

This paper was sent to and received by  
Professor Humberto Maturana  
Matriztic Institute  
Santiago  
Chile  
and he graciously acknowledged it.

## The Santiago Theory – a Revisit, Part I

by  
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In this paper, the male pronoun will apply to either gender.  
The nominal pronoun will apply to the first author.  
The plural pronoun will apply to both authors.  
The spelling is British English.

*We dedicate this paper to Humberto Maturana and  
Francisco Varela for opening our eyes to understand our  
world and life so differently.*

If you read this work, *The Tree of Knowledge* The Biological Roots of Human Understanding Shambhala, 1987, by Humberto R. Maturana & Francisco J. Varela<sup>1</sup>, you will access the information about the Santiago Theory. Additionally you need only type into any search engine of the Internet, Santiago Theory, and you will know what it means to be inundated.

The theory proposes that:

at the very beginning of your life there was NOTHING except you and the structures in you. Then from the structures in you unfolded your world. Since we all have similar structures, we all have similar worlds. However, your world is only *a* world. It is not THE world.

If this is true-to-fact, then the classical view that there is a distinction between *me* and the outside reality as a distinct separate entity **collapses**. It also means that we do not take in sensory information from the external world and represent them in the neural cortex of our brain<sup>2</sup>.

When I grasped this, I felt like those who, so long ago, were compelled to shift in their thinking, to wit to:

1. suddenly realize that the world was not flat
2. accept the horrible truth that we were not at the centre of the universe
3. agree that the sun did not rise in the east and set in the west

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<sup>1</sup> Humberto R. Maturana & Francisco J. Varela are faculty neuro-scientist of the University of Santiago, Chile.

<sup>2</sup> **It also means that we do not take in sensory information from the external world and represent them in the neural cortex of our brain.** If this is true, there is a critical implication here. It is that the brain does not have to engage in information processing.

4. acknowledge that we are not stationary but that we are going around the sun at a velocity in excess of 26000 mph
5. that reality is NOT self-evident<sup>3</sup>
6. fall in line with the axiom that:  
   there is no why!
7. even worse, that there is no Cause and Effect<sup>4</sup>.
8. and perhaps one day, end the terror and horror that in all the cosmos we are alone<sup>5</sup>.

We have had to engage in some Einsteinian thought experiments to produce this paper. As we look back, we are a little breathless from our efforts but we are pleased with what we have done. However, as we look forward we can see the knives and hatchets coming out of the world of orthodoxy to give us our most deserved coup de grâce<sup>6</sup>.

What Maturana and Varela did not specify in their work was what were the structures in us. The field of Neuro-Semantic Programming, NSP, now proposes that they are:

1. our HOPs, (Hierarchy of Paradigms)<sup>7</sup>
2. Deep Structure<sup>8</sup>.

Our HOPs are the blueprints of life that are embedded in us and which we use to get:

1. the semantic form of our world
2. our understanding of it, ourselves, others and things.

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<sup>3</sup> that reality is NOT self-evident:

once based on the opposite, we arrived at utterly inane and idiot conclusion. One infamous one was that we at the centre of the Universe. Another was that the world is flat. Additionally, the proof that reality is NOT self-evident is witnessed in our experience when we cry out, “If only I had known.”

<sup>4</sup> no Cause and Effect, as a proposition, has been fiercely and ferociously argued in these books, *Science and Sanity* by Alfred Korzybski, father of General Semantics, *Structure of Magic* by Richard Bandler and John Grinder, and in *Don't Ask Why?!* and *Power and Elegance in Communication*, PEOPLE, PARADIGMS and PARADOXES by the authors of this paper. It is certainly corroborated by Quantum Physics.

<sup>5</sup> end the terror and horror that in all the cosmos we are alone:

If you think about this belief you will get a sense that there is something inane and idiot about its presupposition that God is somehow restricted to creating sentient beings, us, only on our very minor planet, on the outer edge of a minor galaxy that is located in some way out place of the and no other.

<sup>6</sup> our most deserved coup de grâce:

This paper is so utterly contrary to all conventional understanding of reality and human ontology that it cannot but be ill received. It throws a gauntlet down before all established beliefs. Many will not be able to accept it as taken and allow it to pass unchallenged. We welcome what ever the riposte. Our prayer is that it will be the basis of a true and vibrant debate.

<sup>7</sup> Our HOPs, (Hierarchy of Paradigms) consist of the General Paradigms, the Specific Paradigms and the Meta Paradigm. The General Paradigms are those of Race, Family, Language, Religion, Politics, Culture, Societal system, Law, Science, Military, Lore, Customs and Traditions. The Specific Paradigms are an infinity of possibilities and are unique to the individual. We cite here 5 examples, 1 People must be on time, 2. People must not make a fool of me, 3. I must not make a fool of myself, 4. We must be sure to please others, 5. There must be zero tolerance against people who offend others. There are 2 Meta Paradigms. For our purposes we will only index the first. It is the Aristotelian system of Cause and Effect.

<sup>8</sup> Deep Structure:

We have had to postulate this as the basis to explicate this – the Andromeda galaxy that unfolds to us will also unfold to a wild child.

What was this **NOTHING** that Maturana and Varela wrote?

It is our view, this **NOTHING** is the nothingness that was explicated by Heinz Pagels<sup>9</sup>:

**The nothingness “before” the creation of the universe is the most complete void that we can imagine - no space, time or matter existed. It is a world without place, without duration or eternity, without number - it is what the mathematicians call “the empty set.” Yet this unthinkable void converts itself into the plenum of existence - a necessary consequence of physical laws. Where are the laws written into that void? What “tells” the void that it is pregnant with a possible universe? It would seem that even the void is subjected to law, a logic that exists prior to space and time.**

**Heinz R. Pagels:** Perfect Symmetry THE SEARCH FOR THE BEGINNING OF TIME , Simon and Schuster 1985, page 347.

If our entire reality unfolded out of this nothingness, the empty set, then **our creation is isomorphic with the creation of our universe** - as we understand it by the Big Bang Theory of High Physics<sup>10</sup>.

According to the Santiago Theory from our HOPs and Deep Structure **everything** unfolds<sup>11</sup>. What then is this **everything**?

We say that this **everything** is the **infinity of all possible perturbations**<sup>12</sup>. As a whole, they constitute the infinity of all the possible perturbations of our **Universal Physical Records, ∞<sup>13</sup>pUPR**. In the language of Neuro-Linguistic Programming. NLP, this would be the information appertaining to every possible atomic unit and sub-atomic unit of every sub-modality of every possible thing in all creation. For an NLP-er this indeed is what ∞ means.

It is by the structure of our HOPs and Deep Structure that we determine what and which perturbation from our **∞pUPR** will be used to configure a semantic item within the infinity of our **Sensory Data Base, ∞SDB**<sup>14</sup>. In this way our reality unfolds. If our reality

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<sup>9</sup> Heinz Pagels was an American physicist, an adjunct professor of physics at Rockefeller University, the executive director of the New York Academy of Sciences and president of the International League for Human Rights. He is best known for his popular science books *The Cosmic Code* (1982), *Perfect Symmetry* (1985), and *The Dreams of Reason: The Rise of the Sciences of Complexity* (1988).

<sup>10</sup> Big Bang Theory of High Physics states that there was a state of perfect symmetry, the **NOTHING** as described by Heinz Pagels. Then there was a perturbation upon it. From this perturbation exploded everything that was to form our cosmos. We suggest that you get the information about it from the Internet.

<sup>11</sup> **everything** unfolds:

unfortunately this is not the paper to discuss what is the power by which “**everything** unfolds.” It will be done in the series, *Being and Time* of which Part I will be published in the Spring issue of the premier NLP journal, Rapport..

<sup>12</sup> **Perturbations** can be thought of as ripples, tweaks, flips, smears of the magnitude of one to 2 angstroms.

<sup>13</sup> ∞ the mathematic symbol for infinity.

<sup>14</sup> Sensory Data Base, Error! Main Document Only. **∞SDB** holds an infinity of information. We use our ability to abstract to get the minimum that we need to function. If we tried to comprehend all the information, that is to say, every element and sub-element and sub-sub-element, every item and every sub-

never unfolded we would remain in the nothingness of the empty set. To put it in another way, we would continue to exist in Perfect Symmetry<sup>15</sup>. The semantic well-formedness or ill-formedness of our reality and our lives is therefore, by our thinking, feelings and doings.

By our HOPs and Deep Structure, the infinity of our Sensory Data Base,  $\infty$ SDB is converted into the potential infinity of our Universal Logical Records,  $\infty$ ULR<sup>16</sup>. With this, all elements and items of our Sensory Data Base is placed into files either by Time and Place<sup>17</sup>; and then by categories according to content, they are distributed to various sites of the brain. So, if I were to ask you to think of mother now, you might seek the thought of her in vision. You will get the general file dealing with PEOPLE. In that file you will then go to Relatives. In Relatives you will go to Nuclear Family and by choice you will look for your mother when she was 24 years old. If I were to ask you, "What was your best holiday?" you can elect to remember it either by place or by time. If it is by Time, you go file for holidays that are sequestered by Time; then you get to the file for Best Holidays. There before you is 1984 and there it is, all the information about it and it was in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. What we are looking at is the efficiency of accessing information in our  $\infty$ SDB by the order of a hierarchical system.

Now Maturana and Varela offer a very different take versus the classical position that we represent the external reality in us. Their positions is:

**. . . , for in each interaction it is the nervous system's structure that specifies what perturbations are possible and what changes trigger them.**

**In other words, the nervous system does not "pick up information" from the environment, as we often hear. On the contrary, it brings forth a world by specifying what patterns of the environment are perturbations and what changes trigger them in the organism. The popular metaphor of calling the brain an "information processing device" is not only ambiguous but patently wrong.**

**Humberto R. Maturana & Francisco J. Varela: *The Tree of Knowledge* The Biological Roots of Human Understanding Shambhala 1987 page 169.**

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item, and sub-sub-item, ever unit and every sub-unit and sub-sub-unit we would literally drown in all the information.,

<sup>15</sup> we would continue to exist in Perfect Symmetry:

Yet we are forced to conclude that even when we have our unfolded reality, the entirety is still in Perfect Symmetry. If this is so it brings to mind that saying, "No matter what, we shall always be in the palm of God."

<sup>16</sup> Universal Logical Records,  $\infty$ ULR:

It is in this way the entire data base,  $\infty$ SDB becomes a functioning and useful filing system as explicated above.

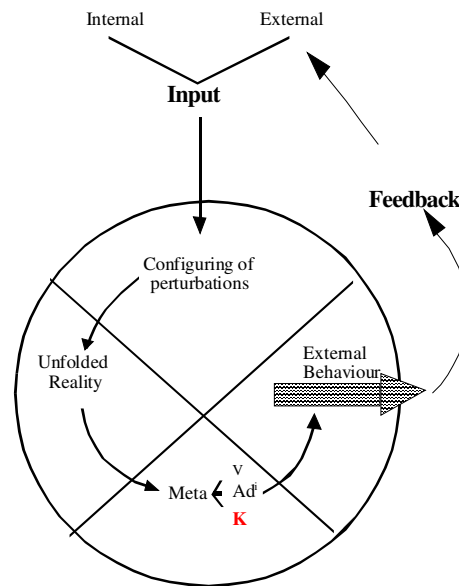
<sup>17</sup> placed into files either by Time and Place.

The Left Brain has a Time function, which imbues it with its sequencing properties. The Right Brain has a geometric function or as it is known in Psychology, a global function. This imbues it with its place or spatial properties. All configurations in the Left Brain has a time tag and those in the Right Brain a place tag.

We say that the act of specifying what perturbations are possible, is by our unconscious thinking. It is our structures that is doing the thinking<sup>18</sup>. By it, the definitive semantic form of an unfolded reality is then before us.

We now have to interpret what is the semantics of the unfolded reality. By doing so we get our understanding or meaning of it. However, by our life's experience, we know each of us will have our own unique take about it. Every person has to take a meta position relative to the unfolded reality whether it is one in vision, V, audition, A, in kinaesthetics, K, olfaction, O and Gustation, G.

Below we place for you a diagram of what we have said here:  
From Neuro-Semantic Programming



It is from the meta position that next unfolds the behaviour or action that is concordant with it. If your opinion about a person is that he is an idiot, your expression towards him will reflect this thinking. If what you see is situation that is beautiful and enchanting you will look delighted and feel so. If you are in a rage about what a person has done, you may thump him there and then or you may have to fight the devil to contain the emotion because of what the neighbours might think.

Whatever you do, there is invariably and upside and a downside. These variables constitute the new perturbations that are the feedback to your HOPs.

In Part II, we extend our exploration concerning the relationship between the Santiago Theory and this proposition:

**Everything is language or more accurately the language structures of the language.**

<sup>18</sup> our structures that is doing the thinking:

The best proof that you and everyone else do not usually do any thinking is the witness-in-experience when you are in a fierce conversational exchange. Then you are about to say certain words that are at the very tip of our tongue. Suddenly, to our horror you realize that if you did utter those words, the consequences would be cataclysmic. Who or what though out those words for you to say? It certainly was NOT you.

**Meaning arises as a pattern of relationships among these linguistic distinctions, and thus, we exist in a “semantic domain” created by our language.**

**To be human is to exist in language. In language we coordinate our behaviour, and together in language we bring forth our world. “The world everyone sees,” writes Maturana and Varela, “is not *the* world but a world, which we bring forth with others.**

**Fritzo Capra:** *Web of Life*, A New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems, Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1996, page 288.

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