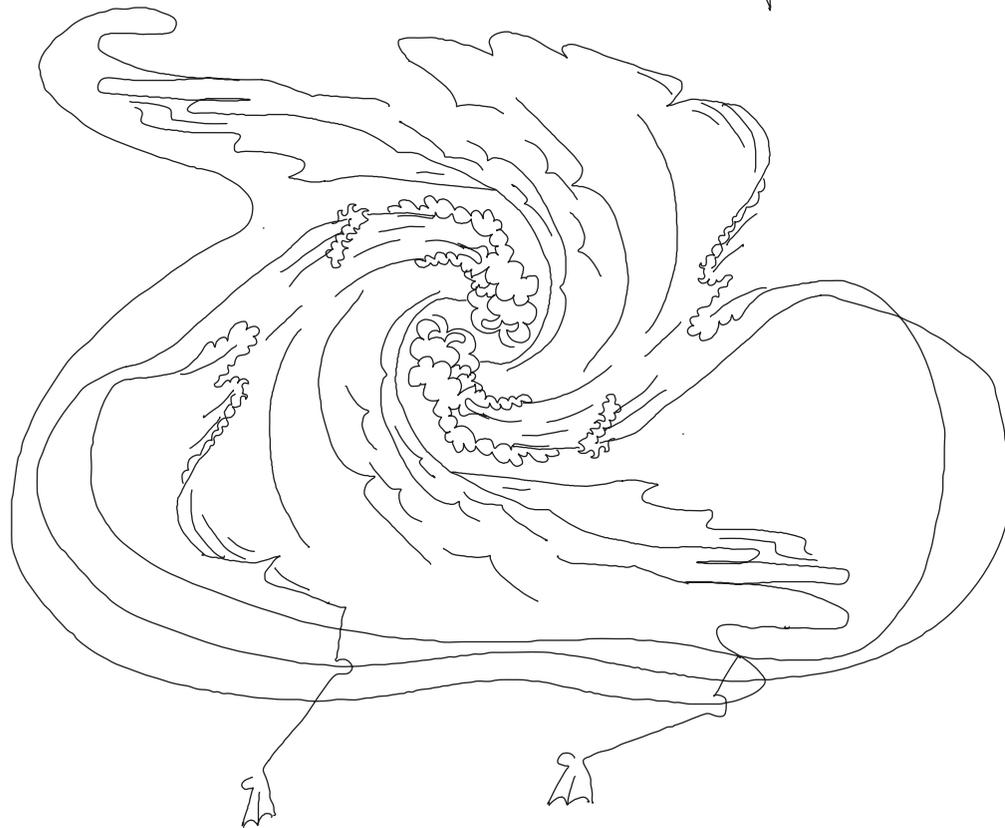
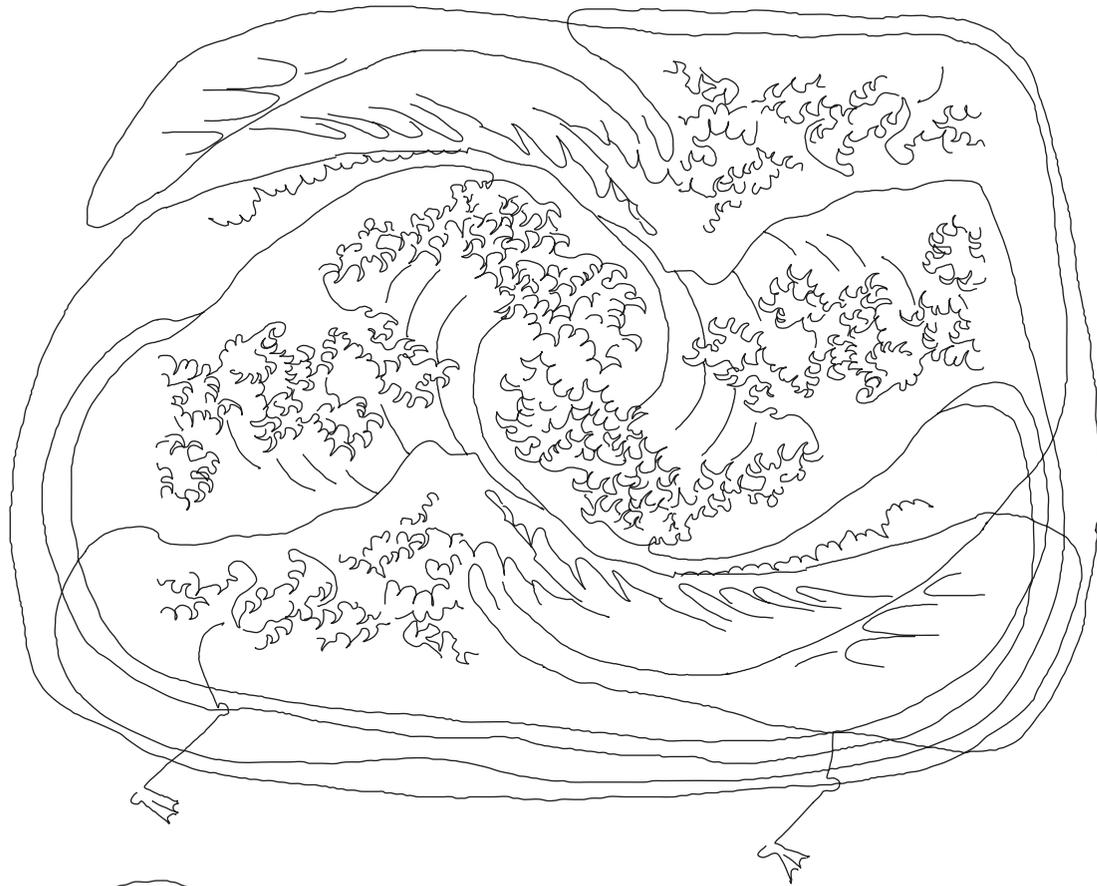
O.G. For me, to make something genuine is to play with an openness and therefore, if I am attentive, also witness at the same time to be played by an impersonal force. I first aim towards a personal defined goal; and then I act while simultaneously letting it go. I kind of need to trust it will happen. I must act or play sincerely but without the anxiety of needing to achieve the set goal. I think this is how spontaneity is acted out. I experience that what I do is not as important as the feeling while doing it. My intention defines the quality of the result, but I must be attentive at the same time. Can you relate to this?

B.K. Yes, today I've completely surrendered to what nature wants to do through me. Earlier in my life I had all kinds of goals; when I was young, I made a list with personal things I wanted to accomplish in my life: money, a house, achievements in work ... And I achieved all those goals early in my life and then I fell into a profound depression. I had no direction in life anymore because I did not have anything to replace these goals with and it made me realize that those were not what life is about. To strive only to achieve your personal goals is artificial and by realizing them, I felt they couldn't fulfill me because they were empty.

But over the years I noticed there always was this voice-like quality of nature telling me what should be done. It never tells why or what the end result should be, but it is very clear regarding what the next step should be and in which direction to go. It never gives any reassurance for the future, it only points towards what should be done NOW. And I have re-learned at great cost of depression and anxiety to hear that impersonal voice.

We are all born with the ability to hear this voice, but we drown it out with our personal thoughts and personal goals and therefore we become unable to hear it.

However, today everything I do is guided by this impersonal force. I call it the daemon to do honor to Socrates. Socrates' daemon used to tell him what NOT to do. My daemon tells me very clearly



what I should do. And if you do its biddings, to my surprise, life becomes invested in meaning while you realize in the core of your being that it is not about you personally and it never has been and it never will be. Still the greatest honor and meaning resides in serving that impersonal force that is not you, that something bigger, this nature or matrix of your own being. And in being of service lies the felt meaning of it all.

Today I have developed such a trust in the direction nature wants me to go, I could almost say I follow it blindly, except for moral judgment. I maintain my personal moral judgment because I know nature is morally ambiguous. Because if nature wants a certain thing, it does not discriminate how to get there and then my personal moral judgment comes into play. If I think what is suggested is morally the wrong way then I don't do it, but then I need to find an alternative way to do its biddings.

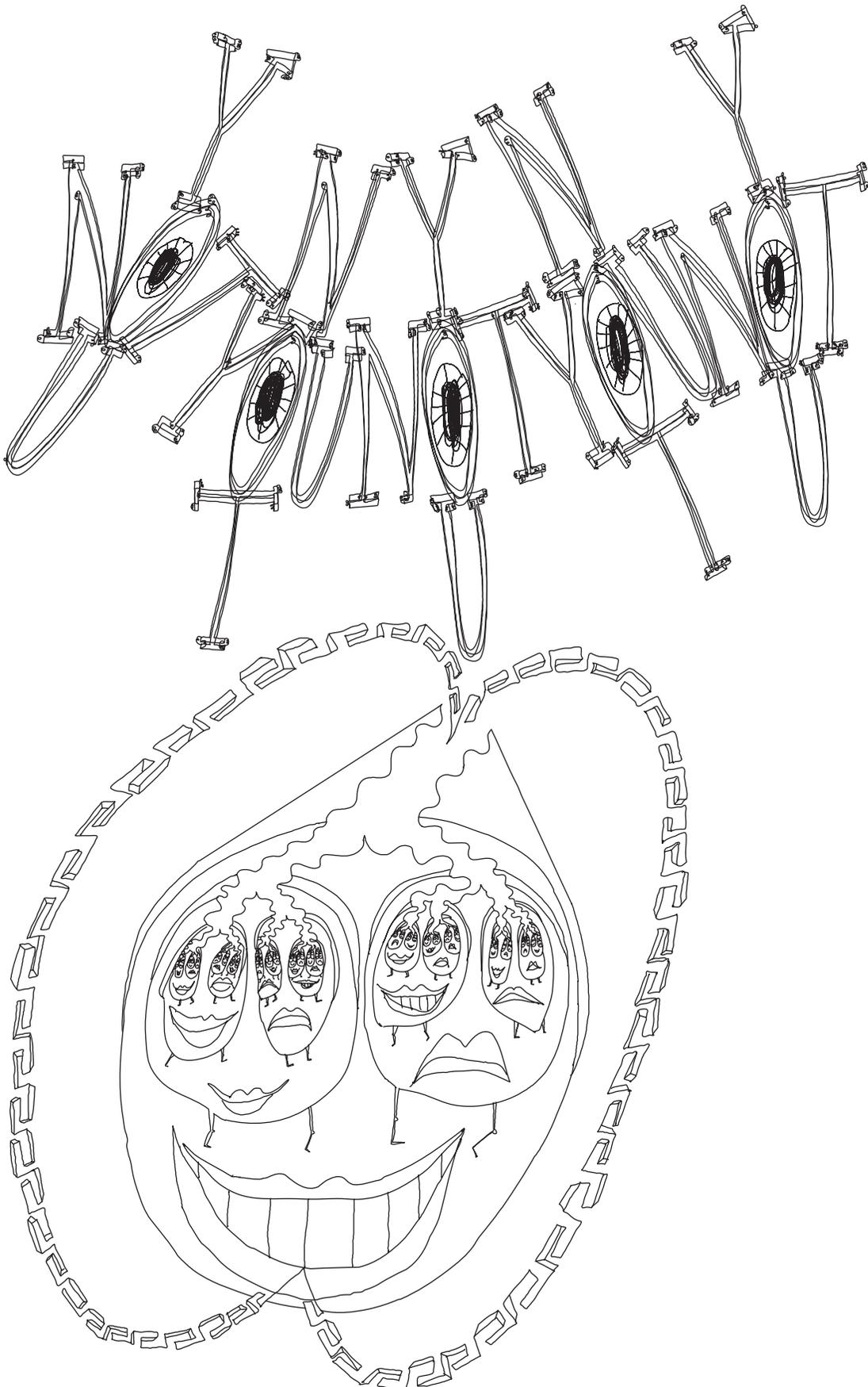
In the West, and now in the whole of the world, we not only lost the ability to hear the voice of nature, which is not even difficult to hear, but we have also forgotten something our ancestors knew, which is that life is not about your personal happiness and comfort. Life is sacrificial, as Carl Jung puts it, and if we can regain touch with that felt truth our lives will be meaningful. Even in the presence of tremendous suffering we will be able to bear anything. But as long as we think it is all about my happiness and my comfort, we will be chasing ghosts and maybe destroying our civilization in the process of doing that.

O.G. I heard you say before that in submission you live the freedom of the slave. Our culture today defines work as opposed to play. Alan Watts said in a lecture that one should aim to get paid for playing. I don't believe he meant that we should not take responsibility but instead be playful adults as opposed to the idea that an 'Enthusiasm made dull' equals an adult. Can play and responsibility go together? What is, for you, the meaning of the word play?

B.K. There are 2 things we feel when we play. First, play has to do with a sense of natural rhythm. Like the way Magnus Carlsen moved the pieces on the chessboard today (20211205). You could almost see the chess pieces dancing. There was harmony and rhythm. Also today, how Lewis Hamilton conducted his car; there was rhythm in play.

Play is the natural way of being in the world, it is to feel and be in tune with the natural flow, to feel that nature is doing something through you.

Second, play has to do with not taking yourself too seriously. To play is to know it is not about you; it is about something that is way beyond the person. You should take your job seriously; what and how you do is crucial; it is your personal contribution to the dance of nature; but your person is not. I take my work and my message very seriously but not myself. Because taking yourself too seriously is just silly; it just aggravates, and it obstructs whatever needs to be expressed through you. If you want your life to be meaningful: flow with the rhythm of nature and do not take yourself too seriously. In other words: play sincerely!



O.G. Great! I understand that you are intellectually committed to intuitionistic or constructivist logic. Can you explain this and how does this relate to imagination and creative output?

B.K. Aristotelian logic, commonly known as logic, is the strongest foundation of our culture. Today, we are open to the possibility that we may someday discover that the laws of physics are not what we think they are. It will be hard to implement, but we are not fundamentally opposed to that idea within the current ethos of our culture. But logic, Aristotelian logic, has become something sacred, unquestionable, and untouchable. The problem is that we cannot use Aristotelian logic to argue for the validity of that logic because that is illogical. We call that the fallacy of begging the question or circular reasoning. But if you think about it, Aristotelian logic is not fundamental at all, and it can be questioned. Aristotelian logic happens to work in practice most of the time, but not all of the time, e.g. quantum physics has done away with Aristotelian logic already for a century now.

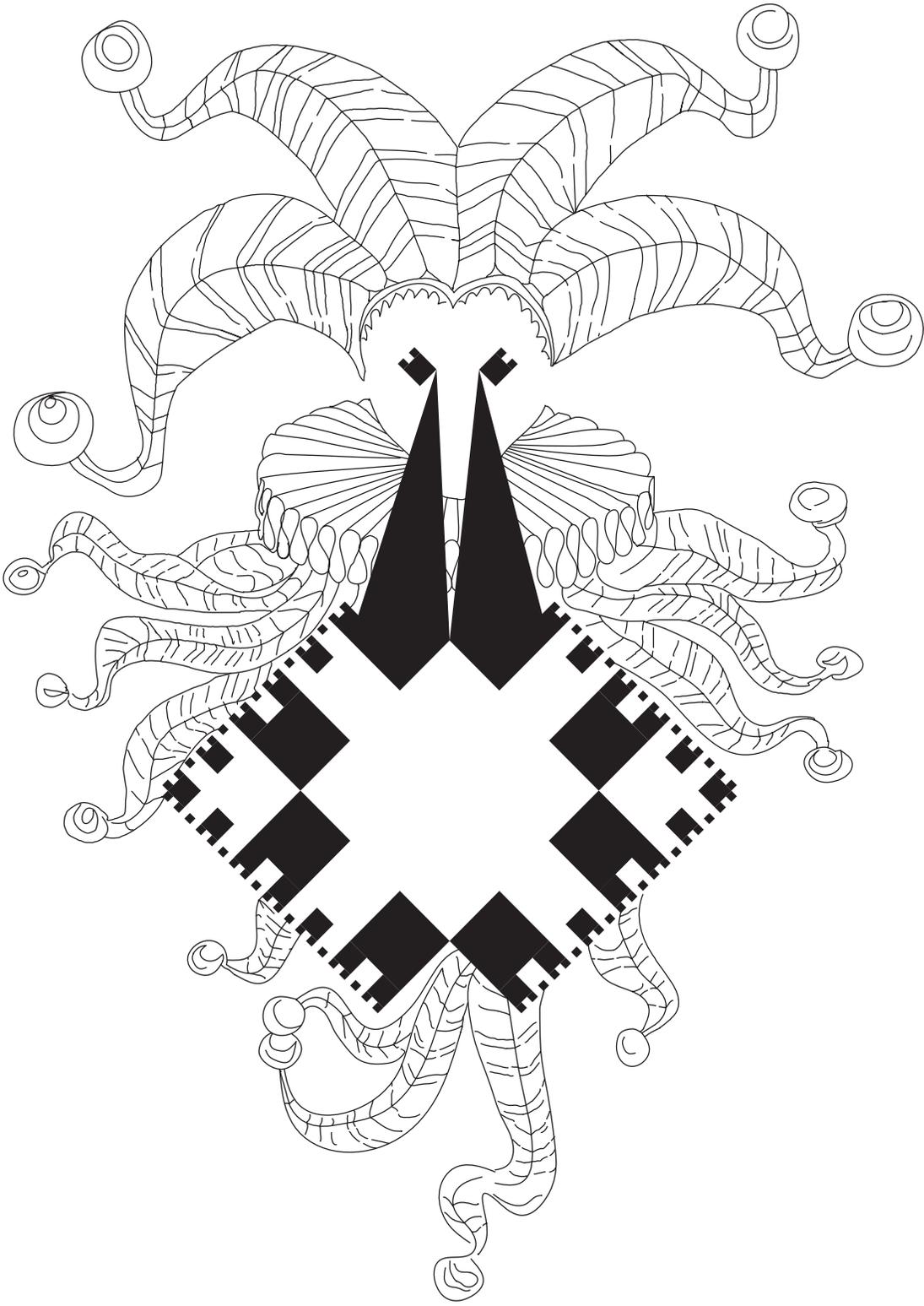
I am committed to intuitionistic logic even though most of my work is still based on Aristotelian logic. The reason I do that is because I try to pick my battles, and I know we can renew our worldview and get closer to truth even within the scope of the commonly known Aristotelian logic. So, if I use Aristotelian logic within the vast majority of my arguments, I use it knowing it is a cultural concession.

Logic is based on a relatively arbitrary set of axioms. And axioms are propositions we assume to be true because they look self-evident. But self-evident is not the same as trustworthy. The difference between Aristotelian logic and intuitionistic logic is that the latter gives up on one of the axioms of Aristotelian Logic. So intuitionistic logic has a smaller set of axioms; it lacks one axiom which is called the 'law of excluded middle'. This axiom says that things are either true or false. So, things are neither true and false nor neither true or false. They must be one of the two and only one of the two. The law of excluded middle seems indeed to be self-evidently true for us. But if you get into sophisticated rational problems, then this self-evident law of excluded middle dissolves.

For instance, Aristotelian logic is used in mathematics to prove that something exists by proving that it cannot not exist. In other words, you prove that something is true by proving that it cannot be false. The problem is that this way, you can prove that certain things exist while having no idea what they are. You can demonstrate that they cannot be false and thus they must be true, but you cannot enumerate them. You have no idea how to produce an example because they are not even conceivable.

So, Aristotelian logic, with its law of excluded middle, is building reality on an edifice of shaky abstractions. While intuitionistic logic dictates that you can only prove that something exists if you can provide an example of it, even if it is only a conceptual example or an artistic example. Within intuitionistic logic, things are only real once they are actually manifest. So, you cannot prove their reality by a trick of abstraction. You can only show that they exist if you bring them into existence.

The use of intuitionistic logic is ultimately closer to truth than our relatively naive and superficial Aristotelian logic. Nature is in and



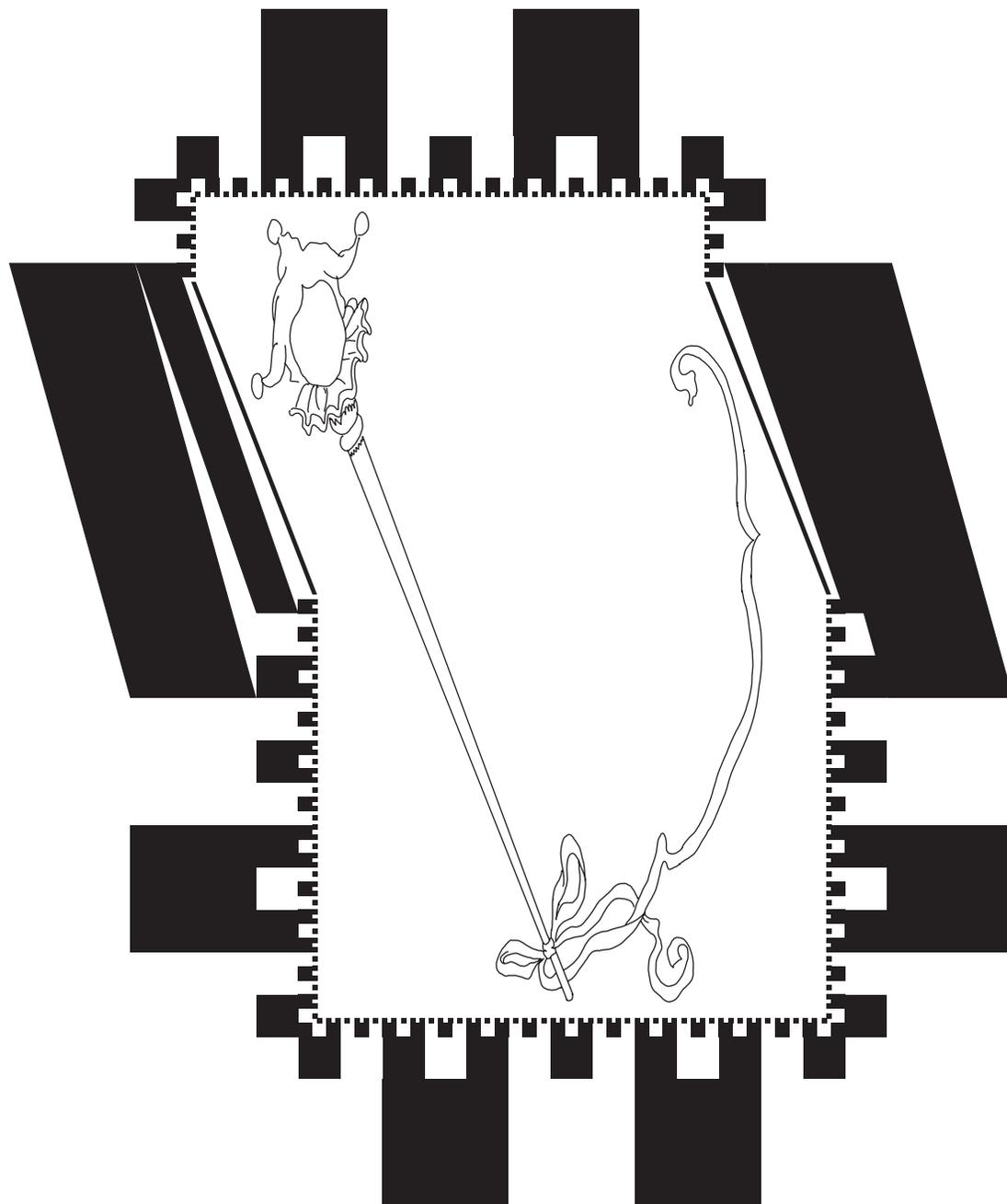
of itself an unfathomable fountainhead of potentialities, but those potentialities can only be said to exist once they actually manifest. For as long as they are pure potential, it is difficult to say if something really exists. It only has the ability to eventually exist, but it will only exist the moment the potentiality is actually expressed, and the thing is manifest.

And that is what creative work is all about. It is about the imagination bringing into reality the unfathomable potentialities of nature. It is through the hands of the artist, the engineer and the scientist that truths come into existence.

O.G. For the Greek Gods: to think something is to make it real. One could say that 'reality reflects beliefs'. And this is also the case if you do not believe this statement because your not-believing is of course also reflected. Is intuitionistic logic compatible with Peter Kingsley's interpretation of the initial role Parmenides gives to true logic? Logic as an incantation tool to trick you into being. Could intuitionistic logic be the backbone of some new language? And if so, how do you see this?

B.K. Peter Kingsley's interpretation of Parmenides' poem is that *to think is to make exist*. So, our culture's hysteria, of what is true and what cannot be true, disappears if you realize that to think is to make exist, and then the discrimination between true and false is called into question very naturally. That is Peter Kingsley's take on Parmenides. It may at first sound like a very relativistic take, which abandons every notion of truth. But to think is to make exist in the sense that the thought itself exists. And a thought is not the same as an objective shared reality. So it is not relativistic. There are objective truths, but a thought itself is also not nothing; it exists as *a thought*. And what analytical idealism says is that the world out there is thought-like. The physical world is the way a transpersonal thought looks like when you observe it. The world is the thought of nature; its essence is mental. So, from the point of view of the mind of nature, to think is literally to make exist. Mind-at-large, its thought processes, is what we call the universe, with its black holes, quasars, exploding supernovas, volcanos, rivers, life and us. These are the mental activities of the mind of nature as represented on the screen of our perception. Physical nature is what the thoughts of the universal mind looks like when observed from our vantage point. And then Parmenides' idea takes on a whole other spin. Because now, literally to think is to make exist. But those are not your thoughts as a little person; those are the thoughts of nature, of which you are part of. And then, intuitionistic logic comes back into the picture because this logic says things only exist if you produce an instance of them. And what is to produce an instance of something from the point of view of the mind of nature? It is to think it! So, an exploding supernova only exists insofar as the corresponding thought is actually expressed by the mind of nature. It is not about proving a theorem that an exploding supernova cannot be false; such a proof is not enough to actually create an exploding supernova. There must be the production of an instance of it. So, from this transpersonal point of view Parmenides was correct and intuitionistic logic applies fully. To think is to make exist, and mind-at-large cannot make exist through a trick of conceptual reasoning; instead, it has to produce



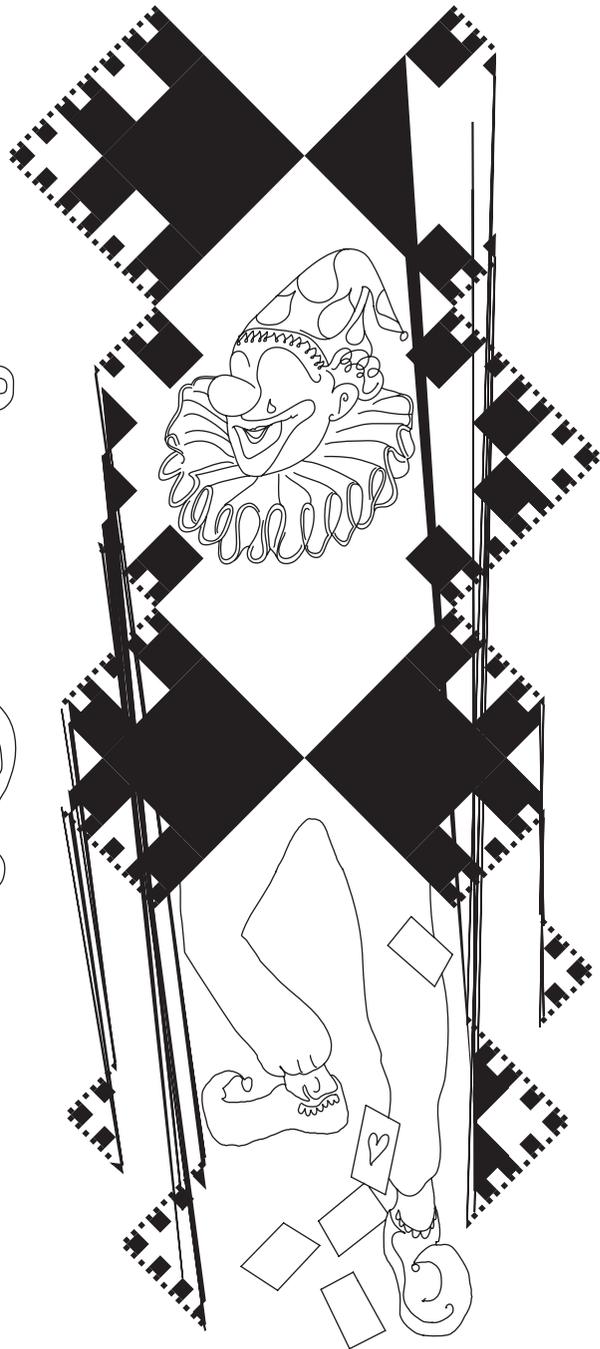
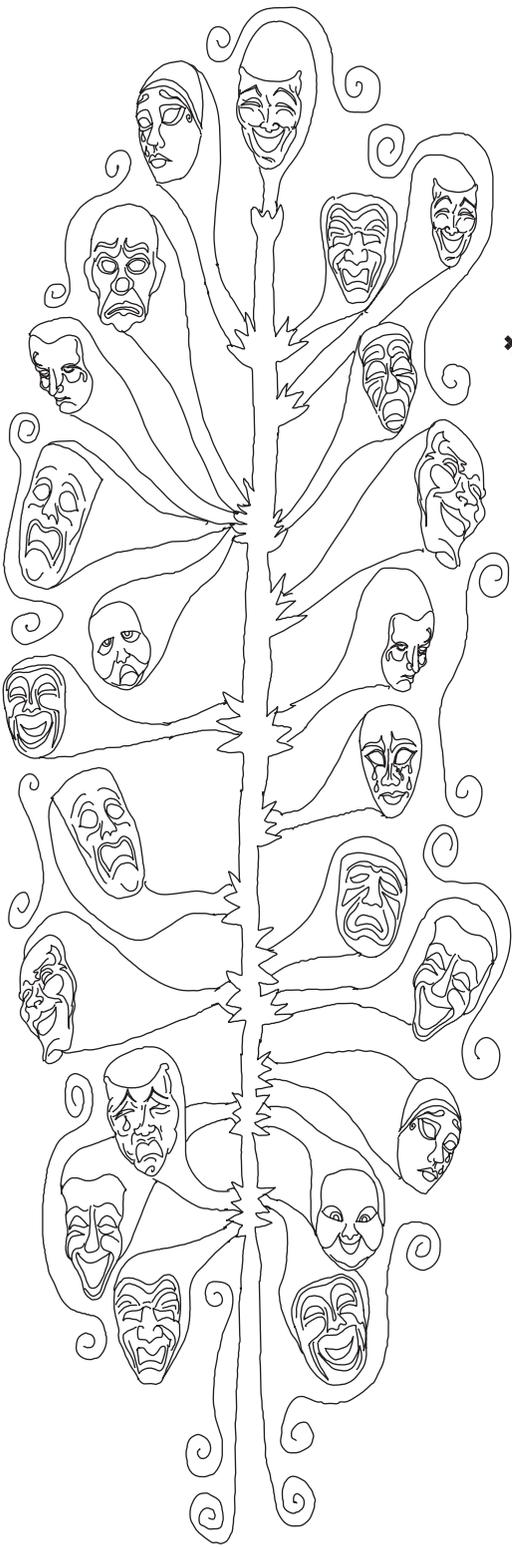


Therefore, intuition is the deepest cognitive skill we have. And in the metaphor of the tree, the intellect is a very young new leaf that just popped out in the canopy of the tree, staring at the sun. But it has forgotten to pay attention to the wet, dark, moist environment in which we are rooted. We have become 'spiritual' in the psychological sense that we only look to the sun and the bright sky but forget to look at the moist, dark matrix of our being, in which we are rooted; and that is our intuitive sense. And as a result of this lack of intuition, e.g. in academia today, most analytic philosophy, which has existed for about a century, has become a silly game, a play in the bad sense of the word; a pure conceptual enterprise without the cognitive skills that are necessary for us to differentiate things that are plausible and maybe real from things that are just conceptual trickery. We can't tell the difference anymore because we do not pay attention to what is coming to us via the roots. We do not use our cognitive faculties that tell us intuitively if something is serious or just a silly thought. Analytic philosophers have lost the ability to make this distinction because they decreed that intuition is unreliable and only thinking, the loud screams of the baby, is reliable; that's the irony of it all. So many philosophers today are players in the bad sense. Without rhythm, they take themselves too seriously while spitting out conceptual trash. They have no compass because they do not use their intuition, which comes from the roots and could guide them toward truth. They lost the fundamental ability to listen and to differentiate bullshit from serious possibilities & scenarios. It is a pity. Not only do we not take intuition seriously anymore, but we have also devised a situation in which the unreliability of intuition is now a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy.

O.G. Ok, but still, I sense intuition is the main force for art and creativity in general. I sense reason not to be the origin for a genuine creative process. For instance, if I read your books, I feel an intuitive power as a starting point onto which you then build upon using reason.

B.K. Absolutely. I will put myself on the record here: reason produces nothing! But there are 2 things for which reason is crucial. First, while reason does not give you any answer, reason itself is important to ask the right question and second, reason is useful to validate the given answer. But asking questions and validating answers is not creative in and of itself. The fountainhead of creation itself has nothing to do with reasoning. Yet, I personally need reasoning to sort of poke it – by asking questions – so it can spit out an answer. Otherwise, the answer remains latent or unreal in the intuitionistic sense; it exists as a potential but it's not manifest yet. I need reason to be able to ask the right questions in the right way because if I ask the wrong question, I get bullshit answers. So I use reason to refine my ability to question, but this in itself is not creative, it's just the trigger to kick nature into spitting something out. And then I use reasoning again to validate the given answer, so I can communicate it and write a text in which I make others sensitive to the possibility that there is good stuff to be pursued in that path.

The creation source itself is never reasoning; the answers come from somewhere else and paying attention to that has convinced me

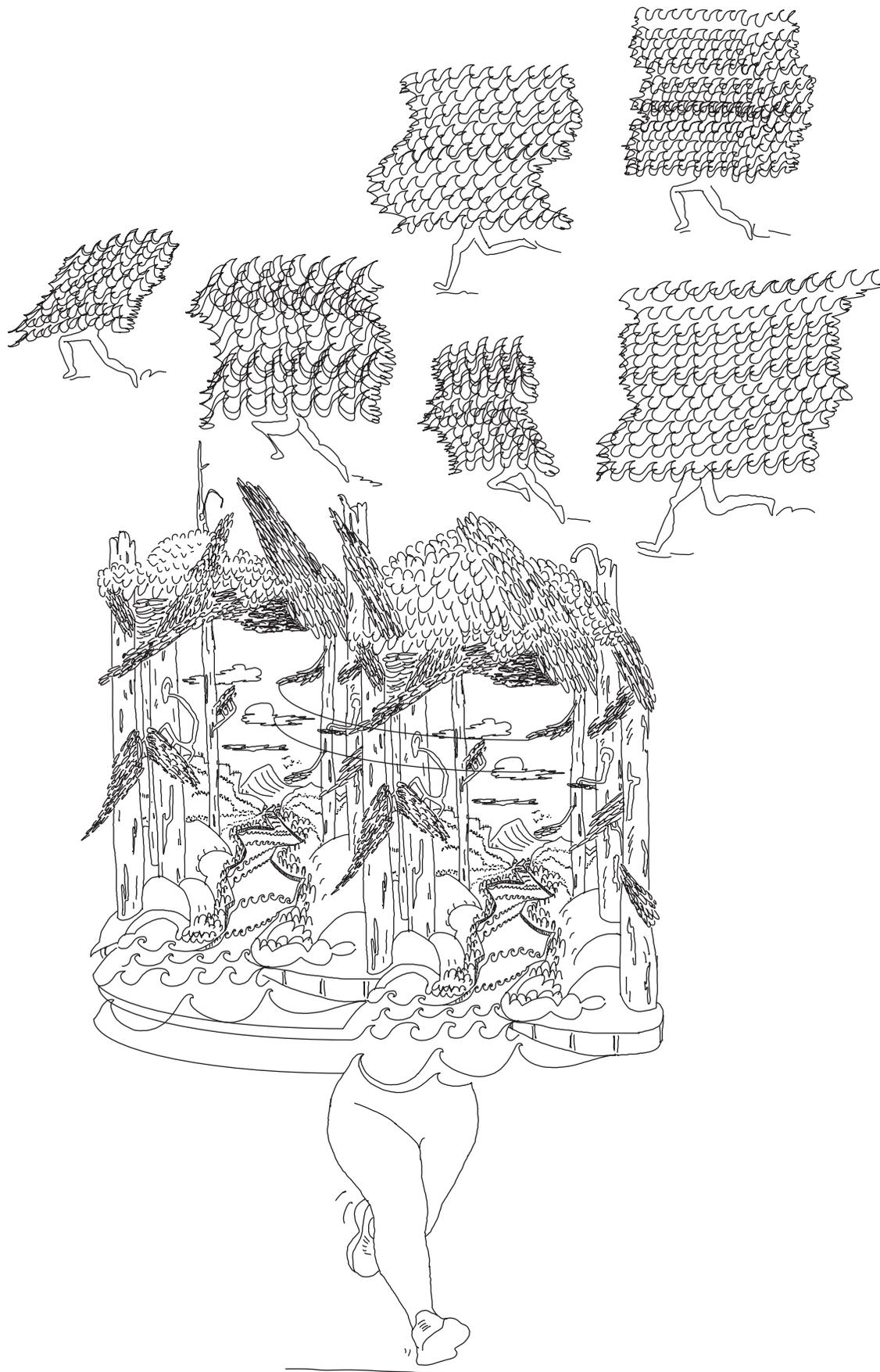


– and now we arch back to the beginning of our conversation – that the answers don't come at all from me personally.

While the answers are always there in potentiality, I have zero merit in the whole thing. My only role is, I happen to need the answers because I find it hard to go through life without them. So, I am very motivated to ask the questions. But the answer, analytical idealism, is nature's answer and nature's philosophy.

O.G. If I understand you correctly you state that space & time are not objective 'out there' or independent from us; but are emergent, non-fundamental properties of being. If I make a densified description of what space & time are for Rupert Spira; I understand he would define space as the experience of relationship between objects in our perception. And time as the experience of relationship between events in our thoughts. For the spatial designer within me these descriptions make total sense, I don't think there is more to it. Are you comfortable with these descriptions of space & time as, first and foremost, the EXPERIENCE OF RELATIONSHIP? And if not, how would you define them?

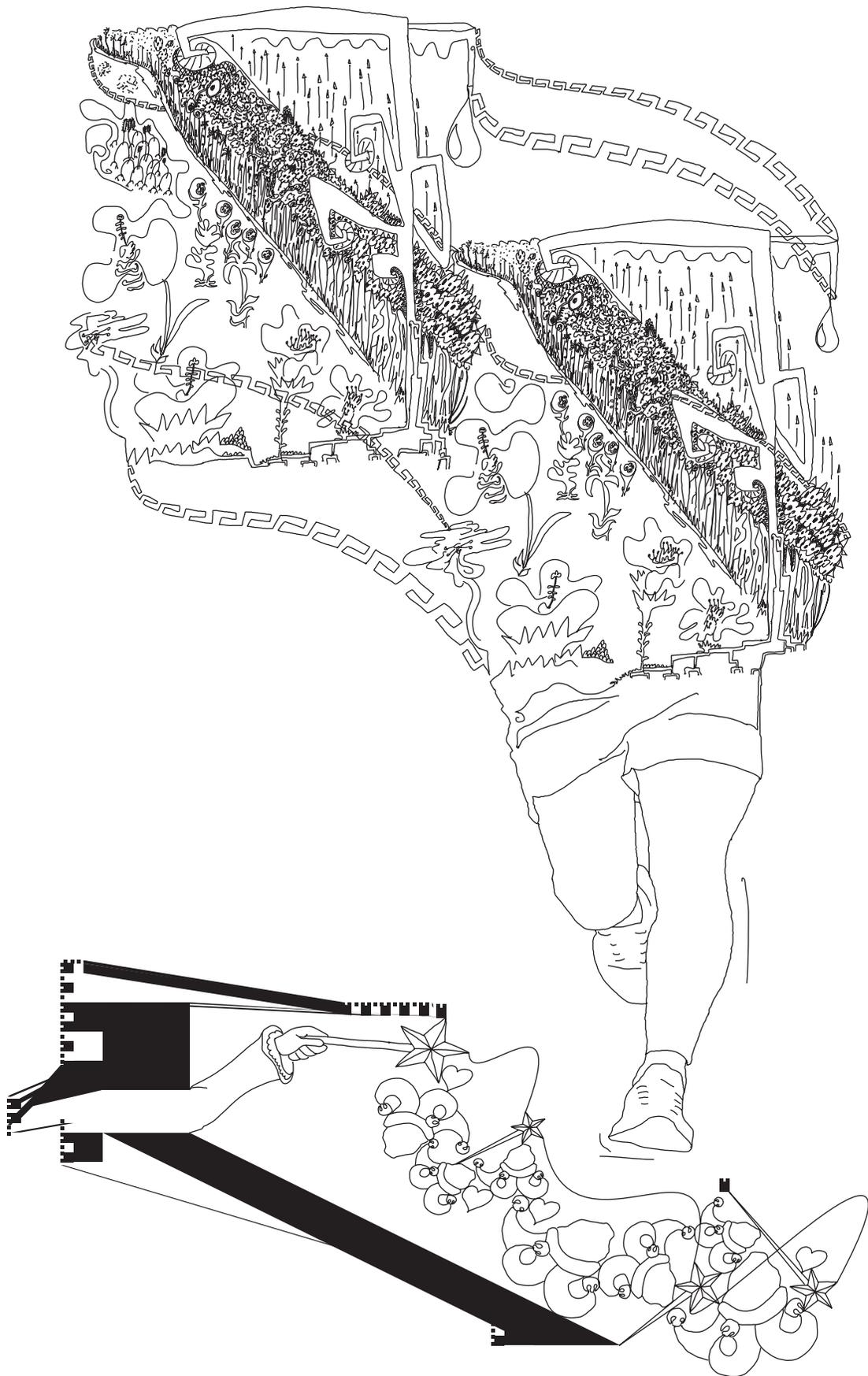
B.K. I am absolutely comfortable with these descriptions. I think Rupert, as usual, has nailed it because he is paying attention. It is impossible even for the best scientists today to articulate in words what space or time is without incurring into the fallacy of circular reasoning. Space and time do not exist in any objective way and it's obvious that they don't. I think it was Saint Augustine who said, 'I know what time is but if I wish to explain it to him who asks, I do not know.' Time is an aspect of experience, but it has no unambiguous or conceptually clean definition. If asked what space or time is, most people typically answer in a circular way and say e.g. space is the distance between 2 objects and time is the interval between 2 events; but then 'distance' and 'interval' are just other words for space and time. This is obvious. Neuroscience today tells us that time is extraordinarily relative; even the relative order of events can change depending on how you are primed psychologically to react to stimulus in an experiment. Also, general relativity theory tells us that time is not this linear river that flows in only one direction at constant speed, as we think it to be, because from a relativistic perspective different observers can see the same events happen in different orders. So, time is something that belongs in the observer. It is not a property of an objectified universe. In modern physics, e.g. loop quantum gravity is theoretically suggesting now that time is emergent and that it pops out of lower-level quantum processes, which have a structural description but not in time and space; it's a kind of abstract structure but not temporal or spatial. One could imagine it as an associative structure of links within a huge database; it does not need time or space to function. So, I totally agree with the relativistic or relational character of space and time. I also think it is very important for us as a civilization to become more alert to this fact. Today, we torture ourselves largely based on the unexamined notions of what space and time are. We regret the past and are anxious about the future. We miss people who are far away, while people who are nearby, we do not miss; even if we didn't see them for a year. We forget that time and space are properties or aspects of our personal cognition; they are not the scaffolding of the objective world out there.



The unexamined assumption that time and space are objective pervades our culture and this has huge implications in every aspect of our lives. Our view of the world and of ourselves would be very different if we had a felt understanding of the relativity of space and time.

O.G. In the same line of argument I want to make a speculation. Because personally I sense a link between the descriptive term 'the experience of relationship' and the little I know of Carlo Rovelli's relational quantum mechanics. Because similar to Rupert Spira's description of space & time, and this is my speculation, one could perhaps say that: physical quantities are the experience of relationship between mentation (personal thoughts & perceptions AND transpersonal mentation) within consciousness. Physicality is then a unique & personal experience of represented interaction of absolute mental states within consciousness. So, matter is relational from a personal perspective. The absolutes are – if not interfering – in a superposition state. But in interaction their resistance is expressed as matter. Does this speculation make any sense to you? Or am I aiming in the wrong direction?

B.K. I think there is an important intuition behind it. My friend Fred Matser uses the word 'resistance' a lot. But I have not managed yet to put this intuition into unambiguous and logical constructs and words. I think the key realization here is that what we call the physical world does not have a standalone existence. The physical world does not exist in and of itself, it is the result of an observation or a measurement. Before the person makes an observation, there is something there, but it is just not physical, because physicality is just the way that something out there presents itself to observation. Physicality is the image produced by an act of measurement and therefore that image is not there unless and until you measure. It is important to understand that this does not mean that there is nothing out there; that would be an illogical conclusion. And this is sadly the conclusion Carlo Rovelli extracts in his latest book, *Helgoland*. At this moment, Rovelli cannot yet conceive of a standalone reality that is not physical. Since experiments have forced Rovelli to concede that physical reality does not have a standalone existence, he now concludes that there is nothing out there. Yet the message of the experiments is obvious: there is a world out there and that world is not physical. Physicality is just the way the world presents itself to our observation and therefore, indeed, physicality is always relative or relational. Because if things depend on the circumstances of the observation, then they are relative or relational to those circumstances. For example, movement is relative: if you are inside a train and you measure the speed of the train relative to you then the speed is zero. But if you are on a platform and you make the same measurement of the same train you will measure movement. We need to understand that we get different answers depending on the circumstances of the measurement. So, in this example movement is relative or relational. What Rovelli correctly has concluded – and after 40 years of experiments, anybody who is minimally honest in foundations of physics today has to conclude the same thing, is that all physical properties are relative or relational, just as movement is. So mass, weight, electric charge, momentum, amplitude, frequency are all relative. The physical world, which is the collection of all things that can be measured, is indeed relational.



But today, and again I am basing my assessment on the book Helgoland, Rovelli concludes that it is not just relations, but relations between relations, all the way down. And for me this conclusion is illogical. Because you cannot state 'there is only movement but there is nothing that moves'. That's incoherent. If there is a dance there must be dancers. The physical world is similar to movement but something which is underlying that movement must give existence to movement and that absolute is mentation, transpersonal mental activity.

O.G. Perhaps here I could state that each individual observer, each conscious agent, because of its unique relation with this transpersonal mentation, has therefore its own unique physical world.

B.K. That's correct. You are always that observer that is either on the platform or inside the train. You always have a unique point of view within the ocean of transpersonal mentation in which we are all immersed. Nowhere is there an idealized positivist concept of science; there is no 'point of view from nowhere.'

O.G. Is it relational because the observer and that which is observed manifest together the perceived reality?

B.K. Yes, I think this description is accurate.

O.G. Ok, within the same train of thought. A few days ago, I heard this great speech from Ian Mcgilchrist from the Essentia Foundation. Mcgilchrist states that 'Things or relata are secondary to relationship. And that we take part in the reciprocal creation of the world.' Again, I understand this relationship as the interaction between the personal perspective and a transpersonal mentation which combined, as a result of interaction, collapses (in a quantum mechanical sense) into the experience of things, relata or matter.

B.K. Correct. To me, again, the empirical reality that everything that is physical is relational or relative, tells me that there is something that is underlying the physical; something that is, by definition, non-physical because it has to be non-relational. And the other thing we all know for sure that exists, which is non-physical, is mental processes.

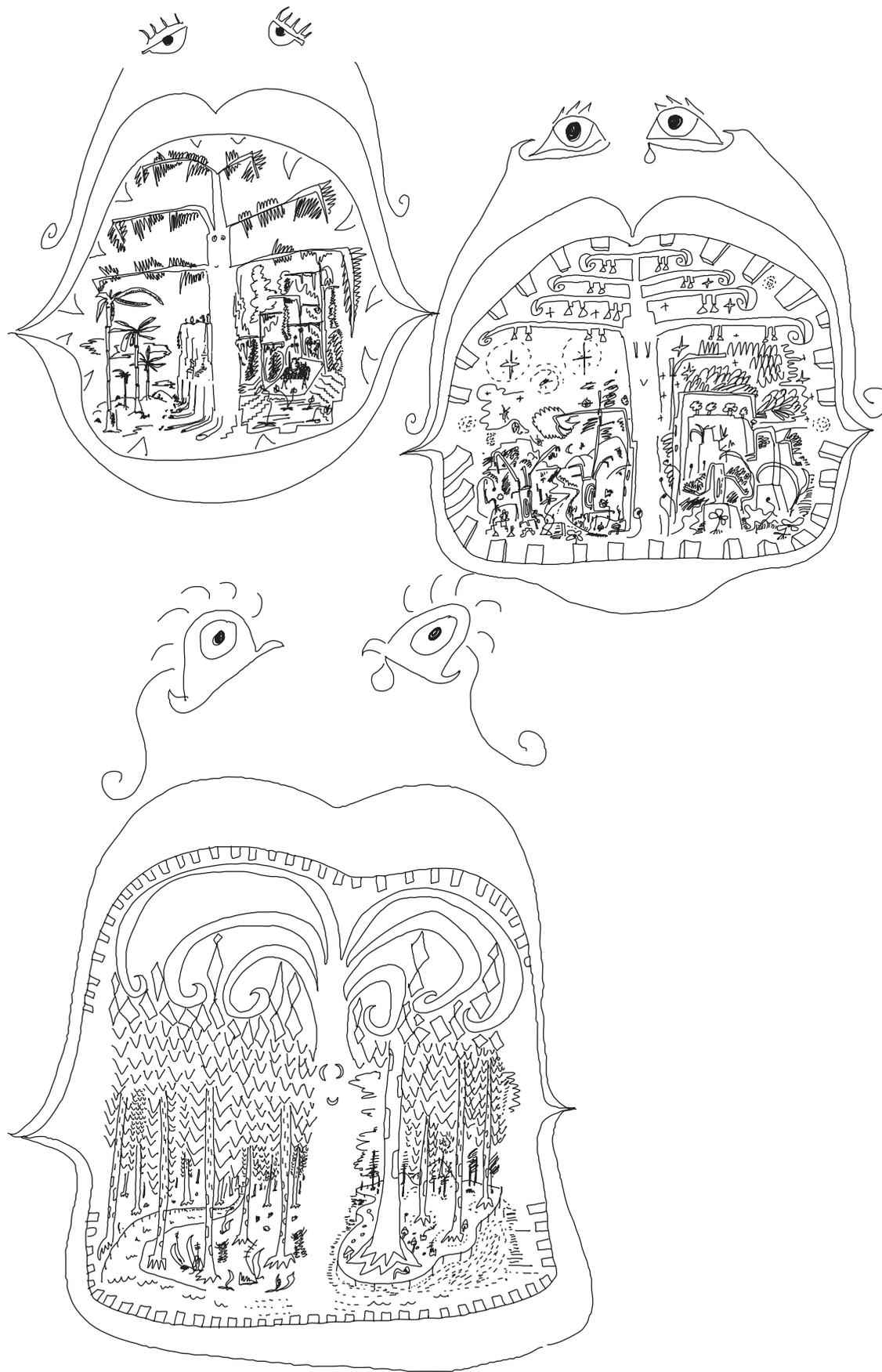
O.G. So mentation is the ontic absolute and matter is its relational expression?

B.K. Indeed! But instead, the mainstream today is dividing up into 2 equally absurd ideas. One is that physicality is indeed relational and there is nothing that underlies the relations; Rovelli's viewpoint in his latest book. So ontically speaking, there is nothing. My critique here is that every second of our experience tells us there is something and not nothing; there is experience!

The other absurd view is even worse and precisely the opposite extreme: the multiverse, as promoted by people like Sean Carroll. Here the physical world we are experiencing now exists as one out of a kazillion real physical universes, popping out of nowhere for no reason every infinitesimal fraction of a second, and there is exactly zero empirical evidence for this. For me, this second absurd view is probably the most implausible, inflationary thought conceivable to the human mind.

We must face the obvious. The real world out there exists, but in and of itself it is not physical. It only presents itself to us according





to the things we call physical properties. But indeed, physical properties are only the result of an interaction between mental processes.

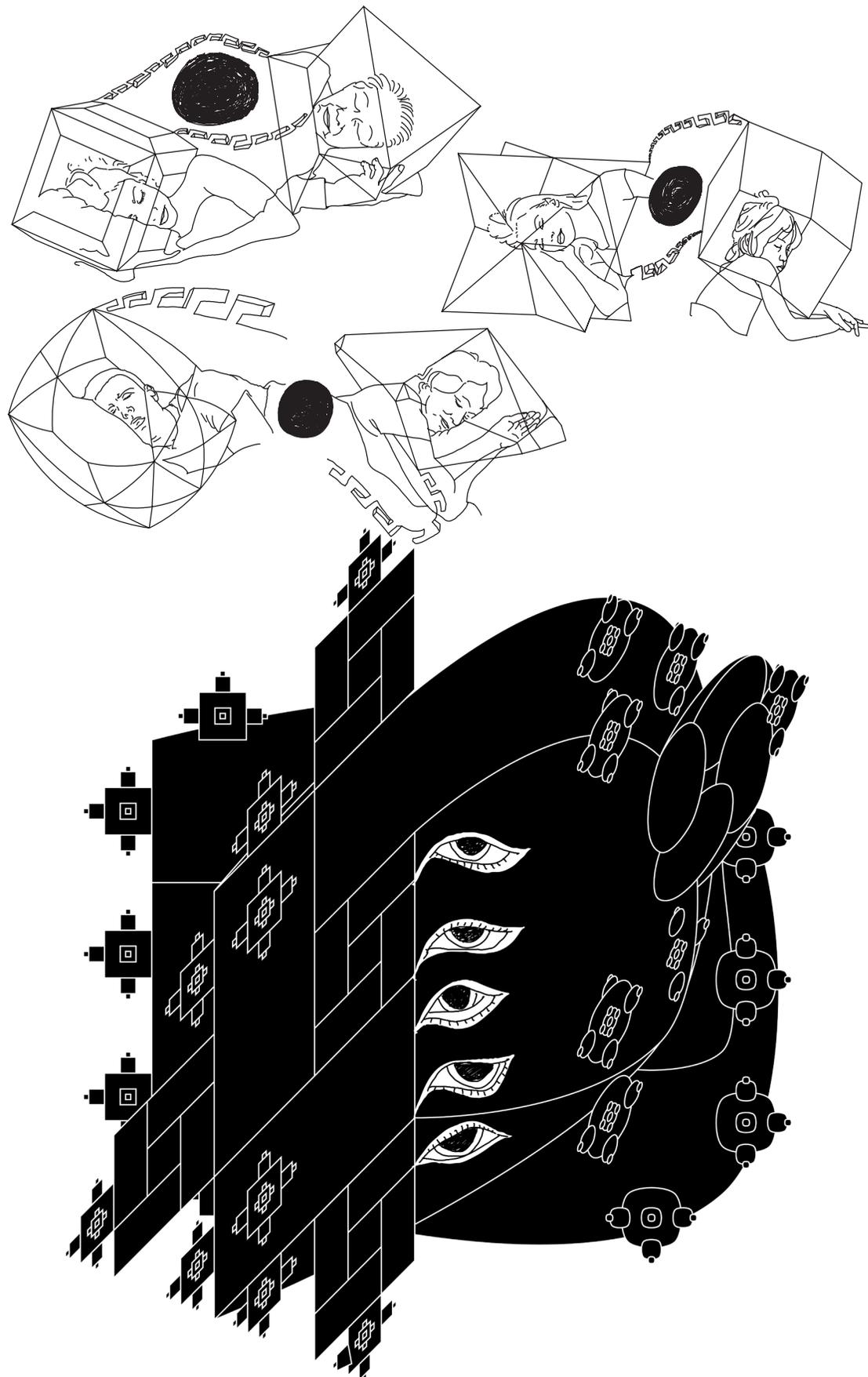
O.G. Great! I want to make a bold speculation. If time, space, and physicality are indeed relational, is it then not valid to make logical constructs in which ONLY mentation, the absolutes which are not relational, are included. for instance:  
 to want ≠ to have  
 to have = to feel you already have it – wanting  
 and as a consequence:  
 to want + to get = to feel you already have it (*while wanting it*)  
 If I am very attentive, I sometimes see this logic expressed in my own life. For instance, when throwing something while aiming at a target: the believed or felt anticipation of hitting the target seems crucial for the outcome. But I also noticed similar constructs e.g. in the theological works of Joseph Benner or Neville Goddard; about the workings of prayer. The words ‘Faith’ and ‘Feeling’ even share a linguistic origin. My question: have you ever been aware of such phenomena in your own life? And are such constructive mental equations valid for you?

B.K. I don’t know. I first want to make a comment on the use of equations. While you use them in a broad sense, not in a purely mathematical sense, I think mathematical equations are the wrong tool for the job if we are trying to describe the world as it is in itself, as opposed to how it presents itself to us upon observation. The latter is physics, which is the science of perception; because even if we use instrumentation in physics, we still need to perceive the output of that instrumentation. We need to see the screen of the oscilloscope; we need to see the histogram that comes out of the calorimeter in a particle collider. Perception is still the only channel that mediates between us and the world. And physics is a science of that channel, a science of perception. Thoughtful physicists, such as the renowned physicist Andrei Linde, have acknowledged this. And I think when you study perception, mathematical equations are very useful, because perception is fairly objective and repeatable; mathematical equations are a good tool for the job. But I don’t think they are appropriate for describing the inner life of the universe. Because mental activity is elusive and ambiguous. Mentation is a shapeshifter, it plays with self-deception. The right tools for relating to the world as it is in itself, the world behind appearances or behind physicality, are psychology and art.

O.G. But could we imply a constructivist logic which excludes all relational or relative aspects (matter, space & time) and includes only the absolutes or mentation? From a personal perspective, I have sensed that if you want to get something, the believed and felt emotional state of already having achieved your objective is prior to the expression of actualizing the desired result.

B.K. I understand how you could have come to this but, because of cultural sensitivities, I do not want to touch on this yet.

O.G. Ok; I would describe lucid living as to be in a sustained awareness of being aware. You continuously ‘serve the divine’ by means of self-reflection. Similar to a lucid dream; lucid living does not entail that you have the personal volition to change your surroundings; but by being non-judgmental & attentive you personally unconditionally accept what is. And by this offer, this continuous acceptance



of change, you impersonally construct a reality which will, only as a consequence, benefit you personally. I understand this still touches on the previous topic, but how do you see the link between lucidity and meta-consciousness?

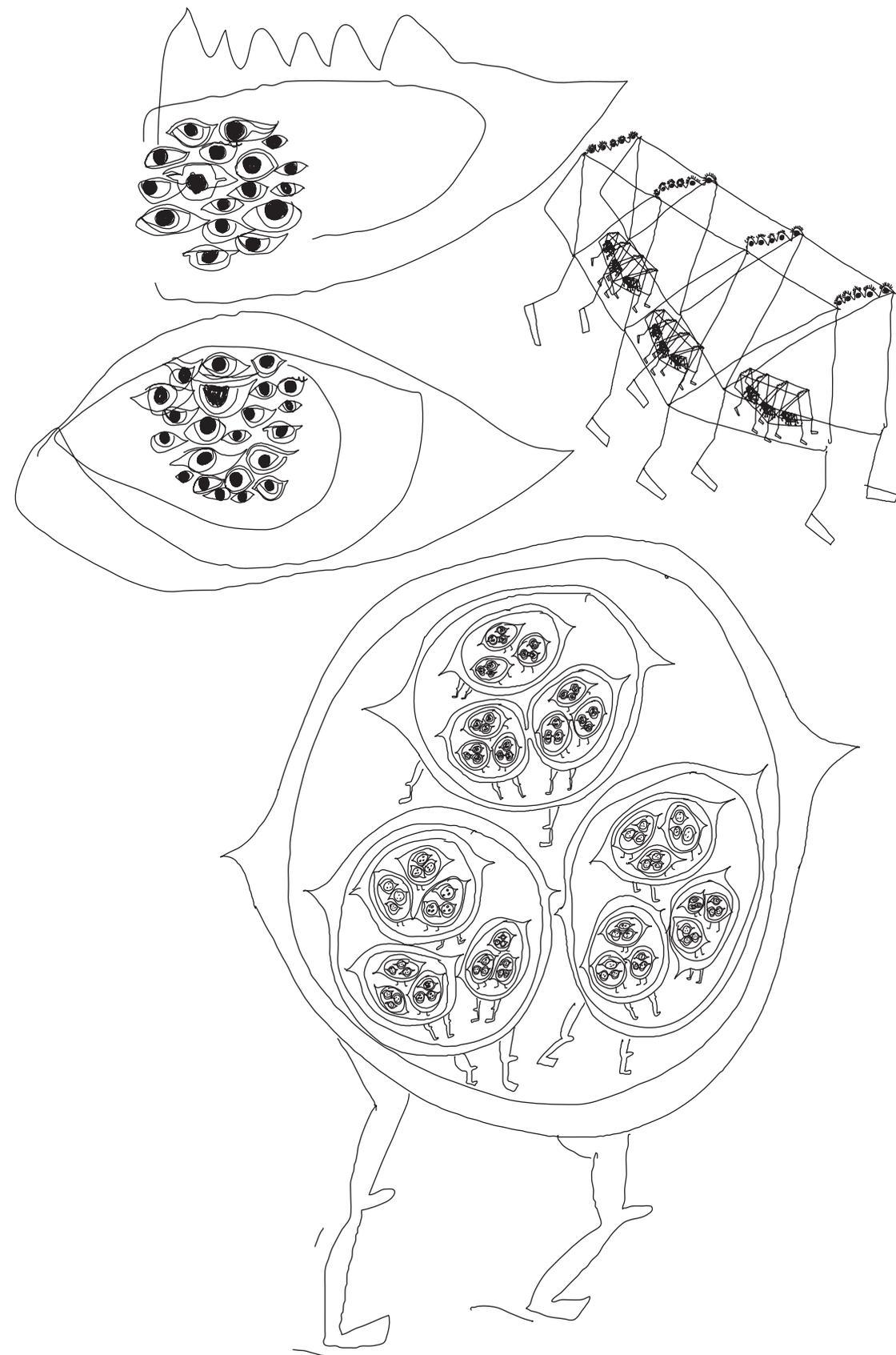
B.K. They are very related. Lucidity has to do with paying attention, keeping your eyes open for what is happening around you and asking the right questions about what this all might mean. And I think this is the natural way of going through life. We have been invested by nature with a point of view that is not available to God. And I am using the word 'God' or mind-at-large as a metaphor for the underlying field of subjectivity that spans the entire universe. So, we are spies for God. But in order to be a good spy we need to pay attention and collect useful information. So yes, lucid living is the way to go but that shouldn't be confused with paranoid living. It has to be playful. You must be able to get into a state of flow. Because being in a state of flow is also something you need to spy upon. It is not about observing that you are observing that you are observing because you will be obsessing with the details instead of looking at the whole. So indeed, we should aim at non-paranoid but still lucid and attentive living in which we explore the joy and suffering life has to offer. We also need to be willing to pay attention, also to the suffering part, because that tends to be the richest territory for new insights and realizations. We have dismissed in our culture the importance of suffering to a degree that we think the whole meaning of life is to avoid suffering. We should not forget that suffering is an intrinsic part of nature and if it is experienced, pay attention! Otherwise, you suffer for nothing.

O.G. Do you remember a moment in which you noticed that, if you do not try, but *while suddenly aware, you just do*: your cat winks back at the exact same time you do?

B.K. No, but maybe I have not been paying enough attention, perhaps I just was not lucid enough ...

O.G. On numerous occasions you explain that biology is what dissociation looks like. Each metabolizing organism is the representation of dissociation; a whirlpool within the stream of consciousness (mind-at-large). But in the current boundaries of analytic idealism: does dissociation need to be strictly limited to metabolism? Can self-organizing spatial temporal structures, such as a solar system, not also be a material expression of a dissociation within consciousness? I do not want to open the door for conscious computers or chairs; I mean SELF-organizing (non-silicone) spatially bounded systems. And if so, a metabolizing organism could be a dissociation within a greater dissociation. The whole could be conceived as a holarchy of whirlpools within whirlpools within whirlpools, within an infinite unbound mind-at-large, a vertigo of infinity and eternity. The end of dissociation is then the re-integration in a greater dissociation which itself is embedded in mind-at-large. Is such a speculative conceptual expansion plausible within the boundaries of analytic idealism?

B.K. There is a difference between conceivable, plausible & possible. And analytic philosophers are very picky about these differences. Is it conceivable that other forms of dissociation in nature could look like something other than metabolism? Yes, that is conceivable, and it would not refute analytic idealism if it were true. The idea that metabolism is what dissociation looks like is not a theoretical



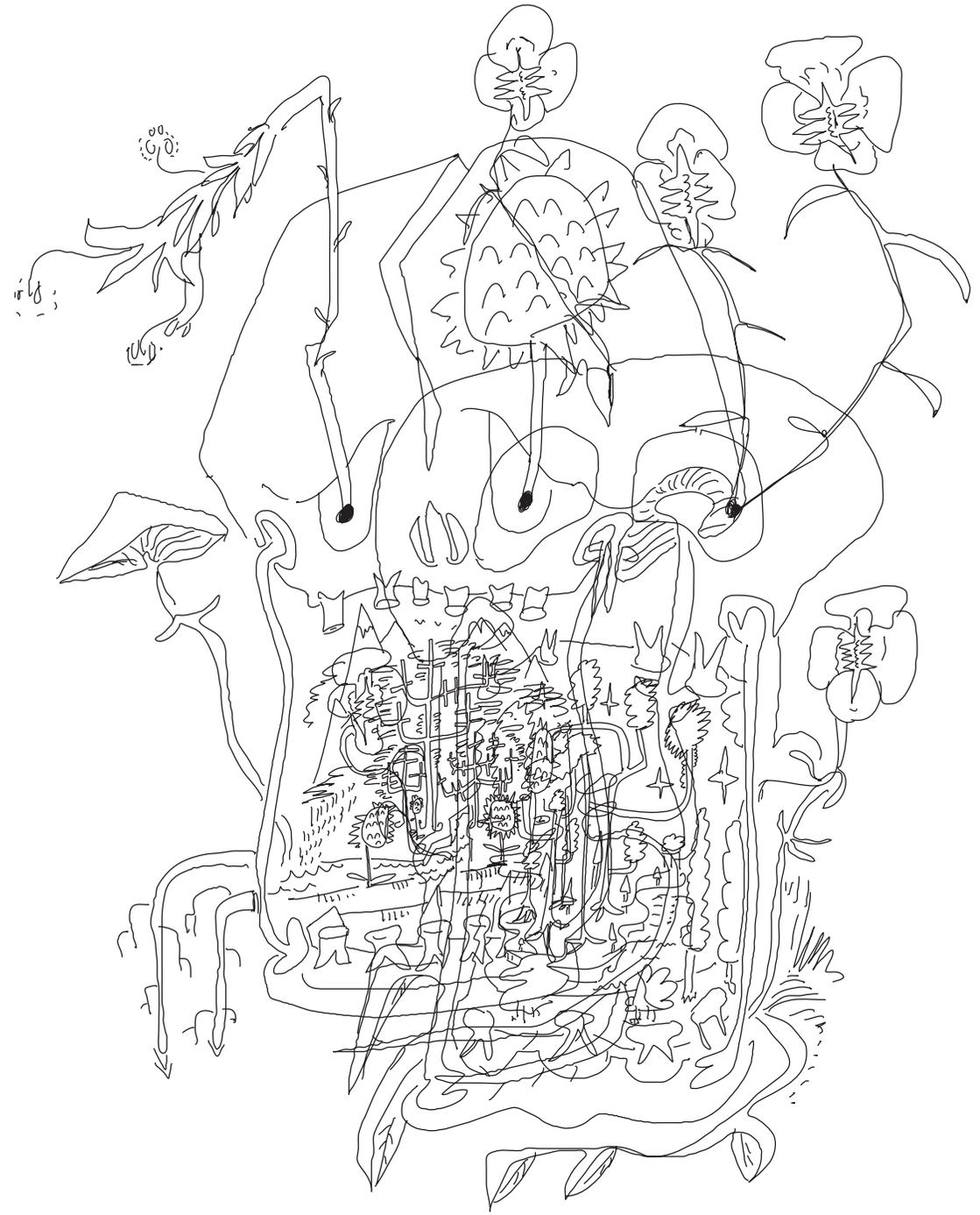
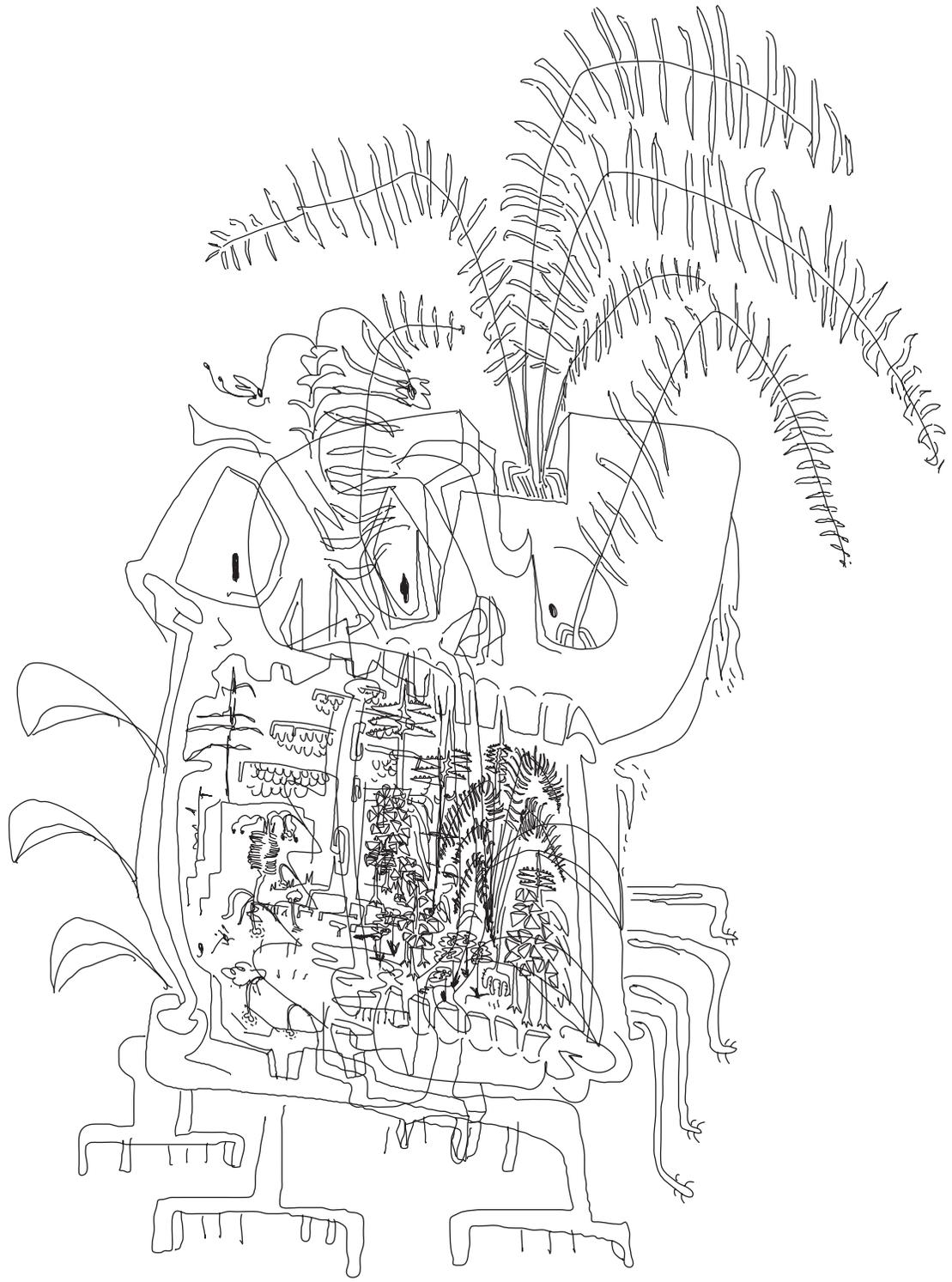
implication of idealism; it's not an output of idealism or a prediction. Rather, it is an input or an observation. It is part of the data that was collected, and which motivates the formulation of analytic idealism. So yes, it is conceivable. The next question: is it plausible? This is more subjective; what is plausible for some is implausible for others. To me the important question is not what is conceivable but what we have good reasons to believe in. Do we have good reasons to believe that other forms of dissociation in nature could correspond to something else other than metabolism? I do not think we do. Because every instance of an entity in nature that we both rationally and intuitively feel compelled to attribute private inner life to is a metabolizing organism. For instance, a paramecium is a single cell without a nervous system, but it goes after food, it moves with intent, it moves away from danger and it interacts with its environment. It looks like it has a conscious inner life and guess what ... a paramecium metabolizes. A virus does not compel me to think it has a conscious inner life. It's more like a particle, almost like a complex mineral that happens to lock into our proteins in a way that multiplies the virus, but it does not compel me to think that it is a dissociative process and guess what ... viruses don't metabolize. The host does metabolize but the virus doesn't. So, I cannot disprove that there are dissociative processes out there that are not metabolizing; but I can also not disprove that there is a teapot in the orbit of Saturn. So, the question is not what is conceivable or even what is physically possible. The question is: what do we have reasons to take seriously as a possibility?

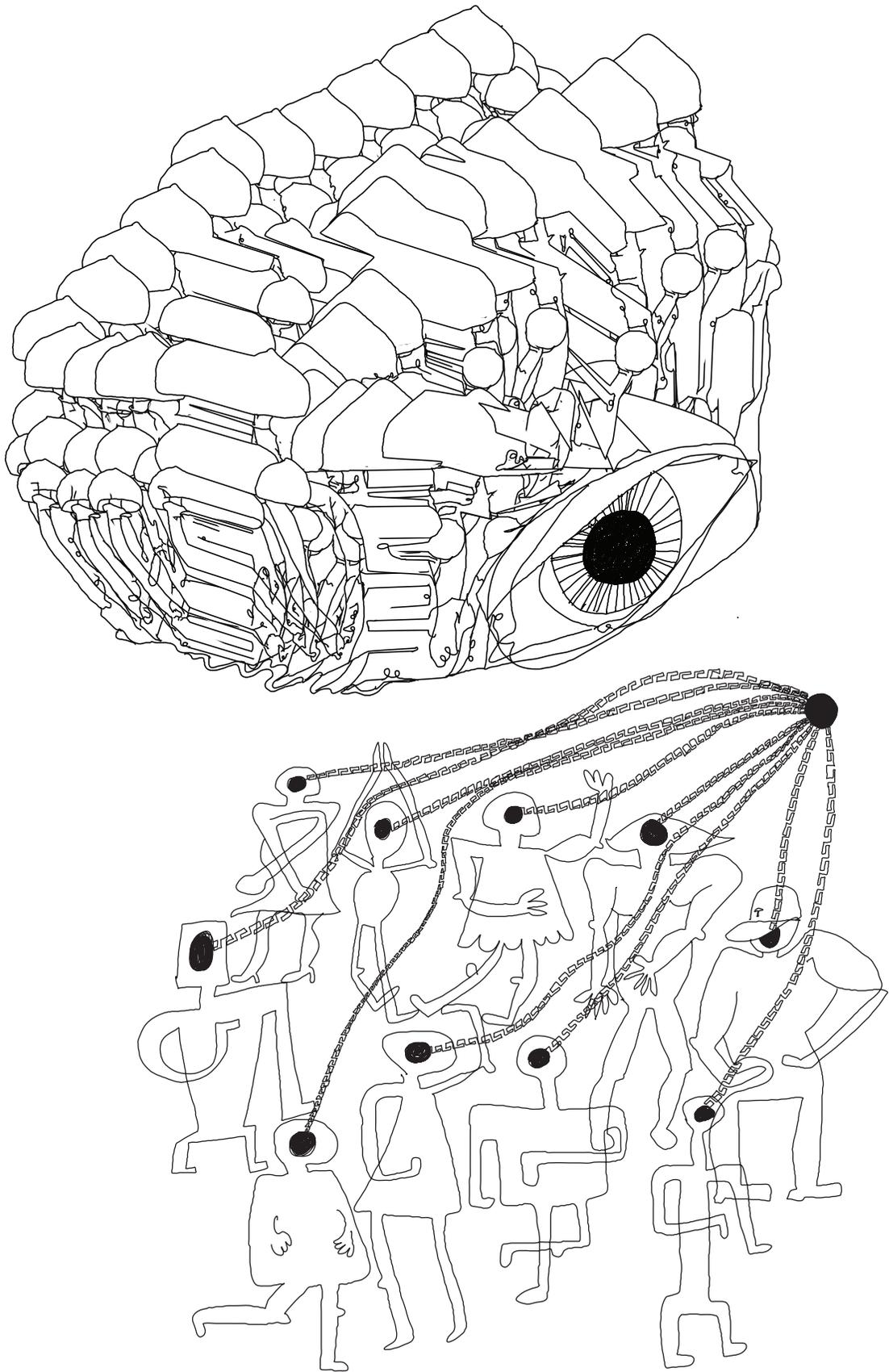
But I grant that people like Rupert Sheldrake have made interesting arguments that stars have the same complexity in the behavior of their electromagnetic fields as brains. And indeed, that could be an indication of some kind of dissociated higher system. This is interesting, but if I now had to make a bet on the question of whether our sun has a private inner life: I'd say no.

O.G. Back to art ... for me, some art can give me, in a glimpse, a sudden feeling of belonging; the exact same feeling I can experience when I go hiking for several days in the mountains. I think the confrontation with art and nature has the potential of self-recognition or self-remembering. Is this sense of reconnecting an expression of what you call 'religare' or religion?

B.K. I think it is, squarely. I think it is the only thing it is. And it is the most important thing that it could possibly be. Art is indeed a form of religion in the Latin sense of reconnection. It is an echo of our true selves; not our personal selves but what we *really* are. It is a fractal echo of the art that gave birth to the universe. It's a lower order instance of the same natural impulse, an impulse of expression and manifestation. And of course, the thing that manifests is part of you, it's part of the mind of nature because that's the only thing that exists. So, every artistic production is a mirror image of the artist, not in the personal sense but in the universal sense.

O.G. In addition, you mentioned that our suffering makes us aware of the fact that we are aware. But I experience the making of a work also as a self-reflective state of being. I think that's partially why the making of art, in and of itself, is truly important. It is an antidote to suffering because its self-reflective state is also





a 'divine offer'. In *'Metaphysics and Woo'* (Science Ideated, 2021, p.201) you state that *'the philosophy profession along with art and spirituality is the only human activity that directly tackles the meaning of life.'* In the article it is clear what you mean for philosophy. But how do you see the role of art? How do you see the connection between spirituality, art & philosophy?

B.K. Spirituality is the reconnection with that which expresses. Art is the expression. Philosophy is the rational analysis of what is expressed. So, spirituality has to do with what expresses, art with the process and philosophy with the evaluation of the product and its meaning. So first you are the thing that expresses, then you express and then you step back while contemplating what is expressed. Spiritual, artist, philosopher.

O.G. I heard you recently talk about the inertia of stigmergy in our society and that we should break free of it. Can a mature use of psychedelics not play a major role in this? I mean as a non-conceptual and direct transformative experience of being open to an agnostic not-knowing. As a trick or *mêtis* to defy reason from within and to make old habits become softer. I think a mature use would be very beneficial for our civilization as a whole because it will enlarge our self-acceptance, which is the basic requirement for empathy toward others.

B.K. Absolutely, one of the most reliable positive outcomes of psychedelic use is that it makes you aware of how much your reality is constructed out of your own beliefs and how fragile those beliefs are. Psychedelics give you a very pungent, immediate, and compelling realization of your own made-up stories and of the stories of the world around you.

I have no problems admitting that psychedelics have helped me a lot in maturing. But I used psychedelics in my mid-30s, when I already had a lot of questions. I do not think psychedelics are useful when you are 20 years old.

But again, I have no problem acknowledging that the most reliable and beneficial aspect of psychedelic use is that it makes you realize, by acquaintance, how much you live your own stories. And that it is all just stories. Psychedelics make the distinction between these made-up stories and Reality clear. In a psychedelic trance you realize how much you have been taken in by your narratives and the narratives of your culture, friends and family. In a strong psychedelic trip, you are faced with your own bullshit and this gives you a very reliable and positive outcome.

But I want to express some concerns about psychedelics. Beware when you come back from a trip with a new and ready-made metaphysical worldview. I want to express this concern because the mind's prime directive is to deceive itself and, under psychedelics, your defenses are low, so you are vulnerable to yourself and your fantasies.

But when you want to explore your own psychology, psychedelics are worth 10 years of therapy. Yet, 10 years of therapy in 4 hours can also be very difficult to integrate. It can be an overwhelming experience. But if done maturely and responsibly, with sober assistance, it is very useful. The experience will open your mind and your ability to empathize with other people will indeed multiply by a thousand. You will realize that you were so wrong about everything, so that when you find other people to be wrong it doesn't evoke judgement

anymore but compassion. Everything that you would normally frown about in others, you still see, but your immediate reaction is one of compassion. But realize, even compassion has a dark edge to it.

O.G. As I said before, I sense that things can only come into existence if they are simultaneously imagined AND believed. And it is quite easy to imagine an-end-of-the-world-scenario, but it takes intuitive creativity to imagine a non-naive alternative for the better. Huxley's novel 'Island' is a great expression of this or the work of Miyazaki & the early Ghibli-studio. For instance, Miyazaki's characters embody different archetypes in different situations and the integration of their faults (shadow work) is part of their endeavor. If you compare Miyazaki's work with some two-dimensional Hollywood films, it seems, Miyazaki's scenarios are the expression of a much richer imagination. My question is: can a richer imagination restore the course of society and re-aim it back towards meaning? Can a believed imagination create better narratives which generate openness and new perspectives to what is known & unknown?

B.K. Yes. The only thing that can create a new narrative is the imagination. There is no other game in town. The ability to imagine beyond the imposed boundaries of culture, the ability to think broader than the current assumptions, the current axioms, the current logic and current paradigm precedes all change.

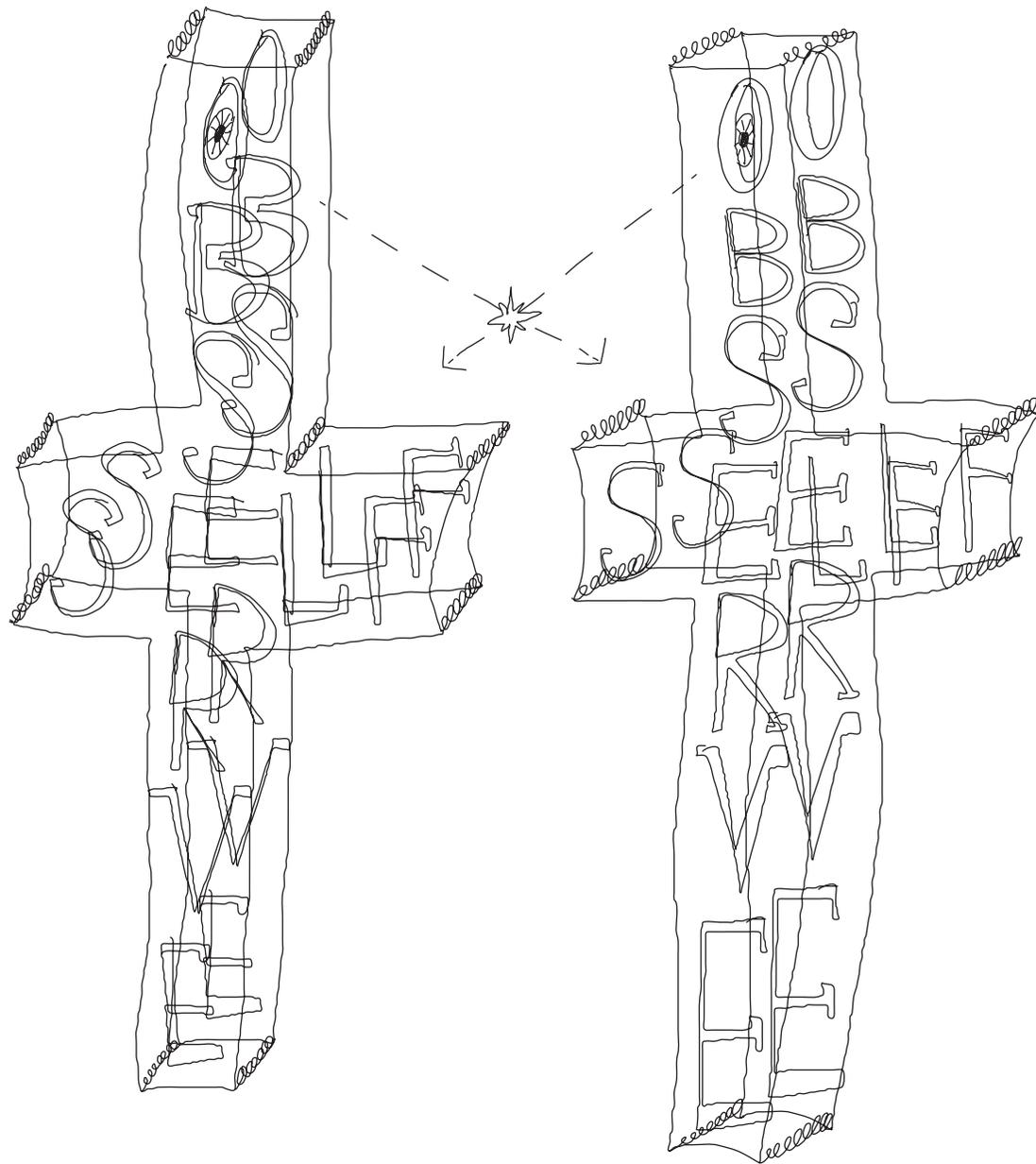
Regarding the end of the world, it is an archetypal theme which often means the end of OUR world. We are all going to die, our world as we understand it is coming to an end. The greatest irony of this is that death is precisely when you become the world, not when you are going to lose it. Because of this, 'the end of the world' is an archetypal theme across times and cultures. Also, an archetypal theme is creation out of nothing. How can everything come out of nothing, ex nihilo? And that has echoes in science in e.g. the Big Bang theory, which is an archetypal creation myth. It has been enshrined in the altar of modern science but is literally creatio ex nihilo.

O.G. So, rather a cognitive Big Bang in the here-now? But out of nothing or out of a *multiverse of potential*?

B.K. Well, there always must be potential, otherwise we wouldn't be here. That is the intuitionistic logic about it. If it exists only in potential, then there is a sense in which it doesn't yet exist. You have to provide an expression or an instance of it for you to be able to say that it exists.

So, we have these two archetypal themes. Everything out of nothing and the end of our world. And these themes will always be there, even if we manage to change our civilization for the better. But if we don't change, it is only our civilization that is going to end. If you give the planet another million years it will be rich again and abundant with all sorts of life. Everything will be again in time and maybe better than now. The end of a civilization is not even the end of a species. There always will be groups who will have the skills to survive, even without current civilization. But if we don't get our act together and civilization ends, a lot of people will die. Because we only drink by opening the tap and eat by going to the supermarket. And if the civilization goes it is a pity because it is a major reset.





Despite all our mistakes, at least today the debate is happening. Despite the craziness of the dominant worldview of materialism, which is literally self-contradictory and empirically inadequate, today there is space for debate, there is space for this conversation we're having. There is space to imagine beyond the current assumptions. There is space to write books and to make art. There is space for the green movement to shout 'we are going in the wrong way!' There is space for theologians to say the religion that atheists are destroying is a straw man, it is not the real deal. These discussions are all happening despite conspiracy theories, the maladies of social media, political polarization, and environmental destruction. Despite all of this: the debate is happening! So, there is a core of promise to our civilization.

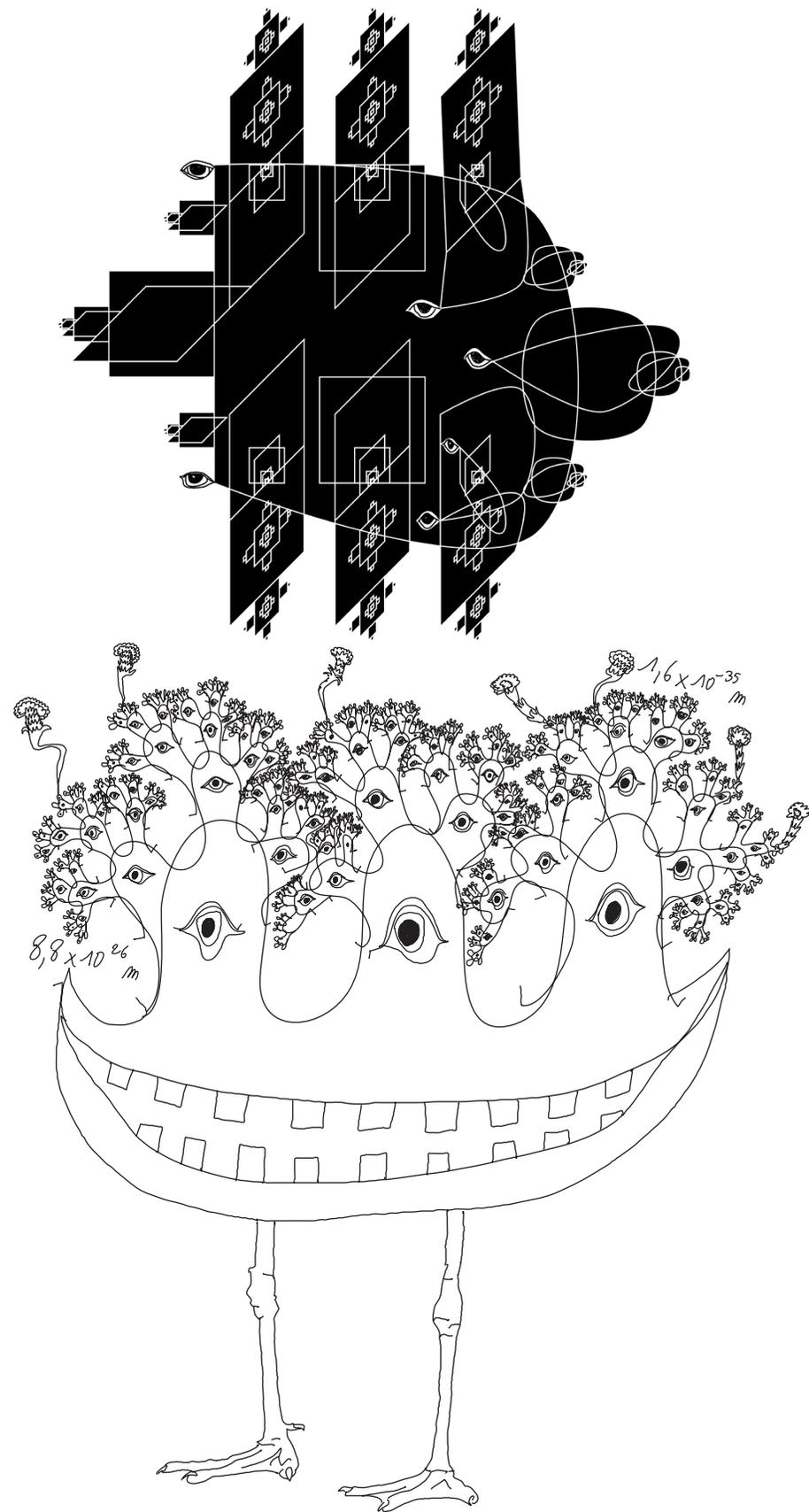
If we would destroy civilization, it would be a pity and a huge restart from an earlier stage but not a fundamental loss. Eventually, we would get to the stage of debate again and go further, because we have already seeded the universal mind with the insights that we have had so far. So we will never go back to zero. But it would be nice if we could avoid wasting time, energy and resources by not destroying our civilization and continuing in a more sustainable way.

O.G. In addition, Terence McKenna claims that the universe is an artmaking engine which always preserves its expressed novelty. And that the only certainty we have is that there always will be more novelty in less time. I think therefore he would exclude the reset of a global civilization. But I wonder if his 'always-more-novelty-in-less-time-idea' could be some sort of a template of nature?

B.K. Terence was an expression of the thelos archetype. His whole idea was that there is an attractor in the future and the whole of nature is being pulled from the future in order to embody a certain goal. Increased fractal spiral loops in which we go increasingly higher and faster is part of the archetypal theme he embodied. Terence was so much in the grip of this thelos archetype that he inflated it while he tried to make it into a scientific theory. But here he was very naive and I think plain wrong.

O.G. I understand, but do we not always experience an exponential growth of novelty, connectivity & insight?

B.K. If you look back in history you see that it is not quite like that. From the axial age of the Greeks 600 BC to the fall of Rome 400 CE there was indeed exponential growth. But after the fall of Rome, we experienced a thousand years of dark ages with very little progress. There were some bright lights too; like John Scotus Eriugena, Augustine and others. But it was a tremendous contrast compared to the thousand years before that. And then the Renaissance picks up again with exponential growth in science and technology ever since. In terms of philosophy, a point can be made that we are going backwards very quickly because of the stupidity of physicalism and the incoherence of that story. There are even reasons to believe that there have been lost civilizations; there are some very interesting signs about significantly advanced groups of people in the past which left us only small hints. Only civilizations we know of today are part of our known history, but we do not know for sure how many times we've had an exponential growth, just to then collapse far back and start over again.



O.G. Is there a synchronistic experience you want to share? And how do you explain these non-causal meaningful events within an idealistic framework?

B.K. Ultimately it is all happening in one mind. We think we have separate minds because we are dissociated processes of that one mind. What we must explain about synchronicities is why they do not happen all of the time. Because, within one mind, things should be related and synchronous. A synchronicity is to experience the broad thought patterns of one universal field of subjectivity underlying all nature, one mind manifesting its own inherent archetypes. But it is the same archetype behind our own minds because we are part of the mind of nature. So, it is very normal that our mental processes are synchronous with what is happening in nature.

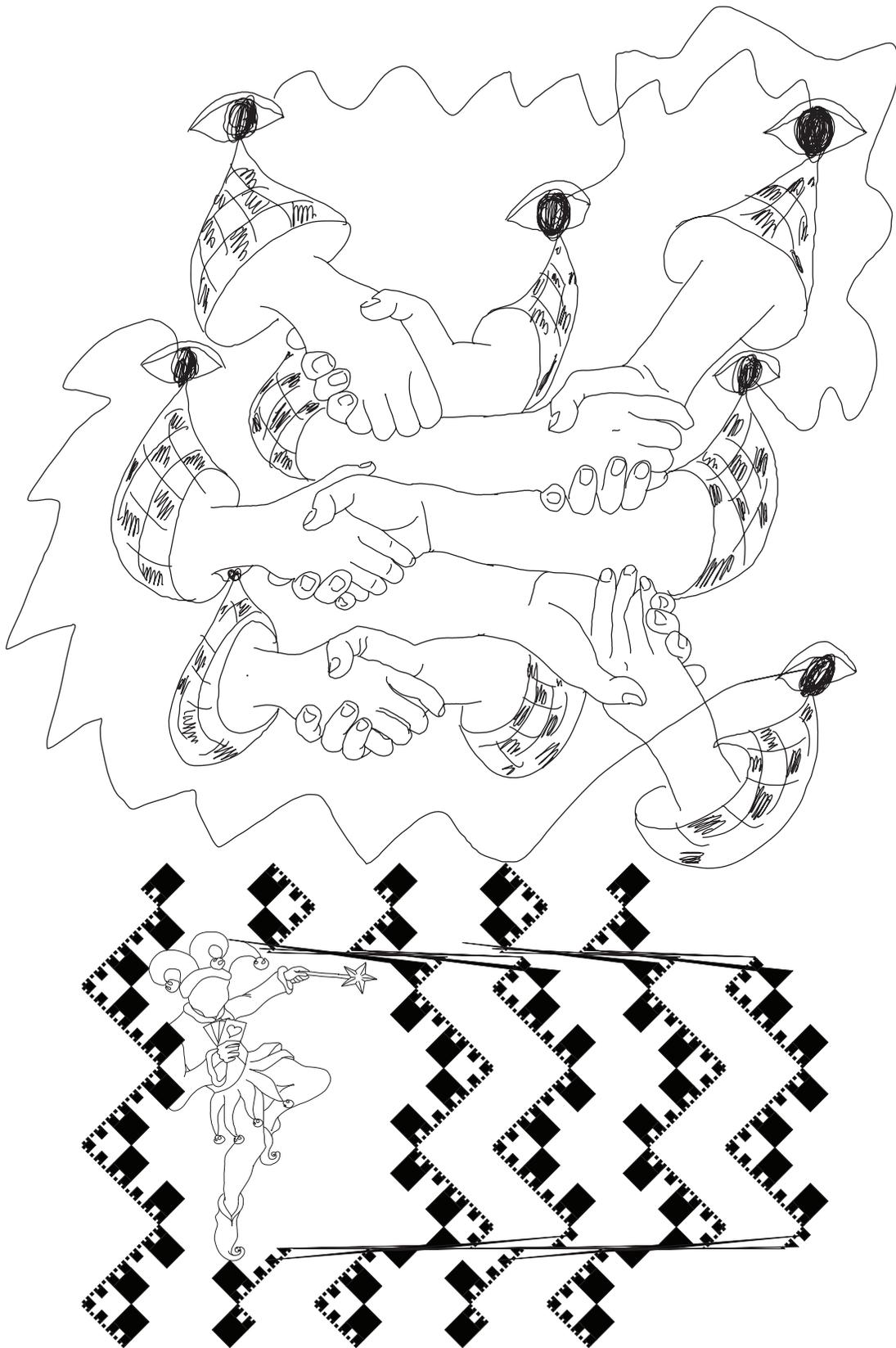
O.G. But you have to believe in them or be open to sense them, no?

B.K. You must know that they are happening and you have to be capable of sensing them, so you can benefit from them. Because often synchronicities happen that we shrug off, don't see, ignore, or don't take seriously and then we miss the opportunity to go with the flow of nature and make life more meaningful.

I will give you a personal example I never told because nobody ever asked me this. Some people are often amazed about some technical knowledge I can express when I am asked a technical question within some deep and very specialized branch of science. Or when I am in a debate, e.g. like I was in a debate with Christof Koch recently, and in a reply I was able to pull out of nowhere some very specific papers of highly specialized journals to make my point against what Koch had just said. So, some people think I must spend all of my time reading, but I don't. I read a fair amount but perhaps less than I should. The secret is to be open to synchronicities. The right papers always land right in front of my eyes just before I need them. This is extremely consistent so I've learned to trust this phenomenon over the years. Sometimes it is a reader who will send me a message or make a comment on Facebook or send me an email. Or I see an announcement of some new research result. Or somebody says something over dinner. The right information just lands in front of me at the very right time.

O.G. So you are attentive while living lucidly?

B.K. I am very attentive to that kind of synchronicity because without it I definitely wouldn't have achieved the position of respect I have today in the cultural dialogue. There are even people who have made the strategic decision never to debate me because they think there is no debate preparation that can make them feel safe. They think I will pull some paper that is extremely specialized and very specific to make the point I want to make. But there is no miracle and neither am I in a marathon of constant studying. People may not believe this but the only thing there is to it, is that I pay attention when certain things land serendipitously before my eyes. If a paper drops on my lap, I have learned to trust and read it. Even if, at a first glance, I don't need this at all; it has little to do with the stuff I am working on. But give it three or six months and it will be exactly the paper I need to make a point in some future context. I have learned to trust and that



is all there is to it. So instead of reading a million papers to derive the 100 I can use, I read 500 papers but those 100 I need will be there. Once you do nature's bidding nature helps with what you do! The whole world will contribute to smoothen the path because nature helps itself if you come to trust it. In a week I will have this debate with Prof. Graham Oppy and I haven't begun the debate preparation yet. But I trust whatever I need to know will land before my eyes when I need it.

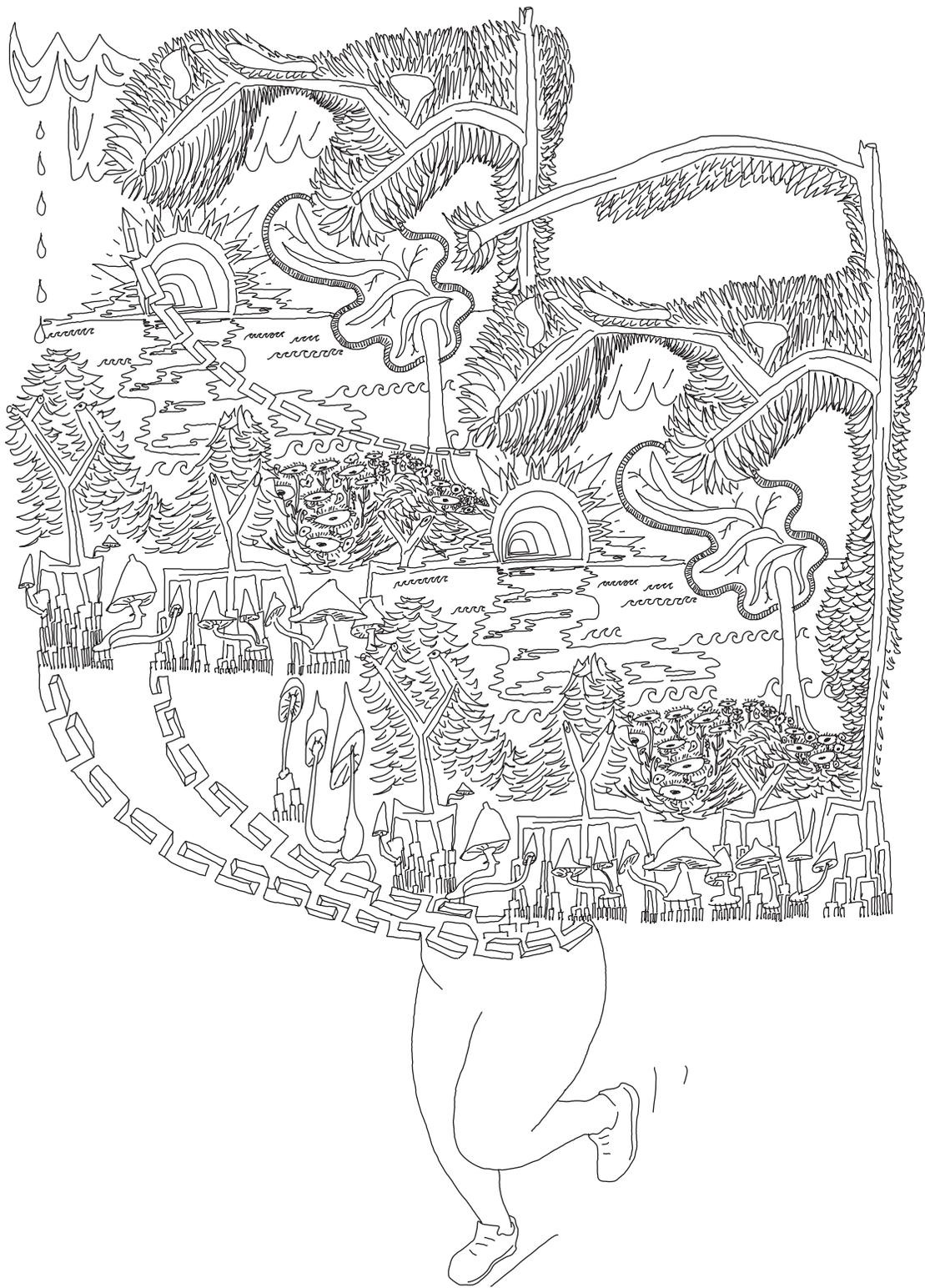
O.G. Then I hope this conversation may give you something beneficial.

B.K. Exactly, because the main thing one needs to do is to pay attention now and take what is given seriously. What lands before your eyes should not be ignored! So keep your eyes open and live lucidly, as you have put it previously. So I come to trust this to a point some would say is even irresponsible. But these serendipitous synchronicities have been happening consistently for 15 years, so at some point I stopped doubting it. So now that is how it is and there is no reason not to trust it. Without knowing I trust that, during a debate, I will have read the necessary papers and the moment when the point of the paper becomes relevant in the discussion I will see the appropriate page of the paper in my mind's eye. I can basically read out from it; I can tell the complete citation, author, paper title, issue number, year and figure numbers. I can suddenly quote stuff. And it is not something I get out of debate preparation because that would be just exhaustive and all-consuming. It is based on synchronicity, serendipity and trust.

O.G. Great, thanks for sharing! Recently I also have heard you talk about why preaching will never work. Preaching is ego driven and it does not have the engine of nature to give it force. I would describe the opposite of preaching as meaningful teaching which is again a relational experience. A teacher needs receptors who are open for meaning and the intention of the teacher has to be impersonal, for the benefit of the whole. But I think a genuine artwork can fulfill a similar teaching-role. The work is an offer and by an enthusiastic and impersonal intention of the artist, the spectator can truly relate to the work and co-create a meaningful experience. Can you relate with this?

B.K. Absolutely. I wouldn't call myself a teacher though, but more somebody who loves arguing. Not arguing in the sense of having a fight but arguing in the sense of making an argument. For me a teacher is not only the one who shares something, but also the one who is in a position of knowing. And I cannot see myself in that position. I am more in the position of guessing in an educated way. I do believe I can make a much better guess than the opposition, but I am definitely not in a position of absolute knowing. And perhaps nobody really is, since we are still just monkeys on a small planet of a peripheral solar system of an average galaxy.

O.G. Ok. But is it correct to state that art, as all physicality, is never literally true? Can art be understood as an embodied material expression? Is art not always symbolic? Because it represents the expressed relation of the mentation of the artist with a transpersonal mentation. So an empathic spectator looks 'through the lens of an artwork' to the artist's felt relation with the whole while he or she made the artwork.



B.K. Yes, indeed, and if you succeed in doing that you will realize that the artist's felt relation is also your felt relation. And that's when art truly comes to life.

O.G. I sense that intention towards the other is always consciously experienced by the other, but to meta-consciously know that you experience the intention of the other, you need to be able to attend to it. But this means that nobody is ultimately unconscious. Because to be unconscious is a non-experience one cannot have about a potential relation between mentation which did not occur.

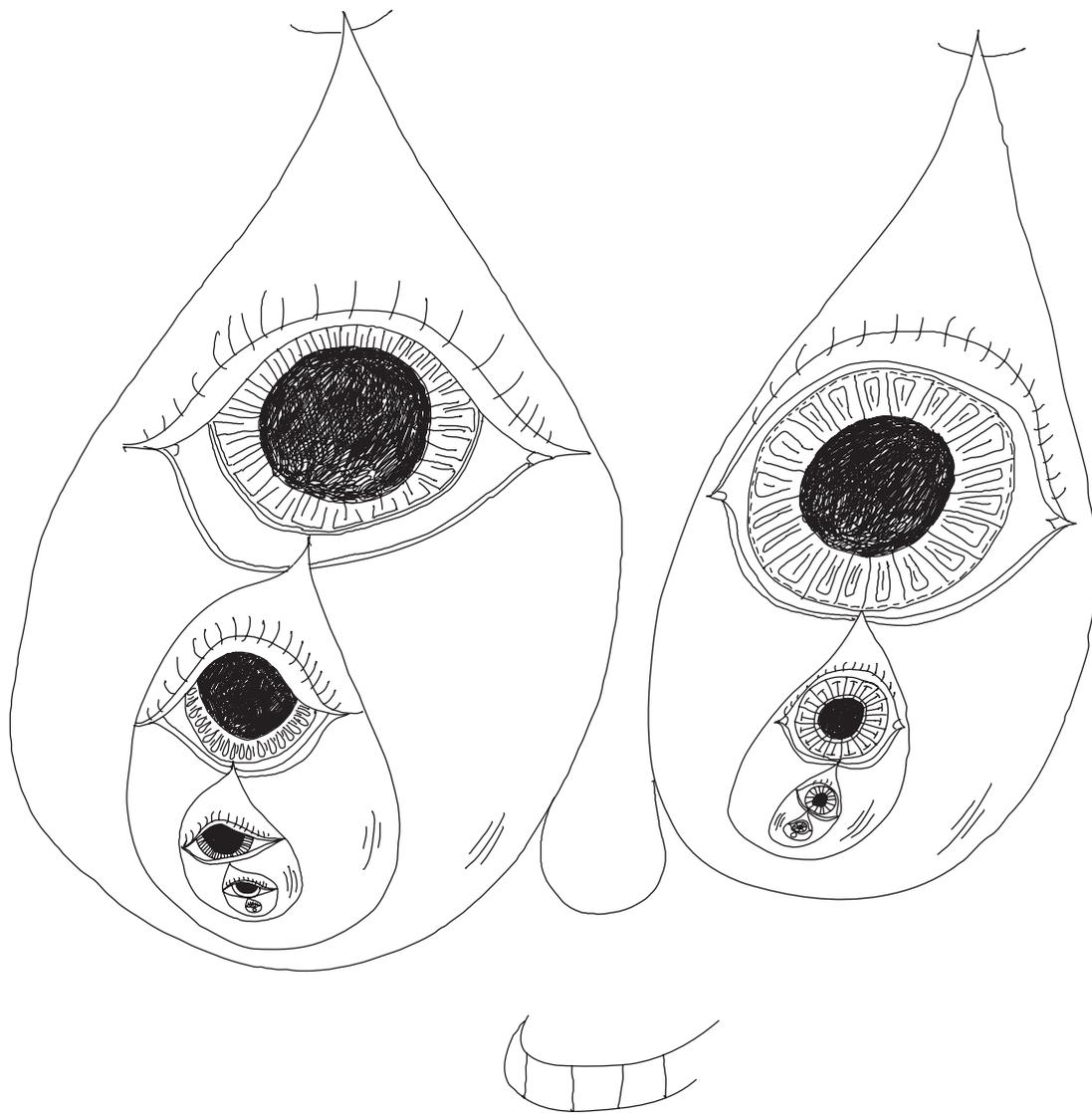
B.K. Correct!

O.G. But then, as a consequence, are we not conscious of all relation between all mentation? Of course, only a tiny fragment is accessible to the ego; a dissociated person can only attend to the tip of its iceberg ... but I imagine all icebergs at some point connect in depth. So, if we are conscious, but not meta-conscious, of all relation between mentation is then all suffering of others not also personal? And does this principle not ground our egoic sense of conscience and personal morality?

B.K. I think we are *conscious* of everything that is happening within the boundaries of our own alter. But we are *meta-conscious* of only a small part of that. As for what is happening *beyond* the boundaries of our own alter, I think not only are we not meta-conscious of it, we are also dissociated from it. This does not mean that we are unconscious of it; it is just not accessible. So the absence of meta-consciousness is not the only mechanism of alienation; dissociation too is a mechanism of alienation. So the lack of empathy cannot be attributed only to the lack of meta-consciousness. Dissociation can have the same effect and we are dissociated from the feelings of others. Dissociation can make it impossible to have true compassion for someone else.

I think we can figure out the way towards compassion without metaphysics. We need to become meta-conscious of the things we are not dissociated from; our own smallness, our nonsense, our failings, our biases, our arrogance, our deviations, our weaknesses and prejudices. All this stuff you do not want to know about yourself is within reach because it is within the boundaries of your alter. If you become meta-conscious of this shadow, you will have more compassion and be less judgmental. Because when you see others fall in the same traps, the first thought that comes to you will be one of recognition; 'I too made that mistake, I too was cruel, I too didn't pay attention to the needs of people I love,' and so on.

So it is a huge step to become aware of our own shadow. It is the practical key towards compassion and, therefore, towards a world with less conflict. But we are so afraid to be disappointed in ourselves that we dare not look at our own evil. Humanity's favorite way to avoid becoming acquainted with its intrinsic evil is to project our shadow onto others. If we do not dare to look at our own shadow, we will have a relationship with it by proxy or by projection. Carl Jung was very sharp about this; if there is something about another person that really upsets you and makes you dislike them, that's probably a reflection of your own shadow. And the reason you dislike it in them is that it consciously reminds you of something you don't want to know about yourself.



O.G. So again, self-acceptance is prior to the acceptance of the other?

B.K. Yes, but first you have to recognize your own bullshit as your own and then you already become more compassionate; instead of judging others you will recognize your own difficulties within others. There will be more understanding and more acceptance towards others. The second step after recognition, and arguably a more difficult one, is what you just said, the full acceptance of your own shadow. By this self-acceptance, you end conflict because simultaneously you fully accept the shadow *of the other*. This is easily said but it is impossible to convey what is really meant by it unless people have gone through the experience. Because to accept your own shadow entails sincerely not wanting to destroy it completely. To accept is not to destroy! And this requires a kind of maturity you don't see in the world today.

Our culture has an adolescent way of going about life in which you try to make everything simple with categories like 'I am with the good' and 'the bad is with the others'. But if you live life with some attention, you know there is a lot of bad in you too. Perhaps this adolescent way of going about life is most visibly articulated in American media today, but it is also enshrined in the value systems of large chunks of the world. You find it in the immature cultural ideal of being a 'righteous person', someone who is only good and has nothing bad. This idea is impossible and unnatural and it's extremely unhelpful to pretend that it is possible. Because if you don't accept your own evil, you will fail to watch it. And if you don't watch it, you don't control it and that makes you vulnerable and dangerous when you least expect it. But to be an adult and to accept the shadow is not as easy as it sounds. It entails looking at that part of you that you really hate and telling it: you too have a right to exist and you too are a part of me. You are not unnatural, you are not an aberration and you will have your time under the sun, but *only under adult supervision*, so I shall not give you free reign. And this is a tricky, intimate relationship to have because you constantly must engage with everything you don't like about yourself. But we have to do it and take personal responsibility, otherwise we will keep on projecting our shadow and we will keep on generating conflict.

O.G. Ok, a last question. I think the ego's main function is to be conscious of its first freedom of personal conscience. Could you say that it should be the ego's priority to recognize the impersonal force, which you call shadow or daimon, and to accept it by moral integration? I've heard you say with one foot in chaos and one foot in order one should find a middle-ground. Is that not also the place where you can surf the wave of experiencing meaning?

B.K. Sure. I think the job of the ego is simple. It is to become explicitly aware of everything; not only of the shadow, but also of the unfolding of nature around you. It is the ego's sole job to become self-consciously aware of all things; to not only experience things, but to know *that* it is experiencing things. The ego's job is not to try to find a way to be happy; that's just an egocentric fantasy. Nature suggests precisely the opposite all the time. Life is tough and the ego's job is to pay attention. And if it pays attention, it will ask the right questions and therefore trigger the creativity of intuition. And when playful, you will find meaning.

O.G. Thank you for being.





