

ANDREA BALLARINI SANDRO VOLPE

THE CREATIVE CODE



KLEINRUSSO

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*How to go from interpreting data
to sharing meaning without losing sleep*

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The Creative Code is the fourth volume of Pick a Lock, a series of personal stories and private visions hurled into space without a safety net in a kind of psychoanalysis session made up of images and words.

Andrea Ballarini and Sandro Volpe take us on a mental Grand Tour, at the end of which we will find, as in every happy ending, a beginning.

A fictional essay, a morality tale or a graphic novel with a lot of words?

When we decided to try to codify, or at least to describe, the wholly intellectual process that led to the identification of the Creative Code, we soon ran into problems.

The first was a formal one, which demanded we find a language capable of communicating the complexity of a simple thought. A warm, engaging language, which was comprehensible to all and would do justice to an exquisitely speculative vision but which also produced a solid, objective method without turning into the kind of Strategic Planning 3.0 manual written by those who have just seen the light.

The choice of a choral approach which would mix diverse sensibilities in coordinating the story was, for a community like ours, the natural response. That's what Creative Sharing™ is, after all.

At that point the second difficulty presented itself and started telling us that we were contradicting all the most elementary editorial rules (curse those blasted genres).

And so, therefore, it was worth a try.

FABRIZIO RUSSO

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Everyone dreams the dreams they deserve.

GESUALDO BUFALINO

INTRODUCTION

“So you see, I’d very much like to invite you to participate in our next tender, which is coming up soon. We’ve selected a couple of research, consulting and training institutes that meet our criteria for reliability, patented innovation in analysis and information management, and I’d like your agency to be involved too - but as its profile is so different from that of the other two on the list, I’m going to need you to give a presentation explaining your approach to information and, more specifically, how you would use it to direct our company’s choices. Especially in light of the increasingly rapid developments in digital technologies.”

I can hardly believe it. I’ve been courting them for a year without getting anywhere except for evasive phone calls,

pointless meetings, phrases like *the time will come*, or *in the case of an eventual tender for a hypothetical study...* The usual noncommittal rubbish, in short. And now they've come looking for *us*. It's every strategic director's dream come true... Where's the catch?

"Obviously, as I'm sure you realise, gathering together all those who need to be present at a meeting as important as this and giving them the opportunity to decide upon the best possible strategic partner for our communication over the coming years is rather complicated..."

Ah, here we go, I feel like saying. I can almost hear the catch taking off from its treetop perch and swooping across the sky, aiming straight for me.

"...so after careful study of the diaries of the ten people who will be attending, the only possible date..."

Here it comes. The catch has me in its sights. It's zooming down like a Stuka. Target identified and locked: Me.

"...is tomorrow morning at 9:30."

Ah! Perfect!

"What do you mean, tomorrow? *Tomorrow* tomorrow!? In eighteen hours?"

"Er, yes. Unfortunately, it really is the only opportunity we'll have for at least the next three months. So though

I'm very sorry to be giving you an ultimatum like this, I'm afraid we don't really have a choice: it's either tomorrow or never."

"Tomorrow at 9:30 is perfect!"

"Of course, we realise that we can hardly expect you to submit something specifically designed for us in such a short time. Eighteen hours isn't long enough to come up with something made-to-measure - you'd need at least twenty-four for that!" he says, chortling at his own joke. In an ideal world, I'd grab him by the throat, but desperation prevails and I chortle too. What the hell am I chortling about?

"Let's say that we'd like to see something which will convince us you are the right agency for us. Something that shows us your unique way of using the information of a company like ours - which as you know is one of the most important in the field nationally - in the digital age. If I might make a suggestion, don't bother with the usual thing where you come here and waste an hour of our time telling us how many offices you have, how many wonderful people work for you, what fantastic studies you've carried out over the past decade and how much your customers' turnover has grown. That's what all the international agencies we

see tell us nowadays. Tomorrow, please come and tell us something we don't already know. We called your agency... oh, I'm sorry! - your *creative community*, what once would have been called a *creative boutique* - as outsiders because we like your way of thinking, and we want to be inspired by something no other research institute or consultancy with one hundred and fifty offices worldwide, twenty thousand employees and a three point seven zillion turnover can give us. So amaze us. Make us *dream*. To put it bluntly, show us a new way of wrapping the same old ham. Ok?"

There are moments in a man's life when his aspirations overpower his judgment. I try and picture the scene: the half-empty meeting room. Me and the head of communications and marketing of the aforementioned mega-company. The elite of the management group marching in. I feel like Fantozzi¹, helpless in the face of this show of power, and suddenly realise that in the space of a single hour tomorrow I'll have to gamble pretty much everything for which I've ever fought and struggled - first in high school, then at the Bocconi university, and then for

¹ The spineless office worker created by Paolo Villaggio who, in a series of books and films, became the symbol of the mores and aspirations of Italy's lower middle classes, mortified by the power of their betters.

years in advertising agencies and companies - on the most important presentation I've given in the past few years. And the die is cast – the temptation is too strong and, carried away on a delirious wave of momentary ambition and overcome by a desire to prove my worth, I come out with a colossal, Brobdingnagian load of bullshit:

“Of *course!* Tomorrow I'll tell you about our approach to analysis and information management. It's a method we've created specifically for today's, let's say, *post-digital* world - one which we have patented, and which I'll be happy to share with you.”

“Great. See you tomorrow at 9:30, then. And please - don't be late.”

~

Why? Why? Why did I do it? Why did I say that? Why didn't I pull a sickie? I really *wasn't* very well this morning. If I'd stayed in bed, I'd be at home right now, happily stretched out on the sofa, calmly watching something on Netflix, or maybe reading that novel I'd been saving for my next bout of flu. Or maybe me and my kids would be playing with the Lego they love so much. But no. Thanks to my stupid sense of duty – because we all get the superego we deserve,

apparently - I got up, knocked back a couple of aspirins and went to the office, where at twelve o'clock the phone rang and I answered, without even imagining that by doing so I was laying the foundations of my own downfall. But how the hell could I have known what fate had in store for me? It wasn't even the office phone that rang - it was my mobile. How could I possibly have imagined that it was the elusive international leader in communications I'd been courting desperately for nearly two years on the other end? And who knows how he'd got my number - I'd certainly never been able to get close enough to be able to give him it. But that lot are like the CIA - they know everything. And so here I am. The house is quiet: my wife put the kids to sleep and then collapsed into bed an hour ago, and the TV is showing some awful thing that's happened somewhere, but I'm too wound up to be able to understand what, so after a half hour of flicking pointlessly between channels I turn it off. And now here I am, sitting on the terrace with my laptop listening to the quiet gurgling of the automatic watering system that keeps my next-door neighbour's plants alive. It's midnight and the city is unusually quiet - you can sense that my fellow citizens, buckling under the pressure of the summer heat, have begun slowing down. In

nine and a half hours I have to speak about our amazingly innovative approach to information, designed especially for our post-digital age, and I still haven't got the faintest idea what the flipping heck it is. Maybe if I broke a leg tomorrow on my way to the office I'd have a good excuse for missing the meeting... Yeah, right - and for dropping my colleagues in the shit. No, I can't do that... And anyway, if I miss this meeting I might as well start looking for a job as a roast chestnut vendor or something... And I even told them we had a *patented method*! What the hell what was I *thinking*? Maybe I was possessed? My god! Altan² was right: I'd like to know who's responsible for all the stupid shit that I do.

Keep calm, keep calm, keep calm. There are still nine and a half hours to go - there's loads of time... *loads* of time... I feel like my middle-school basketball coach - thirty-five points down with three minutes to the final whistle and he was still telling us, *Calm down, lads, there's plenty of time...*

So, the information... What information? Big data or smart data? Nine hours and twenty-seven minutes. I can do it, I can do it. I've coped with worse... If only I wasn't so

²One of Italy's most famous cartoonists, known for the acerbity of his jokes.

sleepy... isn't adrenaline supposed to *stop* you from falling asleep? Right:

PowerPoint. Blank page. Page 1. Title: What is information?

No, hang on: What is data in the post-digital age? A bit limp, but that's the best I can come up with for the moment.

Page 2: Title: Creativity and data. Subtitle: The meaning and the signifier. Return. We'll talk about semiotics. If

Leopardi had said *I like this hill* instead of *Always dear to me was this solitary hill*, we wouldn't still be talking about

him today. No, I've already used that one too many times.

Shame, it's a good one... God, I'm so sleepy... what time is it? How long have I got left? Nine hours and twenty-six

minutes. I can do it, I can do it... Awake! I *must* stay awake...





DREAM I

WHEREIN WE MAKE THE ACQUAINTANCE
OF THE ELUSIVE CREATIVE CODE.
THOUGH SOME SPEAK OF ITS EXISTENCE,
NONE KNOWS WHAT IT IS

h. 01.27 - 01.29

~

The landscape looks a bit like the one in *Heaven Can Wait* where Warren Beatty walks through a layer of fog that comes up to his calves. Or maybe something out of Doré's *Divine Comedy*, with Virgil visible in the background through the mists of hell. As I look around me in slight bewilderment, I suddenly realise that something like a blue neon sign has appeared in the middle of the fog. I read what it says, and stand there, perplexed.

*Pontine*³ *Philosophy*

Pontine philosophy? Bah! The usual dream nonsense. But

³ The Pontine Marshes is a large flat area to the south of Rome. Between the twenties and thirties the fascist regime carried out large-scale reclamation works there, draining the unhealthy swamps and building the cities of Latina, Sabaudia, Aprilia, Pontinia and Pomezia.

in the meantime, an old man with a long white beard and a white robe tied at the waist has appeared beside me. At first I think it must be God, because as a child in catechism class that was exactly how I imagined him: an old feller with a white beard sitting somewhere on his cloud. But then it occurs to me that however badly-versed I might be in theology, imagery like that is really a bit too basic for an adult, so I decide to ask the old man who he is - it's the logical thing to do, after all.

"Plato," he answers.

"Who?"

"Plato? You never heard of me? What were you doing in high school, ogling the girls?"

"*Plato* Plato?"

The old man looks at me with obvious annoyance.

"*Yes* Plato Plato. Like New York, New York."

"*That* Plato?"

"Well, *this* Plato, if you want to be fussy."

"The philosopher?"

"Jesus wept, how do you want me to say it? Right - Plato, son of Ariston of the Deme of Kollytus and Perictione of Athens, born 428 or 427 BC in Athens, died 348 or 347 BC in Athens. The registry office wasn't up to much back

in them days, you know...”

“But just Plato? Didn’t you have a surname?”

“Oh, for crying out loud... Tell you what, son - I’ll be waiting here, and when you’ve got your brain started, you pop back and see me, ok?”

“Sorry... sorry... I just... How am I supposed to speak to someone who was in my high school history books?”

“Right, let’s keep it simple and stick to first names, otherwise we’ll never get this dream finished.”

“Err... Listen, I don’t want to be rude, but I’m hearing a slight accent that doesn’t exactly sound like Attic Greek.”

“No, it’s from Latina. But that’s ‘cause we’re in your dream. When I appear in a Parisian’s dreams, I’ve got an Île de France accent. And in a Londoner’s dreams I sound like a Cockney, see? Don’t you worry your head about it.”

“Ah, ok, I get you. Each of us creates our own reality. “

“Err, I suppose so, yeah. *That’s* straight out of your third year philosophy book.”

Right, now I’m *totally* bewildered. And above all, I’m really not ready to get into a discussion with a Plato who sounds like he comes from the rustic *agro pontino* countryside. But I’m in the middle of my dream now, and unless I wake up suddenly I’ll just have to make the best of a bad lot.

Meanwhile, as though floating in the air, another neon sign appears. This one is orange, and even more absurd than the first.

California dreaming – no, hang on: Caltanissetta dreaming

What's California got to do with anything? I decide not to worry about it.

“Ok, fine. To what do I owe the pleasure?”

“Of what?”

“I mean, I was wondering to what I owe the pleasure of hosting you in my dream world. What is it that you're supposed to mean? Are you giving me some kind of symbolic message? How should I interpret you?”

“No, never mind all that, mate - you're not that hot at interpreting stuff. It's this presentation you're giving tomorrow that's got you in a state, and so your unconscious is acting up a bit. Now why don't you take a nice little pill so you can get a good night's sleep, then you get up, get washed and shaved, get yourself dressed up nice and smart, go in there and give 'em both barrels of bullshit? I mean, they're from all over Europe, they love all that 'imaginative Italians' stuff: just make sure you don't go over the top and

they won't even realise they're being had."

I'm genuinely scandalised: I'm a strategic planner, so interpreting things is my job, and it's a job I take very seriously - perhaps even a bit *too* seriously – so my first instinct is to ask him straight out who the hell he thinks he is. Just because he's the father of Western philosophy doesn't mean the rest of us are a bunch of neanderthals who've crawled out of the bloody caves! But I have a feeling that getting into a row with Plato wouldn't be a good idea: I'd probably find myself in one of those dialogues of his where he knows all the answers and I end up looking like a total idiot... No, no. I decide to let it go.

"Listen, since we're in *my* dream, do you mind if we give up the accents. I wouldn't usually have a problem with it, but it's messing with my head a bit, to be honest. Plato's supposed to speak proper Italian, or at least Greek, but seeing as I can't speak Greek, let's use Italian, alright?"

"Very well. What shall we talk about?"

"That's what I was about to ask you, actually."

"Ah, of course. Sorry, but with all the appearances I make in dreams – here in Italy now, due at a plumber's in California in ten minutes, an hour later I've got an

appointment with a baker in Caltanissetta... it's a nightmare to organise. In your case I'm here to talk about the processing of reality data. I mean, if the founder of philosophy can't do it, who can, right?"

"The founder... What about Socrates and the pre-Socratics?"

"Alright, yeah, sure, of course there *were* them too. Well, Socrates maybe - the rest of them weren't up to much... Just fluff."

"Thales, Anaxagoras, Anaximander, Parmenides, Pythagoras, Heraclitus and all the others were *fluff*?!"

"No, alright, alright - they had some good ideas too, I'm not saying they didn't... I mean, yeah, everything flows was a good idea. But the rest? What a load of bollocks! Anyway, in your case I'm here to talk to you about the Creative Code."

"You what?"

"It's you who's not talking properly now."

"Sorry, you're right. Distraction. What's the Creative Code?"

Another phrase runs under Plato's chin like a neon subtitle.

The Platonic Din-dins

Din-dins? Ah, perhaps I'm starting to understand. I'm dreaming in chapters. And the neon signs introduce the concepts that my dream is going to speak to me about. Very ingenious. Though it's actually a bit insulting too, if you think about it – does my unconscious think that I'm too stupid to keep up otherwise? What does it take me for? In any case, I decide that from now on I'll read them without paying much attention: I've no intention of letting myself be provoked by my own psyche.

“What's the Creative Code...?” mumbles Plato. “Come on, you can't really expect me to serve you up your din-dins on a plate. This is the beginning of the dream, it's meant to inspire you. You're supposed to do the rest of the job yourself. Later on in night, the concept will probably grow clearer, but for the moment just be satisfied with the platonic idea of the Creative Code and remember, to paraphrase one of my much younger colleagues, that *Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must narrate.*”⁴

“Hang on, are you talking in riddles now? Couldn't you be a bit clearer?”

⁴ Plato is referring to Ludwig Wittgenstein and, specifically, his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. (1921), according to which “Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.” See also note 2 of *Dream II*.

“No I couldn’t, pal – I’m a dream, not a wiseman. I mean, I *am* a wiseman, but *in* a dream... You know what I mean, right?”

“I suppose so. But if you don’t tell me what a Creative Code is, how can I have a Platonic idea of it? If I talk about a circle I imagine an ideal figure where all the points are the same distance from the centre, and even if the circles I come across in the real world never meet that requirement exactly, I still recognise them as circles. But if I don’t have the faintest notion of what the Creative Code is, how am I supposed to imagine it? By just making it up?”

“Oh, strewth - here we go again,” says Plato, throwing up his hands in annoyance, “be seeing ya, pal!” And he waves me a dismissively sarcastic goodbye, turns his back on me and walks off, disappearing into the mist.

And another phrase appears:

Continues...

SAN DIEGO, 16:37 - LOCAL TIME



ALL I DID WAS TALK ABOUT LOVE AS AN ABSTRACT CONCEPT, NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH LOVE UNDERSTOOD AS A HUMAN RELATIONSHIP

I'D HARDLY HAVE STARTED TALKING ABOUT LOVE DIVORCED FROM SEX



IN THE MEANTIME IN LONDON...



DREAM II

IN WHICH WE LEARN THAT THERE ARE MULTIPLE
WAYS TO OBSERVE REALITY
AND THAT DETACHED ANALYSIS IS NOT ALWAYS
THE IDEAL SOLUTION

h. 01.49 – 01.51

~

London calling

The beauty of my dreams is that I often know that I'm dreaming, which is great fun, because it's very liberating to be able to jump from one building to another or say the first thing that pops into your head or do terrible things with the certainty that when you wake up there won't be any consequences. Unfortunately, however, it's not always like that: sometimes I just dream, with all the usual fears, worries and limitations of real life, and I only realise that it was a dream after I wake up. That, for example, is what happens in my nightmares. This time I'm confused, though, and I'm not sure whether I'm in a dream or novel by Arthur Conan

Doyle. The only thing I *do* know is that I had to come here, as though something or someone was calling me. The gaslights struggle against the darkness of the London night, and what with the waning moon and the thick fog, they're fighting a bit of a losing battle. A hansom cab arrives at full tilt, giving me barely enough time to jump out of its way. And they have the nerve to say that *Romans* drive badly! Its brakes squeal and its wheels send a tsunami of mud (or worse) splashing onto my trousers - you'd be amazed how filthy the streets of late-nineteenth-century London were. The carriage stops in front of a brick building just like a million or so other similar ones in Victorian London, the door flies open and from within leaps a tall figure wrapped in an old-fashioned coat and a tatty deerstalker. The man takes a key and opens the front door of the house without hesitation before disappearing into the depths of the building, while another passenger slowly emerges from the carriage and gives the driver a banknote. Having thus received his payment, the cabbie cracks his whip and disappears off into the night, and the second man also walks in through the door. I notice that he limps slightly on his right leg and it occurs to me that

this must be one of the mementos of his service in Her Gracious Majesty's army during the Second Anglo-Afghan War. I think that the wound was procured at the Battle of Maiwand, where the British took a thrashing, but these are memories from many years ago: I was still a little boy the last time I read his writings. The man enters and shuts the door behind him.

At this point I'm completely spellbound. I approach the house and, in the dim light of the street lamp, check that the house number is the right one. You never know - what with all the writers in London in this period, it wouldn't take much to find yourself in the wrong novel. The flickering glow of the gas jet leaves me in no doubt, though; on the brick wall, darkened by the smoggy air of the British capital, are three numbers and a letter: 221B.

Tea for two

I take the ring-shaped door knocker and bang it three times, and the sound echoes along the quiet street. Almost immediately there is the sound of footsteps approaching. The key is turned in the lock and the door opens a crack, revealing the face of a woman with

delicate equine features, tawny hair and robust teeth who perhaps was once a real British beauty. It's hard to say how old she is, even though I know she must be about sixty-five.

“Good evening. Mrs. Hudson?”

“Yes...?” the lady hesitates, probably puzzled by my clothing, which must be quite unusual for an evening of the late nineteenth century.

“Mrs. Martha Louise Hudson?”

“Yes, yes, my good man. With whom do I have the honour and what is it that you want?”

I introduce myself, and in exchange the door opens another couple of inches. The chain, however, remains firmly in place, because you never know. I can't really blame her.

“Mrs Hudson, we are inside a dream of mine and I'm here, for reasons which I admit that I'm struggling to understand myself, because I'm on the trail of some sort of message from my unconscious. Does the term 'Creative Code' mean anything to you?”

Ms. Hudson doesn't lose her composure. Evidently that bizarre tenant of hers on the first floor has got her used to some very rum stuff. She merely tilts her head slightly

to one side and gently rebukes me:

“I must confess that I would have been happier if I’d been warned before being peremptorily inserted into your dream, but I realise that when it comes to dreams it is not always possible to follow the rules of politeness and decency. In any case, don’t stand there on the step – the fog is cold tonight.”

She closes the door again for a moment so as to remove the chain, and then opens it wide and beckons me inside: “Come in. Would you like a cup of tea with some biscuits that I made this afternoon?”

How could one turn down such a kind invitation?

When you imagine the home of a Victorian landlady, what do you see? Lots of curtains, lots of rugs, tables with their legs covered to avoid giving rise to lascivious thoughts? Exactly. Except that the legs of the tables aren’t covered. I don’t know if Mrs. Hudson has a boiler full of water perpetually on the go, but within a nanosecond a tray appears bearing a steaming teapot, two cups and a plate with half a dozen rather appetising-looking biscuits. We exchange a few pleasantries, and then, when it feels as though the smalltalk has gone on long enough, I decide it’s time to get down to business:

“Mrs. Hudson, the reason I am actually here is because I’d like to speak to your tenant on the first floor...”

“Well what a surprise! *Everybody* who knocks on my door wants to talk to him. For heaven’s sake, he is a brilliant man and except for the occasions when he fills the house with the unappetising odours of his chemical experiments he’s not too bad a tenant: he always pays his rent on time. The thing that is really just intolerable, though, is when he falls prey to boredom: he’s quite capable of playing a Bach fugue on that violin of his at three o’clock in the morning, and carrying on with it until breakfast...”

“Yes, his eccentricities are famous - but he’s also very skilled at processing data and it’s his analytical skills that I need. I have a problem.”

“And what might that be?”

Digital divide

“You see, Mrs. Hudson, it’s not easy to explain to someone like you, who is still living in the age of steam. We are separated by a century of plenty which has changed everything. In the world I come from, everything is so much faster and changes so quickly

that the results hardly ever seem to keep up with the problems - there's never a simple solution to anything. You know, in the digital age..."

"Excuse me, the *what* age?"

"Oh, excuse *me*. The digital age is the one I live in when I'm awake and I'm not dreaming dreams like this. To give you an idea, try and imagine a time when everyone knows everything about everyone else, including people who live on the other side of the planet and who they may never even have met."

Mrs Hudson's hand shot to her chest in an involuntary gesture of sincere emotion.

"My Goodness! How awful!"

"Well, it has its good side too, but I realise that it's not easy to picture a world like that at the drop of a hat. Try and visualise a place where everything moves extremely fast, and where people can exchange information at the highest possible speed..."

"As though I could send a letter to my cousin Françoise in Lyon and get his answer the next day?"

"Much faster. As though you could write to your cousin and get a response within minutes. "

"Oh, good Heavens! There wouldn't even be time to

properly think through what you were *writing!* Why, you might write something in an emotional moment and half an hour later already be regretting your words! You might come out with some *terrible* nonsense.”

“Err, yes - in fact that’s one of the problems. But it can be very convenient and helpful too. And in my world, letters aren’t the only things that speak to us: even the things we buy can tell you about themselves and the people who purchase them. Each tiny act of your everyday life leaves traces that can be interpreted to suggest how to direct our behaviour in order to achieve certain outcomes over others.”

“It sounds awfully complicated.”

“Well maybe just a little, but not as much as you might think. Let’s say that you need to know what you want to investigate in order to interpret the endless reams of data you have available. That’s why I thought of talking to your tenant on the first floor who is so good at interpreting dreams... no, excuse me, I mean interpreting *signs*... The interpreting dreams one is in Vienna, but that’s another thing...”

Mrs. Hudson cocks her head to the side to look at me better. Clearly she is trying to decide if I am dangerous,

and I see her knuckles tighten on the arm of her chair. “Don’t worry, Mrs. Hudson, I’m not crazy - just a little worried about a meeting I’ve got scheduled for tomorrow morning. Ignore me. I’d just like to meet your tenant, who has loads of experience in the interpretation of signs and clues, because I’m convinced that in the face of the exponential multiplication of possibilities - as I said, in the age where I come from there are no simple solutions, because they are always changing depending upon the place, the time, the person and the public – as I say, in the face of this proliferation of signs, I am convinced that I need a super-analytical mind, like that of your tenant of the first floor.

Hudson’s biscuit beats Proust’s madeleine two-nil

Mrs. Hudson seems to reflect upon my words, then takes a biscuit from the plate, plunges it into her cup of steaming tea, gives it a nibble and closes her eyes, apparently absorbed by some recollection its taste has evoked: something with which Proust’s madeleine quite clearly pales in comparison. I’m beginning to think I’ve lost her for good, when she suddenly speaks again.

“From what you tell me, I have the feeling that my dear

tenant is not the right person for you. He is extraordinary at examining pure facts, and on the basis of those is able to infer things unimaginable to we mere mortals, but if I've understood you correctly, what you are saying doesn't lend itself to one incontrovertible reading. There isn't just one single answer to your questions. And anyway, as Mr. Holmes always says, the answers depend essentially upon the kind of questions that you ask."

Mrs. Hudson is a truly surprising woman. Behind that appearance of a quiet Victorian widow lurks an agile, brilliant mind.

"Mr. Holmes, from what I know of him, prefers cut and dried, unambiguous answers. According to him, once you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, *must* be the truth. I have the feeling he will struggle even to *understand* a problem like yours. I would say that, rather than a super-analytical mind, your case requires a mind capable of synthesis – or of *supersynthesis*.

Paradoxically, Mr. Holmes's flatmate Dr. Watson, who is much more tolerant of human contradictions, might be of more help in your case. The problem is that the doctor is not as gifted as his friend, so while you will

surely find him understanding and of comfort, I do not know how many answers he might be able to give you to your problem.”

As I said, Mrs. Hudson’s logic is ironclad, but it risks running my oneiric-philosophical research aground before it even begins.

“So in your opinion, what should I do, Mrs. Hudson?”

“I would speak to Immanuel about it.”

“Immanuel?”

“Yes. He’s a Prussian. He claims that each of us creates our own reality and that therefore more than one reality exists. If nothing else, he would at least hear you out.”

“Do you think so?”

“Certainly. Don’t be put off, because he can sometimes come across a trifle fastidious, but he is not a bad person, all told.”

“And where is he?”

“In Prussia.”

“You mean in Germany?”

“No, no - in Prussia. In Immanuel’s time, Germany hadn’t been invented yet.”

“I see. But how do I get there?”

“What’s the problem? The beauty of dreams is that now

you find yourself here, and when you roll over in bed you are in Prussia at the end of the eighteenth century. Don't you see those glowing white words? Would you like another biscuit?"

Continues...

LONDON, 00:51 - LOCAL TIME

...YES, HE WAS LOOKING FOR YOU,
BUT DON'T WORRY,
I DEALT WITH HIM...



...AND HOW CAN I
REPAY YOU, MRS. HUDSON?



GOODNESS
MR. HOLMES,
YOU MUSTN'T IMAGINE
I DID IT FOR
THAT REASON...



YOU MAKE
ME SOUND LIKE A
HORRIBLE PERSON



ALTHOUGH ACTUALLY...
NOW THAT I COME TO THINK OF IT,
I CAN'T REMEMBER WHERE
I PUT THE KEY TO MY SECRET DIARY,
AND IF YOU HAD TIME
TO GIVE ME A HAND...



AGAIN?

I SWEAR THAT
I'D PUT IT IN A SAFE PLACE
THIS TIME



THE HOUSE MIGHT HIDE,
MRS HUDSON,
BUT IT DOES NOT STEAL...



LET US PROCEED IN ORDER:
FIRST WE MUST EXAMINE
THE CLUES AND ANALYSE
THE MATERIAL EVIDENCE.
WHERE DID YOU
SEE IT LAST?



IN THE MEANTIME IN KÖNIGSBERG...



DREAM III

WHEREIN IS THE SURPRISING REVELATION
THAT MORE THAN ONE REALITY EXISTS, AND THAT
EACH OF US CREATES OUR OWN

h. 02.17 - 02.21

~

Kant's Clocks

The poster inviting people to the Christmas celebrations says 'Konigsberg Cathedral', so somehow Mrs. Hudson's words must have transported me to East Prussia. I am in the cathedral square. And I'm freezing cold, because I'm not dressed for the outdoors in the middle of Prussian winter, but I tell myself that it is all a dream and so, perhaps, I won't actually die of pneumonia. The sky is so leaden that the cathedral - a rather silly building which looks like a cross between a medieval castle and a tower out of a fairy tale - pierces it, the top of its spire disappearing into the low cloud. The touch of snowfall last night has turned the street that runs alongside the cathedral into an expanse

of icing sugar which is far too slippery for my sneakers. Through the dawn silence walks a small figure huddled up in a dark coat, his eyes on his feet and his mind lost in thought. A sort of low bearskin is pulled down over his head, making him look like some strange Baltic animal.

A draper appears in the doorway of his shop and glances at him, then pulls from his waistcoat a shiny pocket watch shiny and adjusts the time. If I want to find my man I'll have to ask someone, and the shopkeeper is as good as any. "Ah, yes - that's him," he answers, "leaving the square and taking that narrow street that leads off the island. He passes by twice a day, morning and evening, regular as clockwork. More regular than clockwork, in fact. Here in town, we set the clocks by him." He shows me his silver onion-shaped watch. "If you hurry you should catch him."

Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never explain me.

I thank him and set off after my quarry, glad to put a few hundred feet between me and the shopkeeper's nasty breath. Despite his size, the little man moves quickly, and managing to not fall over on the icy cobbles is not exactly the easiest thing in the world, what with my shoes slipping and sliding in every direction except the one I want them

to. To avoid getting lost in the medieval streets which form an incomprehensible maze on the small island in the Pregel, I call out loudly to the philosopher:

“Herr Kant! Herr Kant!”

I must have woken up half the town. The little man stops, turns and looks up from his feet. He notices me running towards him and peers at me.

“Yes?”

“Herr Kant, good morning. Forgive me for ambushing you like this, but I didn’t know where you lived and when I saw the opportunity of meeting you..”

“Very good, very good, young man. No need to run: I pass here twice a day.”

“I know. Or rather, I just found out. Could I ask you some questions?”

“If you don’t mind doing it as we walk...”

“No, no, not at all. And anyway, walking and talking is something your colleagues have been doing since the time of Athens...”

Kant looks me up and down for a few moments. He probably thinks I’m an idiot, but luckily he decides to let me go on anyway.

“What is it that you wish to ask me?”

“Right, well, you said that each of us creates our own reality...”

“Oh did I?”

“What do you mean, oh did I? Wasn’t it you who said it?”

“Well, no it wasn’t, actually... What was it you said? *Each of us creates our own reality?* Interesting. Let me write that down.”

And he pulls out a notebook and pencil and jots a quick note. I’m somewhat taken aback.

“The thing is, Herr Kant, I’m struggling with a problem that I don’t know how to solve.”

“Try and explain, young man. I’ll gladly help if I can...”

“Here, let me give you an example. Let’s say I’m involved with data ... let’s say quantity x of data... marketing data, data which comes from survey institutes, data from research, etc. etc. Do the things I’m saying sound strange to you?”

The philosopher slips a hand under his fur hat and scratches his head in a gesture of perplexity.

“Well let’s just say that I haven’t got a clue what you’re on about. But since we are in a dream, let’s also say that I can understand you just the same. In my day, thank heavens, there were no such things.”

“Ah, okay. Well let’s speak a little more generally, then. Let’s talk about, say, how many people come to know a certain thing at a given time – no, in a certain *amount* of time. I don’t know: I break my ankle, and within a day three hundred of my acquaintances find out.”

“Good gracious, you do know a lot of people. “

“It was an example, Herr Kant. Just an example. Okay, right - let’s take a concrete example, I’m better at those.”

“Ah, yes, that’s a good idea, young man.”

It’s a game of two halves

“Right. Have you heard of football?”

“Not exactly. I actually have other things to do than keep up to date with the events of your day.”

“Oh for God’s sake! Herr Kant, if we carry on like this we’ll never get anywhere! Since we are in my dream, could you just follow me and know what football is? Okay?”

“Perfectly. I know all about football. In fact, I’m a Bayern Munich fan.”

“Ah! I wouldn’t have had you down as a supporter.”

“I didn’t know I was one until just now, but you know how it is with dreams. Anyway, go on...”

“Right, yes, an example we were saying...” I have to stay

focussed, I have to concentrate, otherwise this chap here will never understand what I'm after. "The 11th of January, 2015 in Rome there was a derby between Rome and Lazio, and the captain of Rome scored two goals. Do you know the Captain?"

"Young man, who do you take me for? I might live in East Prussia at the end of the eighteenth century but there are some things one simply knows if one lives in the West! Go on, go on. So, Totti..."

"Right, well, Totti scored two goals which sorted out a game that had started off pretty badly for Rome... Rome the football team, I mean... Do you follow me? "

He pulls a vaguely irritated face and gestures for me to carry on.

"The second goal was an absolute dream – total flying acrobatics. Virtually a photocopy of Carlo Parolo's goal in 1950 at the 80th minute of a Fiorentina-Juventus match – the one that became the symbol of Panini football stickers. Does any of this mean anything to you?"

Kant at this point blurts out a quote from memory:

"There's a throw-in by Magli towards Pandolfini. Egisto moves, there's only Carlo Parola between him and the goalkeeper; the attacker's sure he can do it but the defender doesn't give him time

to act. An imperious spring forward, a flight through the sky, a unique rebound. A standing ovation for Parola's prowess.' From an article by the freelance journalist Corrado Bianchi. Shall I continue?"

Taken down a peg as regards popular culture, I refrain from reacting and carry on.

"It's Totti's two-hundred-and-fortieth goal in the first division and the eleventh he's scored in a Derby. Not exactly an exceptional occasion, then - even though, if we're honest about it, nobody else had ever scored eleven goals in the derby, but never mind that. Anyway, it's here that genius strikes, because genius is the only word for it. Carlo Nanni, the goalkeeper coach, runs over to the Captain and passes him his phone. Totti fiddles with it for a moment and then takes a selfie in front of the southern stand, with the crowd going completely berserk."

"He takes a *what?*"

With an air of slight smugness, I explain the mysterious term 'selfie' to the man many consider the central figure of modern philosophy, feeling that I've evened up the scores after the humiliation of a moment before.

"Anyway, that moment of inspiration turned a goal which was similar to the other 239 he had already scored into a

highly significant media event - one of the most significant in Rome's recent history. That selfie was retweeted endlessly and posted countless times on all the social networks. It unleashed a kind of collective viral frenzy where everybody, whether fans or not, started tweaking the image of the Captain's big grinning face, replacing the background of the stands with everything you can imagine: the arena with the tigers from The Gladiator, Lazio celebrating winning the Italian Cup, the stars of the Oscars, and so on. Millions of contacts for a goal like so many others that didn't really mean anything, except to Rome fans. It was extraordinary."

Double standards – triple, actually

"Hmm... very interesting. So as I understand it - and you tell me if I'm dropping the ball - this new technology of the selfie permits another way of interpreting a phenomenon, or as you might put it, data. A relatively unimportant event becomes important due to the fact of its being widely circulated."

"That's more or less it. You understand, though, that this poses a problem of interpretation of data... or of phenomena, or events, or whatever you want to call them."

"Yes, because it causes a disconnect between the, let's say,

effective relevance of a phenomenon, and its relevance in terms of diffusion. So, the result you get depends on how you look at the thing - in this case, the goal. And this is linked to the brilliant synthesis you came out with only moments ago: *Each of us creates our own reality.*”

“Yes, but please stop saying that like you’ve never heard it before, Herr Kant - it’s making me nervous.”

“I would say at this point, on a strictly hermeneutic level, you face the problem of finding a critical tool which enables you to achieve a synthesis able to go beyond the previous two matrices: one which analyses the brutally quantitative data, or how important that specific goal is - three points, one point or zero - and one that analyses the, so to speak, *qualitative* traces, or the intensity of emotion aroused by that particular goal: poor, large or disproportionate.”

“In other words, how I explain data and big data to the managers who are coming to hear me speak tomorrow morning.”

“If you like. Or, to express it with a slightly more elegant metaphor, it means bringing together the mathematician and the poet, and I think I might already have an idea where, in my opinion, all this is leading – if we wish to contemplate the mathematical rigour of the accountant

with the evocative power of the poet in a unified whole, where does it lead us?”

“Where *does* it lead us?”

“Where *does* it lead us?”

“Herr Kant, why are you repeating my questions? What is this, an Alberto Sordi movie ⁵?”

“Alberto who?”

“Never mind. So where *does* it lead us?”

“Oh come on, isn’t it obvious?”

“Herr Kant, if I thought it was obvious, would I have come here to freeze myself to death at this time of the morning? And by the way, don’t you *have* summers in Königsberg? “

“Come on, it’s easy: structure and inspiration. Where does all this lead us?”

“Just tell me, please.”

“To narration, no?”

I narrate therefore I am

“When we tell a story we must necessarily use both of these things. A story must have a structure - a beginning,

⁵ The popular Italian comic actor. This is a reference to one of his classic gags, featured in numerous films, in which he repeats a question to his interlocutor several times.

a middle and an end. And at the same time it must be inspired, because it must hold the interest of those who are discovering it and must surprise, amaze, move and entertain and so on. Structure and Inspiration: other names for the two complementary polarities in which Being manifests itself: essence and substance, or the Vedas' Purusha and Prakriti. The yin and yang of the Taoist. It's obvious, isn't it?"

"You think so, do you?"

"Why, isn't it?"

"If you say so."

"In fact, I'll tell you more. To paraphrase the words of a fellow Austrian from a few hundred years hence – but anyway, this is a dream and time is simply a convention of our reasoning mind - *Whereof one cannot explain mathematically, thereof one must narrate.*⁶ More or less."

"Yeah, I've already heard something like that."

I have a feeling that there's something useful in the German *meister's* words, but at the same time there's also something bothering me about them. And suddenly, it hits me.

"Herr Kant, your hypothesis is undoubtedly stimulating,

⁶ Like Plato in the previous dream, Kant refers here, to one of the seven main assertions of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* by Ludwig Wittgenstein.

but, if you will permit me, I... I have an objection, if I dare.”

“Dare away, young man. You have no idea how boring all this respect is. One of the great advantages of fame is that if you’re boring, people always think it is their fault, but it’s nice to encounter the odd bit of healthy irreverence. Tell me, tell me...”

Data to be announced

“Well, the thing that puzzles me is this: let’s say that I know how to speak at the same time about big data, by which I mean information from the digital world - in other words, data drawn from experiences where you don’t know you are the subject of study - and traditional data, or information derived from qualitative and quantitative research where you’re aware of the fact. The result of this narration will be profoundly influenced by my personal choices and my interpretative discretion, won’t it? Let me explain. Starting from the same elements (big data and traditional data) I might organize my narration like, let’s say, a historical novel, while you, perhaps, would create a short moral parable. Two very different results, yet both correct from the point of view of the procedure which led to their development.”

“*Und so?* Young man, get to the point. What is your question?”

“My question is, which is right one?”

“Ah, grand. I had you down as being more intelligent, you know? If the data is shared and the process of its interpretation is correct for both narratives, it follows without a doubt that both results are correct.”

“Both? But how is that possible? And what about the law of the excluded middle⁷?”

“Bah! Apart from the fact that pulling out Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* seems to me a bit of a Thomist way of going about things, I’d say that you are ignoring the point of observation. The point of observation is crucial. Changing *that* dramatically changes the result: you are familiar with the principle of parallax, right?”

“Erm... yes, more or less...”

“Ah, I see: you’ve forgotten it. Well, I can’t say I blame you - it’s something you study in high school, and it doesn’t come up much in conversation afterwards. It’s an optical law which, in a nutshell, says that if you change the point

⁷Third not given, or the third solution is not possible. The expression comes in the formulation of the *logical principle of the excluded middle*, which states that two propositions forming a contradiction ($p \vee \neg p$) must have opposite values of truth, and that there is a third possibility (law of excluded middle).

of observation of an object – that carriage over there, for example – it seems to move in relation to the background. And it's the same with narration: if you write a historical novel you get a historical novel, and if you write a moral fable you get a moral fable, but what matters is that the conditions which led to those results are both formally correct, otherwise we enter the realm of the purely arbitrary.”

I'm a strategic planner, but I can explain

Kant seems so convinced of his theory that I'm forced to reconsider it more carefully, even though the strategic planner inside me rebels with all his strength: you don't spend years in marketing without bearing the scars. What happened to the inopposability of market research? It might not always reflect reality, but, hey, life is complex... No, I can do it - I can handle letting go of the magic formula that says '*Are the results of the research clear?*'

“In fact,” says the philosopher of Königsberg “I'll go even further...”

Great, that's all I need.

“I'll even say that not only does the point of observation affect the outcome, but somehow it is the very act of

observing the phenomenon, of measuring it, that alters it. But here we are bordering on developments in physics that won't be discovered for another century and a half⁸. Let's not put too many irons in the fire, because you are already looking confused enough, young man."

"It isn't easy for me to abandon the certainties of quantitative analysis - as inaccurate as they might be, they at least provide me with a landmark in the endless prairie of data, whether it's big or small. You know how it is - even a false certainty is better than no certainty at all."

Here the severe Prussian professor has a moment of humanity and puts a hand on my shoulder. It's absolutely freezing in this bloody Teutonic country, and from his mouth puffs of mist emerge along with his words.

"There there, young man, don't be discouraged. As a young friend of mine from Weimar⁹ says, *To find yourself in the infinite you must distinguish and then combine.*"

"You're making it sound easy. But nowadays, you live in philosophy books and the dreams of people like me. You

⁸ Here Kant is clearly alluding to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, which says that you cannot know the momentum and position of a subatomic particle at the same time. Or, in more general terms, that you cannot measure a phenomenon without altering it.

⁹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

don't have to deal with CEOs and creatives all the time.”

“I have no idea who these characters might be, and an *a priori* judgment tells me that I have no great desire to find out, but I would like to meet you halfway and thus will give you some advice. Wake up, pop to the toilet, go into the kitchen, drink a glass of water and perhaps smoke a cigarette on the terrace. Then get back to sleep and have a chat with my friend Carl. You will find it illuminating, you'll see. Have you ever been to Switzerland? “

Continues...

KÖNIGSBERG, 03:22 - LOCAL TIME

...TALKING ABOUT
SWITZERLAND,
WHAT TIME IS IT?

OH MY GOD, I'M LATE!
FOR THE FIRST TIME
IN NEARLY
THREE HUNDRED YEARS
I'M ALMOST A MINUTE LATE



THE WHOLE CITY
SETS ITS WATCHES BY ME:
THE WORLD AS WE KNOW
IT COULD CEASE TO EXIST...

IT'S LATE!
IT'S LATE!

I'D BETTER RUN



ONE LAST PUSH:
I'M NEARLY HOME.

IMMANUEL...
YOU'RE LATE FOR DINNER...

I KNOW!

I KNOW!



IN THE MEANTIME IN ROME...



INTERMEZZO

h. 02.23 - 02.25

~

As we all know, there are no more half-seasons anymore, and even the full ones are nothing like they used to be. On summer nights in Rome there used to be a bit of a breeze, however slight, but nowadays there's nothing. On the terrace there's not a breath of air, as the smoke rising vertically from the tip of my cigarette into the clear sky despite the fact that we're on the seventh floor demonstrates. The thermometer is between 27 and 28 degrees. It's like being in bloody Milan. Sitting there in my deckchair, I reflect upon my weird dreams and what I ate for dinner last night. I don't know what was in the pasta, but whatever it was, my wife ought to patent it as a psychotropic. In one night, I've already had Plato, Sherlock Holmes's landlady and Kant, and who knows

who the rest of the night holds in store for me.

Though actually, the idea of blending big data and traditional data into a coherent narrative is a pretty good one. Of course, I still have to solve the problem of which of the millions of possible narratives to choose from, because the criterion of the formal regularity of the narrative is clearly not going to be enough. If I'm speaking to an audience of economists, I can't really talk to them about the Smurfs, can I? And, on the other hand, if I'm talking to a group of five-year-olds, I can't tell them the story of Adam Smith's 'invisible hand'. At least, I don't *think* I can.

But the idea of storytelling feels like a stimulating one. Or at least, more interesting than those marketing texts that try to explain to me what I think without making me understand. Furthermore, it's now clear that the old models of analysis and data management are now increasingly inadequate for interpreting a reality which grows more sophisticated at monstrous speed thanks to the spread of digital technologies. And if you cannot effectively analyse what's happening around you, you're obviously not going to be able to develop industrial or business strategies to cope with it. We are already in the

age of the IOT¹⁰ and we haven't even understood the age of the Internet yet. To tell the truth, personally speaking I have enough trouble programming my digital alarm clock, which has meant turning up late to more than one meeting.

The world moved with all the slowness of a pachyderm for centuries, then I was born and in a few brief decades, everything changed: after being oppressed for thousands of years, women have now suddenly thrown off their blinkers and regard us men with worrying smirks, faith in the inevitability of progress has quite clearly gone up in smoke, and now the digital age is here we might as well chuck what we thought we'd understood into the rubbish. With all that going on, is it any wonder I get myself into a bit of a flap sometimes? And what about that flipping Greek, coming out with all this Creative Code stuff and then disappearing off into the fog of dreams? You might

¹⁰Internet Of Things: a possible evolution of the use of the internet, where objects become recognisable to one another and acquire intelligence thanks to being able to communicate information about themselves and access information about others. Alarms which go off earlier when there's traffic, trainers which transmit information about time, speed and distance to compete in real time with people on the other side of the planet, pill boxes that warn your family if you forget to take your medication - any object can take on a proactive role by connecting to the Internet. The goal of the Internet of Things is to make the electronic world draw up a map of the real one, giving an electronic identity to the things and places in the physical environment.

be Plato, mate, but your manners stink! So anyway, in the absence of more convincing hypothesis, Kant's idea about the narrative model suddenly starts to look very cool.

Sure, why not? I could go in tomorrow morning, tell all this to the management top brass, and then climb up onto the table, run its length and chuck myself out of the window like in the Hudsucker Proxy. A nice theatrical little exit, no doubt about it. And that way, someone else would have to find new strategic and operational models for the digital age. I mean, with what I pay for life insurance my family should be alright... Shame I'm not really the type for ending it all, because this would be a sweet little opportunity. I can already see the headlines: *Strategic planner commits suicide. Before Jumping From Seventh Floor Writes to Agency Creative Director: You Sort It Out.* Ah, I'm going back to bed.

DREAM IV

WHERE IT BECOMES EVIDENT
THAT SEIZING THE DAY MEANS
SEIZING EVERYTHING

h. 03.17 - 03.21

~

The wizard of the lake

The lake is as calm as only a Swiss lake can be. A layer of fog hangs about a metre above the surface of the water and the grey sky is so low that if this were a Jacques Brel song you could hang yourself from it. I walk down the pier toward the shore with my mood even greyer than the sky. I confess that after the London fog and the Prussian snow, a Caribbean beach would have been nice, but it seems the great thinkers prefer Nordic landscapes. And why wouldn't they? In Jamaica, all you want to do is stretch out in the sun with a joint, not meditate on the big questions. Bollingen on Lake Zurich is certainly more suited to that kind of thing. As I get closer to the shore I make out the figure of a

crouching old man with white hair who is fiddling about with what looks like a rock: the doctor. The private pier leads directly into the garden of the house, even if the word *house* doesn't really do justice to the building, which is a small castle made up of several parts and with the peaked roofs typical of the area. The doctor is in a part of the garden over which stretches the shadow of a squat round tower. I walk over, smiling my best smile: I wouldn't want to disturb the genius at work.

"Dr. Jung, I presume."

The old man stops, his chisel hanging in the air, and, only now noticing my presence, looks at me over the lenses of his gold-rimmed glasses.

"It was Dr. *Livingston*, I presume."

I'm a little taken aback.

"I'm sorry?"

"Never mind, Swiss humour. Come, come - I've been expecting you. "

"Expecting me? You surprise me, Dr. Jung?"

"Oh, call me Carl – there are only you and I here, so there's no need to stand on ceremony. Yes, Immanuel called me an hour ago to tell me about your visit."

"Immanuel *called* you? On the *phone*?"

“No of course not. Let’s say he used a metaphysical shortcut. I realise that we’re in a dream, but a phone in eighteenth-century Prussia would be a little odd, don’t you think?”

“And a metaphysical shortcut is *normal*?” I say, thinking that *everything* seems a little odd.

“Well, Nordic mythology is full of natural springs and magical talking ponds... haven’t you seen the Lord of the Rings?”

“No, I’m sorry - I only read the book.”

“Ah, good lad! A bit on the long side, but interesting. Anyway, Immanuel tells me that you’re having trouble working out which of the many possibilities is relevant for guiding one’s actions in relation to a given situation. Or rather, to be more precise, you’re struggling to understand how the story of a specific mixture of big data and traditional data – in regard to the final form, upon which the influence of the narrative’s creator is obviously vast - can be genuinely significant and not simply the result of a random distribution of elements. Am I right?”

Casually & causally

“Yes, I’d say you are. You’ve expressed the concept in other words, but that’s more or less it: how can I trust something

which, from a rational point of view, is simply a juxtaposition of random elements or, at most, the development of the completely arbitrary?”

Jung lays down the chisel with which he is carving a theory written in incomprehensible symbols into the rock and smiles at me, before pulling himself up on creaking knees and looking at me, a slight smile under his white moustaches. He pulls a straight pipe from one jacket pocket and a pouch of tobacco from the other and slowly proceeds to fill the bowl, carefully pressing down each layer.

“I understand, dear boy... do you mind if I call you boy?”

“Of course not; Herr Kant called me ‘young man’.”

“Yes... a man of the old school, our Kant - a little inflexible, what with all those categorical imperatives of his, but an interesting fellow all the same. Too bad about the complicated relationship with his mother, because a woman would have done him good... Bah! No point dwelling on the past. Come, let’s sit down here – the damp from the lake has got into my knees and they need a rest.”

He leads me to a small table made from a tree cut down almost to its roots. The four chairs around it are made from another four stumps that once were trees. Despite their highly rustic appearance, they are very comfortable.

“However, the problem is not that of finding a Cartesian reason to make everything add up. The problem is to enlarge the framework. Have you a match, by any chance? I seem to have run out.”

I put my hand into my pocket and find a disposable lighter. I pull it out and, as I’m passing it over to the great old man, I notice the words printed on it. I’m giving Carl Jung a lighter that says ‘*No brain, no pain*’ - I feel like throwing myself into the lake but the Swiss gent doesn’t seem to notice and skilfully lights his pipe without burning his fingers.

“Do you believe in horoscopes, tarot cards or fortune telling?” he asks suddenly.

“Sorry, doctor. I come from a family of Hegelian rationalists.”

“Oh that doesn’t matter. You know about causation, do you?”

“Of course. It is the structure at the basis of the way in which we interpret the world. The pen falls because I dropped it and because of the force of gravity.”

“Exactly. Causation is the way we connect two distinct facts, establishing the type of relationship which exists between them. As you very rightly say, it’s the basis of our way of seeing the world. Indeed, of interpreting it. But try instead to imagine that things are related by other links, of an analog

or final nature, for example. After all, until the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century, people accepted analogical connections without a second thought: all magic works with analogical connections.”

“Dr. Jung, forgive me if I sound skeptical, but when things start getting mystical, I tend to get lost.”

“You’re right. First things first. Do you know what the I Ching is?”

China’s just round the corner

“Sort of. It’s a Chinese oracle. There’s a colleague of mine who, every time she goes out with a new boyfriend starts tossing coins like there was no tomorrow to see if she should marry him or whether he’s just the usual bastard.”

“Good. I think we should start from further back still. You have heard of yin and yang, I imagine...”

“Yeah - that half white and half black thing, right?”

The old man takes such a deep breath that it’s as though he’s trying to get all the air in Bollingen into his lungs, and I suddenly feel embarrassed by my ignorance. But then it occurs to me that it’s not really very professional for a psychoanalyst to make his fellow man feel uncomfortable like this. I put on a brave face.

“That half white and half black symbol represents the two primal forces of the manifestation or the Being, or existence, whichever you prefer. Two opposing forces in eternal and continuous alternation – the growth of one means the decreasing of the other, but nothing which exists at this level of reality is conceivable outside of these two principles. Nor is one of these two forces conceivable without the other. To understand sound we need silence, we need darkness to understand colours, to understand joy we need pain and so on, with all the pairs of opposites which define our level of reality.”

“I can follow you that far. Professor Kant mentioned it too - he also spoke of essence and substance, Purusha and Prakriti.”

“Ah! Then perhaps, dear boy, you are a less desperate case than I had imagined. Yes, well, all traditional cultures, beyond the varying forms they adopt to adapt to the conditions and contexts in which they are developed, refer to similar principles, because the metaphysical system which underlies them all is the same: the infinite. And the infinite is by definition not susceptible to further division, otherwise it would no longer be infinite. There is no A and not-A, because if there was such a thing it would not *be* infinite.

And, moreover, we can not even define Λ , because if we could, that would mean that it was in some way limitable and, therefore, would no longer be the infinite of which we are speaking, which does not have a before and after or a here and a there, because any specification would be a limitation, which is a contradiction in terms. All clear so far? “

I nod.

“For these reasons, the infinite - which is very different from the indefinite, from the indefinitely great, the indefinitely long, the indefinitely whatever you want to call it – can only be discussed negatively: infinity is that which does *not* allow for further limitation. But let us not digress. Let us keep what we have said of the unsayable as a theoretical postulate and stay on our yin and yang. “

“Yes, let’s!”

A momentary flash of irritation lights up Jung’s eyes.

“My boy, I understand your desire to bite into the flesh of knowledge with regard to your specific problem, but first you must learn to separate it from the peel and cut small pieces of fruit - otherwise you risk choking yourself. And, if I may, I would not set off from such an extraordinarily high point. Trust me, and concentrate on following my reasoning.”

I almost feel like standing to attention and clicking my heels but that wouldn't be polite, so I just nod obligingly. The Swiss gent patiently takes up his explanation.

God is in the details

“Taoism, which is what created the I-Ching, conceives of reality in a radically different way to us. As we have said, for us the principle of causality is the rule which allows us to interpret accidents, separating that which is part of an explainable and demonstrable chain of events from those things which are pure contingencies. To a Taoist, it is precisely these accidents which are important. *All* accidents. Without exception. The moment in which you observe any given situation appears to the ancient Chinese vision of things more as a stroke of luck than as the well-constructed result of concurrent causal chains. The object of interest is the configuration that all accidental events form at the observed time, and has nothing to do with hypothetical reasons which take coincidence into account. While the Western mentality carefully separates, weighs, selects, classifies, isolates and so on, the Chinese picture of the moment contains every detail down to the most minute trivial one, because the moment observed is the total of all its ingredients. That is

what happens when you toss coins - these random details enter into the picture of the moment of observation by forming a part of it, which, though insignificant for us, is full of meaning to the Chinese mentality. For us, saying that whatever happens in a given moment inevitably possesses the peculiar quality of that moment would be so banal as to be almost meaningless, but think of those wine experts who can tell the location of the vineyard and the year of harvesting just from the way a wine tastes, or the astrologers who can describe traits of a person's character purely on the basis of the position of the planets at their moment of birth... And there are endless other examples. All the mantic techniques – the techniques of divination - work in this way: the moment at which you turn over those particular tarot cards reflects the particular question about which you are consulting them, and therefore is significant, like that particular arrangement of coffee grounds and so on. If you consider such things you are forced to admit that the instant can leave traces in the long-term. The particular moment in which you make the observation contains, qualitatively, the same universal principle which is to be found in the situation which causes the observation to be carried out - and by analogy the interpretation of the moment makes the

situation in question interpretable. I-Ching, tarot, astrology: you of the twenty-first century would call them different interfaces of the same software. The ancient Chinese mind contemplated the universe in a manner comparable to that of the modern physicist, who cannot deny that his model of the universe is a decidedly psychophysical one. The microphysical event includes the observer just as much as the reality that forms the substrata of the I Ching comprises the subjective, or mental, conditions of the totality of the momentary situation. So no need to worry too much about choosing which of the many possible interpretations – or in your case, narratives – is the right one: the fact that the interpreter has chosen one means that it *becomes* significant, and a Taoist would have no problem trusting it. Is everything clear?”

Everything isn't really clear, but I nod anyway. Though despite the amount of information and how distant it is from my ultra-Western way of seeing the world, I have to admit that it's evocative. But Dr. Jung hasn't finished.

“And because the cyclical forces of yin and yang are at work in every single event and every detail of existence, the particular picture of that moment contains within itself the seeds of the possible *evolution* of that instant. It is not simply

a static photograph – it is a *dynamic* one.”

More and more interesting. However, there’s something that still doesn’t add up.

“Dr. Jung, there’s one thing I don’t understand, though...”

“Lucky you if there’s only *one* thing you don’t understand. I don’t understand *most* things, despite the fact that I spend all day and all night trying to.”

Considering he’s from Switzerland, he has a pretty decent sense of humour. All these silly stereotypes...

Right You Are (if you think so)

“If every moment possesses meaning and is therefore unrepeatable, by starting from roughly the same data I might get a different result, or in my case an entirely different narrative...”

“Of course. Every moment is unrepeatable and contains everything. If you change the moment of observation, you change the whole picture. This is why you should never ask the master the same thing twice: all you’ll do is annoy him and end up getting sent to wash the car. ‘Wax on, wax off, wax on, wax off’. Haven’t you seen the Karate Kid?”

“Of course I have - *everyone* my age has. So you’re saying I just have to take whatever comes out as good, without

even thinking about it?”

“Of course you must. Otherwise you run the risk of losing yourself in the infinite. Infinite observations, countless frameworks, infinite results: you’d never see the end of it. Moreover, in your line of work, when you ask an expert for an opinion and get a completely unexpected response, what do you do? Start changing expert until you find one who tells you what you want to hear, or accept the verdict?”

I have a feeling it wouldn’t be wise to explain to Dr. Jung just what we advertising agencies are capable of doing with our polls and focus groups, because I’m not sure he’d understand.

“I must admit that your point of view is interesting, Dr. Jung. But allow me one last question.”

“Be my guest - my pipe is only half smoked, so take your time.”

“Earlier on, you mentioned an interface - the choice of that particular point of observation: the coins, the coffee grounds, the tarot cards. Just to get away from divination a minute and get a bit closer to my field - you know: managers, marketers, that kind of thing – can we really say that the choice of the elements of my, let’s say, *narrative* might affect the final result?”

“As I said, each detail, no matter how tiny, has a determining effect upon the final result, because the slightest variation determines a different final framework. However, that does not mean that one is wrong and the other right. They are both right. This is a crucial point and I am delighted that you have picked up on it: all those years of marketing and business administration do not appear to have entirely burned out your synapses, I am happy to see. Should you really wish to examine this aspect in more depth, I think you should go and have a chat with my friend Jane, who knows her stuff when it comes to narrating things. Let me give you her address.”

And so saying, he puts a hand into his breast pocket and draws out a fountain pen. From another pocket he takes a card, writes something on it and hands it to me.

“Go on, go on – you’ll see, it’ll be enlightening.”

“Where does your friend Jane live?”

“In England. In Hampshire.”

Great. More fog, rain and cold.

...NOT A BAD IDEA,
USING THE I-CHING
TO RESOLVE
QUESTIONS
OF THE HEART...



WHY DIDN'T
I THINK OF THAT?



DAMN IT,
WHERE ARE THEY?
I KNOW I PUT THEM
IN MY POCKET...
THEY MUST BE HERE
SOMEWHERE...



TADA!
NOW LET'S GIVE THEM
A THROW...



...IT WORKS!!

...AND WITH A BIT OF TWEAKING,
IT MIGHT EVEN TURN OUT
TO BE A NICE LITTLE
MONEYSPINNER...

SOON AFTER, IN CHAWTON...



DREAM V

WHEREIN ARE EXAMINED
THE POWER OF THE WORD AND
THE IMPORTANCE OF DIALOGUE

h. 04.01 – 04.04

~

Tea for Two

Chawton is a small town, or more accurately a village, about fifty miles south-east of London. The Austen's cottage is a red brick one which looks as though it is made out of Lego, and is as boring and predictable as most suburban English homes: all very staid, all very old. On the facade, in the bricked-up part where, centuries before, there used to be an arched entrance for carriages, a marble plaque recalls that the famous writer lived here from 1809 to 1817, before, seriously ill with Addison's disease, moving to Winchester, where she died soon after. I'm a little bit puzzled – I hope my dream hasn't brought me to the right

place in the wrong time. Nothing I can see gives any unequivocally clear sign of which historical period I'm in: there are no cars, no lampposts, not even a bicycle, just that typically English atmosphere which would be as suited to a Jane Austen novel as it would to one by Agatha Christie or even Ian McEwan. I approach the door, looking for the bell. But there isn't one, only a letterbox and a modern-looking lock. I peek through the two windows flanking the entrance, hoping to see some movement inside, but without success, so I resign myself to the inevitable and knock on the door in what I hope sounds a manly and decisive manner: in our day and age, you hardly ever knock on a door anymore – you buzz intercoms and insert codes, but hardly ever knock. I obviously haven't lost the knack, though, because it opens almost immediately, revealing the face of a woman in her thirties in the gap between the door and the jamb. I recognise her immediately. She's not as pretty as the actresses in romantic Hollywood movies have made her look, but her face has a peculiar, magnetic charm, especially her big dark eyes which are difficult to avoid.

“Miss Austen?”

“Ah, yeah - I thought it'd be you. Come on inside, why don't ya.”

How would you imagine the living room of a Romantic Englishwoman? Lots of sofas, tables, trays, oil lamps, carpets, heavy curtains and maybe a cat? That's it, to a T. They're all so predictable these English houses: Mrs. Hudson's, this one. A unique feature of the Austen house is the sheets of paper scattered everywhere, in piles, written on, blank, crumpled up; and pens, pens of various shapes and types, including, to my amazement, quite a few biros. I can't stop myself from asking for an explanation.

“Well, that's the advantage of being in a dream, bub. You have no idea how much easier it is to use a biro than those damn goose feather quills we used to use back in my day. Anyway, that's the way it is. Let's get down to business. What is it you're after? And would you like a cup of tea, in the meanwhile?”

How much tea do the English *drink*? The only time anybody drinks tea in my house is when they've got flu. But I have to admit that when it comes to biscuits, you can't knock them: they're all delicious. And so, in front of a teapot and a cup of hot tea without sugar but with

only a drop of milk (which brings to mind Asterix and the Britons, who drank cups of hot water with a drop of milk, because they hadn't started importing tea yet), I begin to tell the writer about my dream encounters: Plato, Mrs. Hudson, Kant and Jung.

A cynical Englishwoman

“Having to create this so-called narrative in a very broad sense, the elements involved will have a powerful effect upon the final result, won't they?”

“Sure they will. When you're facing a narrative, whether it's a short story, a novel or even just something you're telling a buddy, you have to mentally lay out the elements involved upon the table. And you can't just bullshit, as my friend Ernie used to say: literature's a matter of blood, guts and balls.”

“Ernie?”

“Hemingway.”

Ah, yes – I thought I recognised that refined, genteel style.

“Say you've got a protagonist: a young dame of good feelings and all that - intelligent, smart, a few hangups, maybe: not enough sex and too much brains. Then

add a rich, greedy aunt. And a talented but distracted young guy. And then the main character's antagonist – some spoiled, capricious girl from a rich family, who uses her feminine wiles to give the talented young guy enough of a sniff of the pie to blind him to the fact that heroine would be all too ready to hand over the goods to him in any way, time or place that he desired. And to keep things lively, stir in a bit of hoo-ha – *caciara*, ain't that what you Italians call it? - and a few other background characters to fill up some space. Like maybe a dull, uppity shepherd, and a gossipy friend, and a straight-laced, pain-in-the-ass head of the family. And if we want to get this book into the bestsellers lists, they're gonna need to hit the hay - maybe a couple of bouts with the male co-protagonist, which could be the talented young man above or, maybe better, some smooth womanising sonofabitch - in the first fifty pages. Every now and then, stick in a bit of racy dialogue between friends about what low-lifes men are - all sweetness and light when they're trying to get you into the sack, and then they stop answering the phone as soon as they've got what they were after. That way, your typical big-city female reader - who on average is

pretty highly-qualified and has to spend every single day dealing with guys who aren't as smart as her but who have it easy career-wise just because they've got more testosterone - can identify with it and buy the book and give it to her pals too. You've got two possible endings: the classic one, where she marries the talented young guy after telling the smooth womanising sonofabitch to take a hike, and the modern one where she tells the smooth womanising sonofabitch *and* the talented but distracted young guy to *both* take a hike, and sets off to meet life head-on - and from the look on her face you can tell it's gonna be *her* calling the shots with the next sonofabitch she hooks up with. Fish in a barrel. More tea?"

My God, who *is* Jane Austen, the little girl out of 'The Exorcist?! Listen to the way she talks! What's the matter with my dreams? She sounds like a cross between Sex and the City and something out of Mike Hammer! My God, what monsters pop culture generates!

"Miss Austen, in my case - and I don't know if Dr. Jung has already warned you - I don't need to write a story but rather to narrate a certain situation, or better, to organise a discussion around a certain theme, which

is a company's image, or essence, or whatever you want to call it, in order to develop an example marketing strategy and communications. Though I don't know if those words mean anything to you." But then I think a second, and realise that Miss Austen knows plenty about marketing strategies and communication applied to the narrative.

"Listen, whatever you're after, if you can write snappy dialogue you're all set. You know, like Dashiell Hammett - not those Italian translations from the forties, though, they were trash - or the Joe R Lansdale *Hap & Leonard* books? If you can write dialogue like that, bub, half the job's in the bag."

"So, other than metaphorically, what do you recommend? Getting people around a table and talking to them?"

The power of words

"Sure. As long as you avoid wading into the swamp of all that brainstorming stuff. In my experience, brainstorming practically never works. No, hang on, that's not strictly true... Yeah, if the person running it's really smart, it *can* produce some interesting stuff,

but it usually ends up just being a turkey shoot of other people's ideas. People come out with the first thing that comes into their head, and the alpha male or female of the group ends up taking over the whole damn caboodle."

"I'm getting the feeling you've seen quite a lot of brainstorming, Miss Austen."

"Hey, listen, I've spent the last two hundred-odd years in the publishing business, and lemme tell you, that's a *real* jungle. As far as your problem goes, I suggest you work out what the goal you're after is - in your case, like you said before, defining the essence of the brand, identifying its ideal narrative, etc. etc. - and then on the basis of that, decide on the best form of discussion. Or, if you like - and if we want to stay close to my personal speciality - the type of dialogue you need to knock together."

"Meaning?"

"Meaning I'd say that you think of a formula where there are three types of individuals with some reason for being at this hypothetical meeting. I don't know - the representatives of the company, maybe, and a few people with some expertise about the issue in

hand – you know, other companies in the same sector, journalists who write about it, all that jazz. And finally, your working team. You get ‘em to speak together about a series of talking points provided by the chairperson. And the chairperson *has* to come from your team. Or else, get them discussing in pairs, and keep mixing the pairs up, so that each participant talks to everyone else and comes out with what they really have inside in a way they never would in public. There are other ways to get them to talk, but to avoid total chaos, I’d ignore ‘em for now and keep it simple. Obviously, ya don’t just throw the talking points in at random – your team’ll need to choose them from the ones that stood out in the results of the studies, surveys, focus groups and that goddamn big data, as you like to call it. And, as I’m sure you’re well aware, the starting point is fundamental for defining the playing field of the game, otherwise you might end up wandering off into infinity like a drunk after the last bar has closed for the night. Anyway, the reason for deploying all this energy is to bring out real, natural dialogues where nobody feels so overwhelmed by the weight of their own damn job that they can’t speak as freely as possible. Lemme

give you an example.”

Right, yes, let's have an example. It makes me think of the words of a colleague who is much younger than Miss Austen: *When you explain with an example, I stop understanding anything at all.*

The KISS rule

“Let's take my *Pride and Prejudice*... You read it?”

“Of course!”

How do I tell her that I've always found it unbearably boring? All those characters chatting away about nothing at all, all those micrometric observations that would fit on the head of a pin. An example of what Umberto Eco would call *tetrapylotomy* - the art of splitting hairs. A massive drag, in short. And yet it *is* one of my wife's favourite books... Who knows, maybe it's something to do with me being a man...

“Right, imagine a Mr. Collins who was able to talk for two seconds without all that intolerable arrogance and bombast of his. Wouldn't that be interesting? Or, to put my thinking in a context you might be able to more easily understand...”

I wonder if she can tell from my face that I have no

idea who the hell this Mr. Collins is.

“Imagine a marketing manager who’s allowed to speak informally, without worrying all the time about defending his or her role and everything it implies... Don’t you think it’d give you an idea of the company they work for that was more accurate - because we can take it for granted that they’re familiar with the place where they work – as well as being a bit less stiff, less obvious? An idea of the company that was, you might say, *purified* of ideological content in favour of greater humanisation? Cut me some slack for the way I’m explaining this, bub – for all my experience in the publishing world, I’m still a lady from a couple of centuries ago.”

“No, no, please don’t worry - your explanation’s very clear, Miss Austen. It’s a way of approaching companies I’d never have thought of. If you’ll allow me to try and sum it up, you mean the grafting of a humanistic, sometimes even quite literally narrative, approach onto a marketing structure. Forgive me, I’m having trouble expressing myself too.”

Here, the writer frowns with evident effort in the attempt to understand my words.

“You think? Yeah, maybe, if you say so... In a certain way I s’pose it *is* like that. But I prefer to put it in terms of the story, and I’d say that the real creative act of this whole process is the moment when your team summarises the big data and the traditional data in, let’s say, *creative* data. Something that a non-industry audience can understand, so it can become a topic of discussion at a meeting (which we could call a *Creative Sharing workshop*, because people love stuff with fancy names) that’s open to people from other fields. In practical terms, that means making a sort of translation through an almost linguistic study to find a way to communicate in a more immediate, more direct, more emotional way. It’s like when you write a novel: if you have to read what you’ve written three times before you understand it, you need to rewrite it. It’s the KISS rule: Keep It Simple, Stupid. The creative result of all this is to extract a synthesis, by which I mean creative data, which derives from the data and the big data in a story that reflects all the work upstream. *Capisce*, pal?”

Yes, I do. I mean, it’s not exactly *crystal* clear, but considering I’m in a dream, I can definitely see a certain consistency.

“But how does this synthesis actually come about? I mean, what I take home after all this *ambaradan*, as a Milanese colleague of mine would call a brouhaha like this?”

At this point Miss Austen leans back, looks me up and down and smiles at me from the corner of her mouth. “You know, kid, you’re not the brightest spark, but you’re pretty cute. I’d be pleased to give you a few *private lessons*, if you know what I mean.”

I think that I might have an idea, and it sends a shudder running down my spine. Meanwhile, Miss Austen pours another cup of tea and, after adding the usual milk, says:

“See, I’d gladly go into detailed explanations for you.”

I note with horror that she is undoing the top button of her blouse. “But I get the feeling your dream’s on its last legs. You’re coming out of REM sleep and in a few moments you’ll be awake, so it looks like I’m not going to have enough ti...”

And I open my eyes. In bed. Covered in sweat. It’s four o’clock in the morning. In five and a half hours I’ll be in front of those managers, baying for my blood. And unless there’s a miracle in the meantime, I’m going to

be telling them a total load of bullshit. Oh, God!
I get up for a pee.



LIKE HORROR...



...SOMETHING WITH ZOMBIES, MAYBE THEY'RE BIG AT THE MOMENT... OR MAYBE VAMPIRES...



YES, I COULD WRITE A STORY ABOUT VAMPIRES: CHARMING, ELEGANT VAMPIRES...



WHO ORGANISE SUMPTUOUS BALLS, FULL OF SCINTILLATING CONVERSATION...





ONEIRIC INTERMEZZO

h. 04.04 - 04.06

~

That's strange - the bathroom door is closed. My wife's asleep and the children are in their beds too. Yet there are definitely sounds coming from in there: someone is flushing the toilet. I knock frenziedly.

"Hey! *Hey!* Come out of there, whoever you are! Open the door!"

I hear the splashing of water from the taps. Well, at least they're washing their hands. If I'm going to be stabbed by a burglar, it'll be a well-mannered one. Finally the door opens.

"Ballarini?"

What the hell is my co-author doing in my bathroom at this time of night?!

"Oh, hello Sandro. What's the matter? I thought you were going to break the bloody door down! Incontinence problems?"

"What the hell are you doing in my bathroom at night?"

“How should I know? It’s your dream, not mine.”

“No, no, no, let’s not start with that rubbish. *This* isn’t a dream. I was *dreaming* that I was in Jane Austen’s parlour - then I came out of REM sleep and I woke up.”

“If this isn’t a dream, you tell *me* what I’m doing in your bathroom at four in the morning, then.”

Then, suddenly it hits me.

“Ah, now I understand! *That’s* why I was talking like you. Because it’s you that’s writing my dream. Would I ever use a word like *Brobdingnagian*? When in my entire life have I ever said *Brobdingnagian*?”

“Okay, okay - next time *you* write it yourself, and you can use the big words you want: tree, house, cat.”

Maybe I’m starting to lose it.

“Sorry, sorry... Look, you’re right, but I just need to work out which side of the mirror I’m on: you’ve no idea how many things I’ve got flying around in my head...”

“I can imagine. If I’m honest, I don’t understand what I’m doing in your bathroom at four in the morning either, but you know how illogical dreams are.”

“So we *are* still in a dream?”

“I bloody well hope so. Otherwise how do you explain it?”

“I haven’t got the faintest. This dream is getting out of hand.”

“Look, I wouldn’t want to be making haphazard guesses, but I think that at this point it’s time we started trying to wind everything up.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean that we’ve been dragging the reader around for pages and pages, telling them about all kinds of nice things: the poetry of the moment that contains the whole universe, the reality that each of us creates for ourself, the power of the word and all that. But now we need to start pulling it together.”

“And do you think I’d be here talking to you, in a dream, outside my bathroom at four in the morning if I knew how to do that?”

Perplexed, Ballarini scratches his noggin:

“There’s something in what you say. But anyway, you have to start taking it somewhere, otherwise we’ll have the readers hunting us down with pitchforks.”

“Great, that’s all I need - the gang waiting for me tomorrow morning isn’t enough, there have to be angry readers too. In, what...? Five hours something. *Five hours something!* Oh god oh god! This is going to kill me.”

“Come off it. You can’t die in dreams! At worst you might wake up a bit sweaty.”

“How do you know? This is *my* dream. Maybe *I’ll* die in my dream.”

“Well if that’s going to happen let me know beforehand, because I wouldn’t want to be trapped inside a corpse’s head. Hey, who knows what happens to the guests of a dead man’s dream? Maybe I’d be forced to wander endlessly in the dreams of others, like the Flying Dutchman, until a girl who falls in love with me brings me back to real life...”

“What’s that, a fantasy series? I haven’t seen it on Netflix...”

“It’s Wagner, actually.”

“I haven’t seen that on Netflix either.”

“Never mind...”

“Whatever you say. So now what am I supposed to do?”

“Listen, go back to bed and start dreaming again.”

“I’m already dreaming, you said so...”

“Oh for fu...! You’re even more of a pain in the arse when you’re asleep than you are when you’re awake, Sandro! You’re dreaming *about* dreaming. Get back to bed and go back to just dreaming. I’ll talk to the guys upstairs and see if I can have them send someone enlightening. Okay?”

“What guys upstairs?”

“Never you mind. Not your field: creative stuff. Go on, get back to bed and go to sleep.”

“Can I just nip to the bathroom first? I wouldn’t know where to find a loo in a dream.”

DREAM VI

WHERE WE ARE FINALLY TOLD
WHAT THE CREATIVE CODE IS

h. 05.43 – 05.43.45

~

There's a philosopher in my bed

My bed sinks into the usual dream fog. Only it's a bit thicker than before. Clearly, my dream's scenery designer was a bit short on ideas and this was the best he managed to come up with. He's gone over the top this time, though: I can barely make out my bedside clock. My God! In three and a bit hours I have something intelligent to say. Argh!

Suddenly my wife beside me turns over in her sleep, gives me a kick and rolls into my half of the bed. That's funny, she doesn't usually sleep spread-eagle like that. I turn over to see what's the matter, and realize with horror that the person beside me is not my wife but someone much bigger. My heart leaps into my throat.

“So have you figured out what this Creative Code is, then?”

From the covers emerges a large, bearded head that I know well.

“Ah, it’s *you!* What are you doing in my bed?”

“Philosophical joke.”

“Oh, come off it! Go on, get out. Hop it. Having Plato in my bed is just a bit *too* weird.”

“Alright, alright, if you’re going to be like that about it.”

And the philosopher gets up – not without some difficulty, to tell the truth - and sits down in the chair in the corner.

“Ooh, that’s better. I’m more comfortable here, to be honest. I’m not used to your modern beds: too soft, too springy. In my day we used mats. A bit hard, but you get used to them fast enough, and they’re much better for the spine.”

“So why don’t you go back to your mat, then? Excuse me for saying so, but do you really think this is an appropriate way of bursting into somebody’s else’s dreams? Couldn’t we at least meet somewhere - in the square, or the *agorà* as you lot used to call it back in your day? No, we have to meet in my bed. Unbelievable...”

“Flaming hell, what a fuss you make about everything! Not even Socrates was as bloody moany as you, and he wasn’t exactly sweetness and light, you know? In fact, see how he ended up?

Oh, for the love of the gods, he was smart, no doubt about that - but always quibbling about every little thing. And then there was all this ‘sarcasm’ bollocks as well, always pretending not to know stuff when he already knew everything. A real pain in the arse - and you’re not much better...”

“Yeah, but the difference is that I’m not *pretending* not to know - I really *don’t* know. And to answer your question: No, I still haven’t worked out what this Creative Code is, and at this rate in three hours I’m going to be giving my career the kiss of death in front of a pack of managers who are thirsty for my blood.”

“Ooooh, what a prima donna you are! How bad can it be? It’s not like you’ve got to rebuild Western logic. You know, you’d make a wonderful character for one of my next bit of writing. I’ve already got the title for it: *The Loser*. It’ll be a philosophical dialogue where I discuss how you should present your ideas in the best possible way even when you’re not sure of their accuracy. Something a bit philosophical, halfway between rhetoric and dialectic. Obviously you’ll play the part of the feller who doesn’t know anything and gets himself into a flap... I might have to change your name, I wouldn’t want it to look like I was having a go at you personally... What do you think about Leucippus?”

“What?”

“Leucippus. As a name, I mean - do you like it? I’ll be me and you can be Leucippus... or if you don’t like Leucippus, we could call you Eudaimonius...”

“Argh! Plato, give it a rest. I couldn’t care less about your dialogues, if you must know! Tell me about the flaming Creative Code and let’s get it over with!”

“Bloody hell fire, you’re even *worse* than Socrates... Always stressed, never happy... Crack a bloody smile now and then, why don’t you?”

“Right, sure, of course. I’ve been wandering around in my dreams in pursuit of this creative code since one o’clock this morning, I’d say that’s long enough, wouldn’t you?”

“Okay, okay. I’ll explain, I’ll explain everything. But let’s go to the bar – it’s so bloody dingy here in your bedroom that it makes me want to doze off.”

“Sure, the bar, why not? By the time I’ve got dressed, gone out and... “

“Hang on, pal - you’re forgetting that we’re in a dream. Just snap your fingers and *voilà!*”

Of Soap boxes and Temples

And in fact, by some miracle, we find ourselves in a lovely little bar overlooking the *agorà* with a view of the Parthenon.

But it's not the one in ruins we're used to seeing - it's a brand new Parthenon, with all its columns intact. I point to it in amazement and look at my companion... I'm speechless. He follows the direction of my gaze and raises an eyebrow:

"Yeah, they've just finished it... Do you like it?"

"Yes... Yes, of course I do. Why, don't you?"

"I think it's a flaming obscenity - *totally* over the top... Typical junk for tourists. What're you having? I'll have a gin and tonic. What do you reckon? Too early for a gin and tonic? Ah, who cares, we're in a dream, after all: *garçon!* A gin and tonic! Actually, no - a Negroni!" he says to the waiter who has suddenly appeared beside us. I ask for a coffee. After the waiter has gone, Plato gives me a smirk.

"A coffee? Hmm... If you're expecting an Italian espresso you're in for a shock - it's bloody awful here."

"What do I care how good the coffee is, I only ordered it so that we can sit here! Anyway, drinking a Negroni at six in the morning's hardly normal... I know we're in a dream, but there's a limit to everything.."

"What's your problem? I'm a philosopher, not an ascetic. So anyway, what was it you wanted to know?"

"The Creative Code. What the hell it is and where I find it."

"Sure, because this is the last chapter of this book, and if you

don't explain where all this theorising you've been coming out with is leading, your readers will be waiting outside to give you a talking to."

"Exactly. And for the record, I haven't been coming out with *anything* – it was *you* who came to *me* in a dream and threw this idea at me."

"Look, it's pointless sitting here discussing the paternity of your dreams. We've been discussing *that* since the days of Artemidorus... Or rather, we *will* have been discussing it, because he won't be born for another five or six centuries after me..."

"Plato, let's stay focussed. Let's concentrate on the matter at hand. The Creative Code."

"Okay. But we're going to need someone who's a bit more handy with creativity to explain it properly. I've got more of a bent for the theoretical stuff – what we need here is someone a bit more... *artistic*."

"Oh no you don't! They've already sent me to Prussia, Switzerland and England – which, by the way, all have shitty weather. Where do you want to send me now? Iceland, so I can speak to the Lord of the Elves?"

"Oy, calm down! Listen, it was you that asked me to explain the Creative Code to you. For all I care, you can go to your

managers tomorrow and tell them all the *rava e fava*¹¹ of your weird dreams...”

Oh my God, *rava e fava* now, really?! It was bad enough that we had to agree not to speak in *Roman* dialect in the first chapter - now it's Milanese?!

“I'm actually speaking *perfect* Italian, but as you hadn't told me what to talk about, if I want to say *rava e fava* I've got every right to, don't I?”

“What the...? Are you reading my mind now as well?”

“It's a dreeeeeeeam! Haven't you got that through your thick head yet? Relax - not everything's logical!”

Okay, I'm *really* starting to lose it.

“Anyway, calm down, you don't have to go anywhere. He's coming here.”

He turns towards the square and gestures to a young man dressed in a curious dark garment to come over. The young man waves back and sets off toward us. He's wearing a strange floppy hat which looks as though it fell off a balcony and onto his head. But his face rings a bell. Plato introduces him.

“Mr. Raphael.”

¹¹ *La rava e la fava* is a widely used saying in Lombardy and Piedmont area used to mean a long, detailed story which is also inconclusive. There have been several theories attempting to explain its etymology, none of which proven.

“*That* Raphael?” I ask.

“You what? Why, s’there another?” asks the young man in astonishment.

What on earth is *that* accent? No, I can’t handle the Marche dialect as well. This is my dream, so enough of the philology and let’s have the version dubbed into Italian.

“Would someone like to explain to me what Raphael Sanzio is doing in the *agorà* of Athens in the time of Plato? Can’t we try and give *some* semblance of meaning to all this madness?”

Creative Geometry

Plato raises his Negroni and gestures to the waiter to bring another for the painter, then turns to me:

“Let me explain. It’s really not that strange. If one day you take a trip to the Vatican Museums, you’ll see that in the room of the Segnatura there’s a fresco by dear old Raphael here which has got me in it. To tell the truth, there are even Aristotle and some other blokes in it too. He’s in it too,” he says, pointing to the painter. “He put himself in the right-hand corner. So given our previous acquaintance and our mutual esteem, it seemed to me that Raphael, who, besides being one of the greatest creative geniuses of the Renaissance...”

“*One* of?” asks Raphael, sounding a bit piqued.

“Well there were those other two ‘Tuscan fellers,” shoots back the Greek immediately, “what were they called? Buonaccorsi, Buonarroti? And that other guy from Vinci. They weren’t bad.”

Raphael pulls a face as though to admit grudgingly that yes, they weren’t actually terrible.

“As I was saying, one of the greatest creative geniuses of the Renaissance seemed to me the best person to explain this matter of the Creative Code. Take it away, Raphael, because I’ve run out of words again.”

The painter nods and takes the floor.

“Right, well – do you mind if we don’t stand on ceremony, just to speed things up?”

How could I mind Raphael talking to me like an old friend?

“See, it’s all much simpler than it might appear. After all, the best things are often the simplest. If you paint a scene that needs looking at for a quarter of an hour just to figure out what’s going on, it means you need to repaint it.”

“The KISS rule ¹²!” I burst out.

Raphael looks at me, confusion on his face.

¹² See the KISS rule in dream V

“No, no, never mind. Just a little thing of mine.”

The painter raises a doubtful eyebrow, then begins to speak again:

“So, we were saying that the discussions on creative data produce the Creative Code.”

“Yes, that’s the assumption. What I cannot understand is how you’re supposed to get there.”

“Let me show you: at the end of the discussion with all the individuals involved in the process - the ones from the company, the experts in various fields and the members of the agency’s creative sharing team - at the end of all this there’s your creative work itself, which consists of finding a creative synthesis which is immediately usable: a conceptual synthesis. If it were a painting we might mention the vanishing point. Do you follow me?”

“Errrrrrrr...”

“Let me put it a different way. The initial data - the big data more than the traditional data - has marked a point on the horizon line of the infinite possibilities which we will call *A*... do you follow me? “

“Yes.”

“Good. The creative data discussions - which have a consequential relationship with big data because they

derive from it and are a translation of it into another, more expressive language: just one of the many possible translations, but significant for the reasons that Dr. Jung has already explained - have established a second point which we will call *B*. Ok so far?"

"Yes."

"Fine. Now, making use of all your high school notions of geometry, how many lines pass through the two points?"

"One."

"Exactly. So the Creative Code will necessarily be on the ray passing through point *A* and point *B*."

"But a ray is potentially *endless*: you know where it starts but not where it ends. A ray can start in Milan and pass through Rome, but there are six hundred kilometres between the two points, and being close to Milan or close to Rome is not the same thing at all."

"Of course not. In fact the exact point along this ray where you will find the Creative Code will be determined by all the variables you dreamed about in previous chapters: the composition of the panel of participants in the discussion, the instant, the kind of narrative, etc. etc. Is it all clear?"

"Erm. No, not exactly, though for the first time I think I'm beginning to sense something concrete. Excuse me. Mr.

Sanzio, though, allow me a question...”

“Please.”

“What actually *is* the Creative Code? An image, or a phrase, or...?”

“Or whatever it is. The Creative Code is a creative expression consistent with whatever emerged during the Creative Sharing workshop. It might be an image, or a title, or a photograph... that’s what you call them, isn’t it? Or even just a concept, an idea. Whatever the precipitate of all the reasoning carried out so far is. We might say that it is a symbolic-linguistic operation. And a translation, as anyone who has tried to translate something knows, is basically a rewriting. Another way of saying the same thing, to make it accessible to a different, wider audience. A little like the iconology treatise of Ripa¹³, who found a synthesis - in his case, images – which permitted the representation of a whole range of things. Ah, if I’d only had them in my day, they would have been so useful. But I see your face again expresses doubt, misunderstanding and confusion. Shall I

¹³ *Iconologia overo Descrittione Dell’imagini Universali cavate dall’Antichità et da altri luoghi* was published in 1593 and reprinted several times over the course of the following century, with the addition of further images. It is an important work showing the virtues, vices and human passions for the use of poets, painters and sculptors. In it are described in alphabetical order personifications of abstract concepts such as Peace, Liberty or Prudence and the symbolic attributes and colours which characterise them.

give you an example?”

“If you would.”

“Very well, I’ll continue. But you keep that expression - I have to remember it for a painting I’ve just decided to do.”

Thought in the time of Powerpoint

“Let’s take a case at random: one of the thousands possible, but just to get away from pure theory, let’s take a concrete example. You’ll forgive me if I, a painter of the sixteenth century - in fact, *the* painter of the sixteenth century – suddenly start sounding like a marketing man of the twenty-first, but I can see that if I don’t make an effort to meet you halfway, you’re not going to get there. Luckily, we’re in a dream, so we can occasionally forget about logical consistency of style without anybody getting too upset. Take the case of company X - let’s say they’re a multinational with a worldwide presence which needs to get to grips with the impact of a new technology. What can they do? Creative sharing is precisely the way to approach such an eventuality. “We start by collecting information from very different sources: quantitative data (the economic impact of this technology on the various divisions of the company and

of other similar companies, forecasts on the ability of this technology to penetrate and other stuff like that), qualitative data (focus groups, interviews and so on) and big data (analysis of digital sentiment with respect to this technology, created through social networks or feedback from users of the technology, etcetera).

“This data is processed into *creative* data - which might be a graphic or verbal summary, or something else altogether - that becomes the subject of a meeting, which you lot call a workshop because you can't say three words in a row without shoving in some English neologism.

“The selection of the workshop participants is therefore crucial to the success of the process. And when I talk about the selection, I mean their specific qualities, their experiences, their attitudes, their professional skills - who they are and what they're like. I'll give you an example that you know well, so you don't have to work too hard: it's as though in your dreams you see a philosopher, a writer, a thinker, a psychoanalyst and an artist, and the synthesis of these meetings is your inspiration, which will give life to the Creative Code, and so at the workshop of the company in question, in addition to the managers and your workgroup, it would be appropriate to have, for example, an expert on

new technologies, a blogger, a creative, a designer - in short, all the people you think would be helpful in obtaining a broader, less obvious picture. Clear so far?”

Yes, it is, I say to myself, somewhat surprised that that’s actually the case. Raphael continues.

“So, you ask yourself, is that it? Is it hell! Your job at this point is to interpret and analyse the findings from the meeting of the various participants in the workshop, stimulated and guided by the creative data. Do I need to remind you again that you have deduced the creative data from the data and the big data above?”

“No, you don’t.”

“Good. Anyway, at this point, the strategic director inside you might be saying, so I get the same result that a research or consulting institute would provide except just a bit more random?”

“You took the words out of my mouth.”

And here the painter strikes the table with his hand, making the glasses jump.

“No! See? You haven’t understand a damn thing! Hell’s teeth, you’re so blinkered you twenty-first century types - if there isn’t a PowerPoint slide, you can’t get your heads round it! Not even Perino del Vaga was *this* thick. Unbelievable. Right, try

and keep up: the result is the exact *opposite* of what a research institute could provide, because the goal is *not* to produce a recipe but to bake a cake that can be physically shared among the entire company: the Creative Code, in fact. Let me explain it another way, because I can see that metaphors are not your thing: the Creative Code is the creative product born from the sharing and discussion which is capable of merging the accuracy of data - powerful but dry – with the sensibility and the experience of individuals. Therefore, it is a living instrument that speaks to both the rational and the emotional is and capable of generating an attachment which is spontaneous, intimate and personal - in the sense of each individual – throughout the entire company. In essence, it's a tool that summarises the company management's take on things in a way that is emotionally warm, rich, stimulating and understandable by all. You see? Hmmm. Right, listen: let's go back to the example of the multinational we were speaking about before. In that case, the Creative Code summarises a new approach to business to capitalize upon the benefits linked to the new technology on a global level without being compromised by it. Do you understand now? Go on, say you do!"

Yes. I have to think about it a minute, but it sounds interesting.

Raphael, though, is on a roll:

“If I might *mutatis mutandis* to one of my most famous paintings - and forgive me if I reference myself, but it is for the sake of clarity - I did something similar myself, although I didn’t hold any workshops – we didn’t use them in my day. On the one hand I introduced the technical, mathematical data of perspective - thus a rational, mathematical system - and on the other feelings: love, marriage, the union of two bodies and two souls, and so on. And what came out was the Marriage of the Virgin, which blends a rigorous geometric layout with intense emotional content. Clear? In other words, the process of this ‘creative sharing’... Are you *absolutely* sure there’s no way of saying it in Italian? I didn’t even have to use this many English words that time I painted a St. George and the dragon for Henry VIII of England. We’re not much for foreign languages in Urbino... Anyway, where was I?”

And here, Plato, suppressing a hiccup, jumps in, saying:

“The big question still remains. And now? What do you do with the Creative Code once you have found it? “

Here the painter assumes an expression of despair and raises his arms to the sky in a gesture reminiscent of the Christ of The Transfiguration.

“What?” I jump up indignantly. “It was you who put this

idea in my head. I've spent the last five hours jumping from one dream to another, from Prussia to Greece, and you don't even know what it's *for*?"

"The wise man knows not what he seeks, but he knows what he finds."

"What? What does that load of bollocks mean? You've been taking the piss all night!" I say, practically beside myself, but Plato just raises his Negroni and beckons the waiter to bring him another.

I don't know if I can follow me

"If I might conclude", cuts in Raphael, sounding slightly annoyed "I'll explain for the last time what you can do with the Creative Code, but please try and pay attention..."

"Oh, sure, please - explain away," sighs Plato.

The painter seems to summon up all his patience before turning to the Greek and saying:

"Did you even *go* to school, mate? Anyway..."

Still furious with the philosopher, I cut in and, as smugly as if I had always known the mysteries of the Creative Code, explain, in the most resentfully didactic tone that I can manage:

"Once you've identified the Creative Code, you share it

within the company and allow it to guide the choices which need to be made.”

Then I look around me in bewilderment. Raphael smiles hopefully, while Plato plays with the little umbrella of his Negroni.

“Is that it?” he asks, before sucking at the empty glass through his straw.

“Yes, of course - it’s simple. Ideas are much more effective when they catch other people’s imaginations directly. If you give someone a talk that lasts more than three minutes, you know what’ll happen: they’ll get distracted, they’ll get a headache, they’ll remember that they need to buy a present for their auntie, they’ll need a pee. Imagine what would happen if you were to read dozens of pages of documents written in that foggy prose consultants sometimes use to give a lofty sound to their words. Come line four and you’ve already lost them, and it’s goodnight, have a good trip. But the Creative Code has the advantage of speaking to the soul; simple, direct, fast, without too much overthinking or intellectualisation: straight to the heart. In a nutshell, the Creative Code speaks to the human before the client, foreman or plenipotentiary – the executives, as you might call them - in a language of allusions and hints, not of

obligations, precepts and injunctions. Charming works better than commanding.”

The painter puts an arm around my shoulders and says with complicity:

“That’s it, good lad! You’ve explained what I think to me. You ought to work in advertising.”

Maybe – just maybe – I’ve got something to tell my managers tomorrow after all. And at this point I can sink into the last hour and a half of sleep, without dreams - I hope - before the alarm goes off. The last thing I remember is Plato’s voice saying:

“The agency’s paying for this, right?”

VATICAN CITY, 05:44

...AND THEN THE SYMBOL,
GIVEN IN THE FIRST PLACE
BY THE BOOK THAT EACH OF YOU
CARRIES WITH HIM...

...I SEE,
BUT...

...AND THE COUNTERPOSITION
OF THE PLASTIC GESTURE? ON ONE SIDE
YOUR FINGER POINTING UP TO THE SKY,
THE GOOD, THE IDEA, WHILE ARISTOTLE'S
HAND SEEMS TO BE PUSHING DOWN
TOWARDS THE REAL, THE WORLD,
THE MATERIAL...

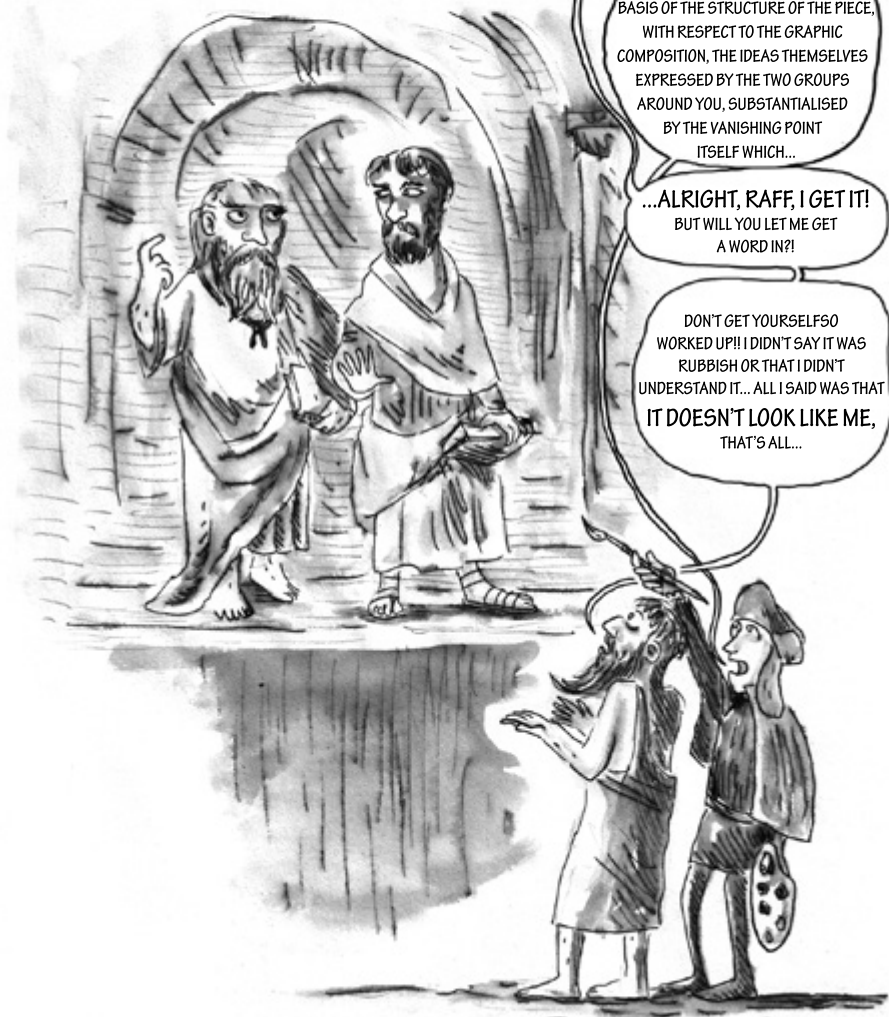
...YES, BUT...

...AND THE CENTRALITY OF
YOUR FIGURES, PARTIALLY ON THE
BASIS OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE PIECE,
WITH RESPECT TO THE GRAPHIC
COMPOSITION, THE IDEAS THEMSELVES
EXPRESSED BY THE TWO GROUPS
AROUND YOU, SUBSTANTIALISED
BY THE VANISHING POINT
ITSELF WHICH...

...ALRIGHT, RAFF, I GET IT!
BUT WILL YOU LET ME GET
A WORD IN?!

DON'T GET YOURSELF SO
WORKED UP!! I DIDN'T SAY IT WAS
RUBBISH OR THAT I DIDN'T
UNDERSTAND IT... ALL I SAID WAS THAT
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ME,
THAT'S ALL...

MEANWHILE, ELSEWHERE





EPILOGUE

h. 09.30 - 10.15

~

And I talk, and talk, and talk. I tell them the story of how it all began with a dream (though of course I don't tell them that I only dreamed it last night, because that wouldn't look professional). A dream in which, at a certain point, Plato appeared and introduced me to the – Platonic, of course! - idea of the Creative Code. And then from there I unravel the narrative and tell the story of how even Jung, who in 1948 wrote a preface to the I Ching, described something to me that closely resembled the use I make in my method of creative data. Then I explain the importance of open discussion and so on and so forth, and eventually I take a board pen and doodle on the overhead projector, with some skill it must be said, a beautifully disorderly spiral, and write beneath it the words CREATIVE CODE.

Hard to believe, but the small crowd of managers exchange satisfied expressions. They liked it. They liked the Creative Code. They understood it, and they *liked* it. *Yes!* Maybe I *won't* end up selling roast chestnuts for the rest of my life after all! The meeting ends, and we say the usual things that you say after a meeting: *Now we need to share this internally... Congratulations... Good job, very, very inspired... And original... We'll be in touch in a few days...* One manager actually pulls out his smartphone and takes a selfie with me in front of all his colleagues. A triumph.

“Oy, I’ll get loads of likes for this!”

I look round at him, and can’t believe my eyes: that’s no manager, that’s The Captain. It’s Totti.

“Francesco... So... So I’m still dreaming, then?”

“How’m I s’posed to know? You look pretty awake to me. Anyway, I’ll share it for you – that way somebody might give a monkey’s about this Creative Code of yours.”

A BIT OF CASUAL REVISION

PLATO

ATHENS, 428/427 A.C. - ATHENS, 348/347 A.C.

~

*The greek philosopher who, together with Socrates,
his teacher, and Aristotle, his pupil, created the foundations
of Western philosophy.*



Born into an aristocratic family, according to some sources he was called Plato from the Greek *platýs* (large) due to the breadth of his shoulders, and in fact the young Plato practiced pankration, an ancient form of combat which combined boxing and wrestling where you beat ten bells out of each other. We mention the fact only for those who are still convinced that intellectuals should all be weedy types. Other versions of the origin of his name exist, but this is the one we like best.

Plato considered Heraclitus and Parmenides the real founders of philosophy, and, even though he never said so in so many words, thought the others were playing in the second division at best.

He met Socrates during the Peloponnesian War, which the Athenians and Spartans fought between 431 and 404 BC, and was so impressed that in a moment of lucidity he decided to set fire to all his poems and devote himself to philosophy. It was perhaps from this episode that, millennia later, Benedetto Croce would draw the inspiration for his justly famous phrase, “Everyone writes poems until they are eighteen; Afterwards, only two kinds of people continue to: poets and idiots.” After the death of Socrates he travelled, going back and forth to Sicily a lot, although history is not quite sure why. What

is certain, however, is that in 395 BC he started writing all his works in the form of dialogues, probably because it was quicker.

In Athens in 387 BC, founded his school in a park dedicated to Academos, the hero that legend said had revealed to Castor and Pollux where their sister Helen, who the Athenians had kidnapped, was hidden, and in this way prevented the twins from putting old Attica to the sword. In the Academy, named in honour of the legendary hero, he taught his method, which was based on dialectic, and nobody who passed by could fail to notice all the theses, antitheses and syntheses flying about. To understand the revolutionary nature of the thing, you have to remember that the method in vogue at the time in the smart schools of Athens was based on rhetoric. In short, the Academy was an experimental school where students were encouraged to do their own thing: a kind of proto-Montessori approach, if you like. Meanwhile, in parallel to his work as president of the Academy, he continued to write a deluge of dialogues and go back and forth between Syracuse and Athens, before eventually stopping because he didn't get on with Dionysius, the tyrant who at the time ruled the Sicilian city. In fact, at some point Dionysius got so sick of having this Greek who was always finding fault with everything under his

feet that, perhaps overreacting slightly, he sold him as a slave. Plato died in Athens in 347 BC and the direction of the Academy passed to his nephew Speusippus. The school was finally closed by Justinian in 529 AD

Plato insisted on the importance of dialogue because he believed in the superiority of oral discourse over what is written. Of course, when you write you have more time to think and to choose your words carefully, but what is written is written. Full stop. Oral discourse, on the other hand, can respond immediately and actively interact with the other person. In short, it's better.

It should also be admitted that Plato was a *tad* self-centred, so in all the dialogues except the last it is almost always he himself who talks to so-and-so, and then talks to so-and-so, always glowing with brilliance and making everyone else look a bit silly.

One of the key concepts around which Plato's thinking revolves is the concept of justice, from which derives the need to understand what is good. And it is the effort of understanding what is good that distinguishes the philosopher from those who do evil out of ignorance. Unfortunately, the fact that the Athenians condemned Socrates, the most upright of men, to death forced him to admit that you could have

driven a truck down the gap between the philosophical ideal and real life.

In any case, Plato believed that the truth is knowable, because somewhere inside of us we possess it, but no longer remember it. The task of philosophy is, then, to generate the remembrance of those ideas which remain incorruptible, eternal and immutable (the *Platonic* ideas, in fact) in a very cool place called *Hyperurania*, which can only be seen when your soul is disconnected from those nasty bodies that prevent us from soaring into the heights of pure knowledge. Below that, much less imperturbable and in perpetual motion, is the world of phenomena, but it is understood that without the first lot, these don't matter much. Well, the phenomena perceived by the senses *are* important because they allow you to awaken the true knowledge which is within us, just as long as you don't end up like the sophists – who Plato notoriously didn't think much of – and go mixing up feelings with pure ideas.

Eventually, though, Plato began to wonder if he had bitten off more than he could chew, so he dropped a bombshell: he admitted that, at the end of the day, only the gods can have perfect knowledge of the world of ideas, and humans at best - and even then only the coolest among them, like him – might reach *philo-sophy*, or love of knowledge, which

results in an inexhaustible search for truth. In other words, try explaining what a sousaphone is to somebody who has never seen one: if you're lucky you might get somewhere near by dint of reasoning – it follows that knowledge can only be perceived and not communicated.

The best these dumb humans can hope for is that the myths come to their aid, illustrating the ultimate truths in story form, so that even the thickest ones - the ones that would get completely lost if they tried to follow a bit of rigorous reasoning - can understand them. But that's another story, and as far as Plato's appearance in Sandro's dream goes, we can stop here.

CELEBRATED PLATO QUOTATIONS

*There are three solutions to every problem: mine,
yours and the right one.*

~

*You can discover more about a person in an hour of play
than in a year of conversation.*

~

Poetry is nearer to vital truth than history.

MARTHA LOUISE HUDSON (NÉE SISSONS)

PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH AND DEATH UNDETERMINED, BUT
OF SCOTTISH ORIGIN

~

*The landlady of Sherlock Holmes
and (occasionally) Doctor Watson.*



The landlady of Sherlock Holmes, and, for the periods in which he shared a flat with him at 221B Baker Street, also of Dr. John Watson. Often mistaken for Holmes's housekeeper, she is keen to stress that, "I'm not the housekeeper, I'm the landlady."

Although Conan Doyle is rather vague on details regarding her character, some information can be inferred, but we might as well let Dr. John Watson, who describes Mrs. Hudson thus in the story 'The Adventure of the Dying Detective', speak:

Mrs. Hudson, the landlady of Sherlock Holmes, was a longsuffering woman. Not only was her first-floor flat invaded at all hours by throngs of singular and often undesirable characters but her remarkable lodger showed an eccentricity and irregularity in his life which must have sorely tried her patience. His incredible untidiness, his addiction to music at strange hours, his occasional revolver practice within doors, his weird and often malodorous scientific experiments, and the atmosphere of violence and danger which hung around him made him the very worst tenant in London. On the other hand, his payments were princely. I have no doubt that the house might have been purchased at the price which Holmes paid for his rooms during the years that I was with him. The landlady stood in the deepest awe of him and never dared to interfere with him, however outrageous his proceedings might seem.

She was fond of him, too, for he had a remarkable gentleness and courtesy in his dealings with women.

In the story titled ‘The Adventure of the Naval Treaty’, Holmes makes the following reference to Mrs. Hudson:

Her cuisine is a little limited, but she has as good an idea of breakfast as a Scotch-woman.

Given Conan Doyle’s parsimony regarding the details of Mrs. Hudson’s private life, we have been inevitably forced to fill up the gaps by resorting to the various apocryphal contributions which, over the years, have magnified the saga of the detective with the funny hat and the magnifying glass to such a point that they constitute a parallel canon larger than that of which any other character in fiction can boast. In the recent BBC series which brought the adventures of Holmes to the present day, we learn that Mrs. Hudson had offered Holmes a particularly low rent in exchange for a commitment to obtain the conviction and execution of her former husband in Florida.

Though often depicted, especially in TV adaptations, as a woman of rather advanced years, in another episode of the recent BBC series we also learn of her surprising past as an exotic dancer.

Whatever people may think of her, it is impossible not to

admire the aplomb with which she accepts the vagaries of her tenant of the first floor and the diligence with which she readily serves tea and biscuits, strictly home-made, whenever he, usually accompanied by Dr. Watson, returns home soaked to the skin at the most absurd hours of the day or night, after having pursued the trail of some villain through the less salubrious neighbourhoods of the capital of the British Empire.

Although Holmes would likely object, it is impossible not to note that Mrs Hudson is probably the closest thing to a mother the neurotic detective has ever had.

REAL AND APOCRYPHAL
MRS. HUDSON QUOTATIONS

*(A body falls from the roof and crashes onto the rubbish bins
in front of Mrs. Hudson's window)*

Oh, right on my bins.

~

*Mr. Holmes, would you mind shooting your pistol a little more
quietly in my parlour?*

~

Some tea and biscuits?

IMMANUEL KANT

KÖNIGSBERG, 1724 – KÖNIGSBERG, 1804

~

*A German philosopher, exponent of the German
Enlightenment and forerunner of idealism.*



Born in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad), then the capital of East Prussia, the fourth of eleven (or according to other sources of nine) children of Johann Georg Kant, a saddler, and Anna Regina Reuter, a fervent follower of pietism. Not much money, then, but a lot of gloom, ensured in particular by his mother who, to avert the possibility of the young Immanuel growing up carefree and testosteroney, called him *Manelchen* - little man - because of his not-exactly impressive height: four foot nine.

We can tell that his relationship with his mother was not the greatest from the fact that the grown-up Immanuel had no known intimate relationships at all with men or women. In any case, he received a strictly pietistic education at the Collegium Federicianum which he would still recall with terror even fifty years later, where he learned Latin, Hebrew, a smattering of ancient greek and nothing about science.

In 1740, at the age of sixteen, he enrolled at the University of Königsberg, the famous Albertina, to study philosophy, theology, literature, Latin and mathematics. Thanks to the good professors he met there, he developed a strong interest in Newton, whose scientific

model filled him with admiration. He graduated in 1746, the same year that he lost his father (his mother, may she rest in peace, had already died in 1737).

With no inheritance to support him, he earned his living as a private tutor to several wealthy families in the area. In 1749 he published his first book, dedicated to the energy of moving bodies, in which a certain impatience with the principle of authority of the ancient writers in favour of a more disillusioned use of the intellect is perceptible.

In 1755 he obtained his Magister's licence, but as he was paid directly by his students he practically had to kill himself to prepare lessons interesting enough to guarantee a decent standard of living. The problem of a regular salary was only solved in 1770, when he obtained the chair of Logic and Metaphysics at the University of Königsberg, a position he held until 1796. It is no coincidence that in this period that wrote his three major works, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment*. Even when the University of Halle offered him more money, more students and more fame and glory, he stayed in Königsberg, which he believed was the ideal

place to pursue his studies in peace. So much so that the maniacal regularity of his daily routine (waking up at five o'clock, lunch, walk, in bed at ten) gave rise to legends like the one saying the citizens of Königsberg used to set their watches by the professor. In short, a great philosopher, but not much of a party animal.

The only frisson in all his eighty years was a little incident in 1794 with the Prussian government, which seized copies of the second edition of *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, but the election of Frederick William III soon restored the freedom of the press. His last years were the perfect culmination of a not very reckless life, culminating in a progressive loss of marbles, perhaps caused by Alzheimer's, and he died in 1804 on the verge of dementia.

Kant is best remembered for making a clean break with metaphysical dogma and for defining what the limits of human cognitive ability are in theoretical, practical and aesthetic terms. All of his work can be summarized in three short questions: What can I know? What should I do? What can I hope for?

It is safe to say that knowledge is the central question of his studies. Based on the assumption that thought

and its object are the result of this activity - because man is a being able to think of himself thinking - intellectual intuition implies an immediate identity of being and thinking. An identity which, for Kant, who couldn't stand the sight of metaphysics, is possible only in the abstract, because the intellect cannot access the thing itself but only that which the senses can grasp: a mediated image. Hence the idea that each of us creates our own reality. For Kant, only the divine intellect was capable of intellectual intuition; the Kantian ego is not creative but simply an *ordering* activity, which organises and summarises the material provided by the senses.

This leaves a number of unsolved problems, a fact which post-Kantian philosophers never fail to point out with some satisfaction, because after a while the professor from Königsberg's top-of-the-class smugness started to get on people's nerves. For example, if knowledge and the thing itself were completely unrelated, it wasn't clear how the hell you could escape absolute subjectivity for long enough to be able to actually *say* anything. And for anyone who wanted to be a scientist, that was no a small problem. And then there was another great leap of logic: the thing itself. The thing itself, as we have

just said, has nothing to do with human knowledge, so how does it inform the sense organs which construct the phenomenon on the basis of that? Who knows. But luckily this is only a summary which aims to clarify certain issues mentioned in our story so we can neatly sidestep all these objections.

RIGOROUSLY KANTIAN QUOTATIONS

Sapere aude! 'Have the courage to use your own understanding' is therefore the motto of the Enlightenment.

~

The starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.

~

Those who say the world will forever continue as it is and always has help guarantee that their prediction will come true.

CARL GUSTAV JUNG

KESSWIL, 1875 – KÜSNACHT, 1961

~

*The Swiss psychiatrist, psychoanalyst and anthropologist
who founded analytical psychology.*



The son of a Protestant minister and theologian, he was a lonely child. It didn't take long for him to start showing what he was made of, though, and he graduated in medicine in 1900 with a thesis on the *Psychology and pathology of so-called occult phenomena*, based on the psychic phenomena of his cousin Hélène. Shortly afterwards he began working at the Burghölzli psychiatric institute in Zurich, which at the time was the place every shrink wanted to be.

In 1903 he married Emma Rauschenbach who came from a rich family, which liberated him definitively from financial worries, and she remained with him until her death, despite the fact that Carl Gustav cheated on her left, right and centre for much of his life. He soon became the head of Burghölzli and began a career at the University of Zurich.

In 1907 he met Freud in Vienna, and in 1910 he became president of the International Psychoanalytical Association. People started calling him Freud's heir apparent, which, though he said nothing, he struggled to digest.

In 1909, the Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, invited Freud and Jung to give a series of lectures in the United States. During the voyage the two psychoanalysed one another, but Freud was strangely reticent about some of his dreams and when Jung challenged him about it,

Freud explained that it was so as not to have his authority undermined. Jung's heart dropped and he began to think of Freud as a fellow who had only one thing on his mind - sex.

The conflict between the two emerged into the open in 1912 following the publication *Symbols of Transformation*. Put simply, Freud thought that at the base of psychic development there was the libido, the sexual drive, while for Jung the libido was not responsible solely for the sexual instinct, but was also a form of universal energy which manifests itself in the thousand transformations of the human being through the symbolic function, which is a kind of transformer of psychic energy.

But it was the unconscious which really caused the break between these two roosters in the psychoanalytic henhouse. While for Freud the unconscious, which is expressed predominantly through dreams, was a trash can where all the leftovers and unspoken impulses of conscious life end up, for Jung the unconscious sent signals to make us realise our inner nature through what he called the process of individuation. Moreover, according to Freud, the unconscious was empty at birth and later in life was filled with everything that had no place in the conscious

life (repression), while for Jung the unconscious existed prior to consciousness, which derived from it. Noting that at this point they were getting along as famously as a cat and dog, in October 1913 the two told each other officially where to get off.

Jung continued along his road and hypothesised that the libido was transformed by tapping into primordial, collective and immutable images (a sort of original imaginary fuel tank) which combined to form symbols, and that these primordial images were archetypes.

Having broken away from Freud and resigned from all official posts, he began to practice his form of psychoanalysis independently, gathering around him a number of likeminded souls, and around his person there grew a cult of personality based on his charisma, something which attracted numerous criticisms. When he was almost fifty, Jung decided to build a house called *Turm* - the tower - in the village of Bollingen on Lake Zurich. What was initially a simple circular tower over time grew into a small castle where the psychoanalyst spent six months a year with no electricity and no running water, in an attempt to reconcile himself with the natural rhythms of life. In the last years of his life, the Tower became his favourite

spiritual refuge.

A by no means secondary aspect of Jung's research regards the occult and that part of the ancient sciences which were put on the back burner after the scientific revolution, and this explains his interest in astrology and alchemy. His studies of seemingly random coincidences, for which he created the term "synchronicity", where he presupposed the existence of connections between events which are non-causal but final, in view of purpose, are quite remarkable. Obviously, all this immediately earned him the reputation, among his more materialistic colleagues, of being a nutter who practically believed in the tooth fairy and seven years' bad luck for breaking a mirror.

In any case, the attraction for that which is beyond the scope of the official science was, we might say, consubstantial to all his work, as is demonstrated by his thesis about and frequenting from the 1920s on of the sinologist Richard Wilhelm. Author of the first translation into a Western language of the Taoist *I Ching*, Wilhelm was the German scholar who introduced him to this ancient treatise which had been designed for the emperors of China and which aroused in him the desire to learn more about the Eastern philosophies he would go on to study, especially in his

later years. The encounter with the *I Ching* was one of the big ones, and the oracle became one of Jung's existential reference texts. It was, in fact, the old man of Küssnacht, as he was sometimes known, who officially introduced the Book of Changes into the Western cultural landscape, writing an illuminating preface for the English edition of 1948, upon which we have relied largely to illustrate our theory of the creative code.

CONSCIOUSLY FAMOUS JUNG QUOTATIONS

Human life is an experiment with an uncertain conclusion.

~

It is important and healthy to speak of incomprehensible things.

~

Where love reigns there is no desire for power and where power reigns there is no love. One is the shadow of the other.

JANE AUSTEN

STEVENTON, 1775 – WINCHESTER, 1817

~

A British pre-Romantic writer. She is still one of the most popular and widely-read writers in the world.



The daughter of an Anglican pastor, she grew up in Steventon, a small village in Hampshire, second to last of eight children (six boys and two girls). During her childhood and youth she was particularly close to her sister Cassandra, who, like her, never married.

Her father saw personally to her education and taught her French and a bit of Italian. The family library, with some five-hundred volumes, was her literary gymnasium. Between twelve and eighteen she wrote her first gothic tales, poems and some parodies of contemporary literature to entertain family and friends.

When she was around twenty, she met Thomas Langlois Lefroy, the nephew of some neighbours in Steventon with whom – obviously - she fell in love. His family, however, thought that the daughter of a Protestant pastor was not up to scratch for their scion and in 1796 they sent him away from Steventon, thus laying the foundations for Jane's future old-maidhood.

To get over the torment, Jane threw herself into literature and worked on what would become her most famous novels, most notably *First Impressions*, the initial version of *Pride and Prejudice*. At the time, the only one who believed in the literary talent of his daughter was the Reverend

George Austen, who encouraged her as much as he could. In 1800 George moved the family to Bath, where five years later he died, leaving his wife and daughters Cassandra and Jane struggling with a mountain of financial problems. In 1806 the three women moved to Southampton but didn't find peace there either, so in 1809 they moved to Chawton, a village in Hampshire where her brother Edward provided his mother and sisters with a cottage he owned.

Finally, in January 1813, the publisher Egerton published *Pride and Prejudice*. The book was quite successful and in October was already being reprinted. In 1812 she began writing *Mansfield Park*, which was published in 1814 and which sold out in six months. *Emma*, published in 1815, was the final novel of Austen's to be published during her lifetime. *Persuasion*, her most mature work, was published posthumously together with *Northanger Abbey*, which the Reverend George had already managed to sell in 1810, but which had never been published. In 1816, poor Jane moved to Winchester for treatment for Addison's disease, an endocrine system disorder, but the medicine of the day was what it was, and the writer went on to a better world at just 42 years of age. It is significant to note that in her final months she had been working on *Sanditon*, an unfinished

satire on progress and its disastrous consequences: life most certainly has a funny sense of humour.

The icing on the cake of a not-exactly carefree life was that her novels were only attributed to her openly after her death, as during her life they had been published as being written “by a Lady” or “By the author of *Sense and Sensibility*” or even anonymously, as *Sense and Sensibility* was in 1811, to enormous success.

Austen’s themes revolve around the life of the English provinces, populated by characters who basically seem to have as their main purpose in life complicating the emotional existence of her heroines.

At the centre of all Austen’s work are women and their thoughts, which makes her one of the first inherently feminist authors and which, unfortunately for her, has meant that popular culture has sometimes relegated her to the limbo of women’s literature: a kind of proto-chick lit, although of somewhat higher quality.

A cutting wit which observes everything and which nothing escapes is the fundamental feature of Austen’s style: a wit she applies to all the various pompous British microcosms which populate her novels, and which is expressed primarily through dialogues, the author’s often caustic opinions

regarding existential questions often poking through the apparent small-talk. What makes Austen sympathetic is her deep intellectual honesty, which doesn't spare even the neuroses of her heroines, like the timid Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park* or the unbearable control freak Emma Woodhouse.

Jane's way of sketching the eternally-lurking stupidity of the world is based upon the wit of the dialogues and a peculiarly female ability to split hairs. Inserting the narrator's voice between the words of her protagonists, Jane manages to present situations in a dramatic or ironic manner, giving the reader the impression of entering the minds of the protagonists. In addition, the characterization of the dialogue through the dialect or idioms belonging to the various experiences of the characters makes it incredibly vibrant and credible, allowing powerfully rhetorical effects here and there that you wouldn't expect from a pious and respectable young lady of the early nineteenth century like Jane Austen.

In addition to providing the archetype for all future incarnations of the millennial battle of the sexes, from the sophisticated banter of classic screwball comedies to the despair of the modern Bridget Jones, the dialogue between

Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* is one of the finest examples of psychological acuteness in all world literature.

SUBTLY IRONIC JANE AUSTEN
QUOTATIONS

*One half of the world cannot understand
the pleasures of the other.*

~

*Women fancy admiration means
more than it does.*

~

*To look almost pretty is an acquisition of higher delight to a
girl who has been looking plain the first fifteen years of her life
than a beauty from her cradle can ever receive.*

RAFFAELLO SANZIO

URBINO, 1483 – ROME, 1520

~

*An Italian painter and architect who was one
of the greatest geniuses of the Renaissance.*



Son of the painter Giovanni de' Santi and Maria Battista di Nicola di Ciarla, he lost his mother when he was eight. When he was eleven, his father also died, but the lad was no slouch and, as an adolescent, was already in full possession of the technical tools of the trade, and Perugino took him into his workshop in 1494. After a few years, however, Raphael decided it was time to go it alone and, at seventeen, obtained the title of Magister and moved to Città di Castello, where he won his first independent commission. It didn't take him much longer to become the hippest painter in town - the boy wonder's fame spread rapidly through all of Umbria, and in the years that followed he received various commissions in Perugia due to his works being like those of Perugino, only better. The history books are silent on the matter, but by all accounts his teacher, now in his fifties, was not best pleased.

In 1503 he made short study trips, first to Florence, where he encountered the works of Leonardo, and then to Rome, to admire the classics, and finally to Siena, where he gave a hand to his friend Pinturicchio, a painter who was pretty much washed up. After a while, however, the young Raphael took leave of his friend, saying, sorry but I have to go and play in the First Division, and turned

up again in Florence, where Leonardo and Michelangelo were working. Despite not immediately receiving official commissions, he stubbornly refused to be put off and remained in the city for four years, continuing to send his paintings to Umbria. In the meantime he got to know the local artistic community who soon recognized his outrageous talent. He took advantage of the opportunity to learn about the works of Masaccio and Donatello, from Leonardo he learned about the composition of figures in space and from Michelangelo the use of chiaroscuro, bold use of colour and the dynamism of figures. Private clients began to order his paintings, but fortune, like bad luck, never comes unaccompanied, and the Duke of Urbino, Guidobaldo da Montefeltro, wanted him for his court. His paintings were being requested at the highest levels, and, among other things, he painted a St. George and the Dragon for Henry VIII of England. In 1504 he realised one of his greatest masterpieces, *The Marriage of the Virgin*, now in the Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan.

In his Florentine period he realised his famous series of Madonnas, among which are his first masterpieces: the *Madonna of the Goldfinch*, *Madonna del Belvedere*, the *Bridgewater Madonna*, the *Tempi Madonna*, and so on.

In those years he also produced some famous portraits in which the influence of Leonardo can be felt, and where psychological insight is combined with a taste for the details redolent of the Flemish masters: The Lady with the Unicorn, the Portrait of a Young Woman and Maddalena Strozzi. Also from this period are some fundamental works such as the Baglioni altarpiece for the church of San Francesco al Prato in Perugia, but painted in Florence, where the deposition of Christ possesses a rare Michelangelo-esque power, or the unfinished *Madonna del Baldacchino*. Unfinished, because Raphael packed up shop and raced off to Rome after being summoned by Pope Julius II, “The Fearsome Pope” - a man with a famous temper who it was better not to keep waiting. The Pope had pledged to relaunch the artistic town planning of the city and didn’t care about costs, wanting the best that was going, which meant Bramante, Michelangelo, and, of course, Raphael, who at twenty-five moved to Rome and never left it.

The pope gave him the job of decorating the room in the papal apartments called the Segnatura, and he liked the result so much that he told him to do the entire apartment, without worrying about the fresco by Piero della Francesca

that had been painted a few decades before. Well, you know what they say: life's for the living. The most famous painting in the room is 'The School of Athens', which depicts the philosophers who originated Western thought - Socrates, Plato and Aristotle - and where, in a corner, the artist put his self-portrait as well as, in the foreground, even a pensive Michelangelo, his great rival in the pope's eyes.

In 1511 Julius II returned from a war where he'd taken a drubbing from the French, and the iconography of the room of Heliodorus, the second of the papal apartments, shows episodes in which the church is saved by the intervention of the Holy Spirit.

Leo X de' Medici succeeded Julius II in 1513 and confirmed Raphael's position, as well as a few new ones. In the room called Fire in the Borgo (1514), the third in the papal apartment, Michelangelo's influence is evident, confirming the esteem in which the two held one another, with Leonardo as the third wheel.

Meanwhile Raphael's fame continued to attract the wealthiest clients. The Siennese banker Agostino Chigi was among the few who managed to distract him from the Vatican (partly because he was one of the few who could

pay better) and got him to work on his townhouse, the Farnesina, for which he painted the Triumph of Galatea, the Loggia of Psyche and other famous frescoes. To ensure that the painter wouldn't be distracted by the comely commoner he'd fallen for, Chigi put him up in his villa, so Raphael could nip directly from the bed of the beautiful Margherita Luti, daughter of a baker from Trastevere, to the scaffolding of the frescoes. The banker loved the boy from Urbino so much that he even instructed him to realise the fresco of Sibyls (1514) for Santa Maria della Pace and the Chigi Chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo, for which he also handled the architecture.

In the Roman years Raphael was also a busy portraitist, producing, to mention only the most famous, the portrait of Baldassare Castiglione, author of *The Courtier* (the coolest of Renaissance handbooks), the portrait of Fedra Inghirami, where he even manages to make his subject's wall eye seem charming, and the portrait of Julius II, where the pope seems to be actually sitting in front of the viewer: a bit of psychological realism rare in a portrait of a Pope. Seeing how well it had gone down, Raphael kept going, doing Leo X and Cardinals Giulio de' Medici and Luigi de' Rossi and, in the same period, a portrait of his mistress,

the aforementioned *Fornarina*, a portrait of exquisite and immediate sensuality.

And then there was his revolutionising of the iconography of altarpieces. Raphael decided they should involve viewers rather than just leave them admiring something distant, and with the Madonna di Foligno (1511-12), the Sistine Madonna (1523-14) and the Ecstasy of Saint Cecilia (1514) he achieved this miracle too.

At thirty years of age, as well as being a good hand with a brush, Raphael was also a shrewd administrator, so in his workshop he took on established masters like Giulio Romano and Perino del Vaga in order to accept increasingly demanding commissions and, in time, ended up delegating important parts of his work to them.

Meanwhile, Leo X wanted to link his name to the Sistine Chapel, and entrusted to Raphael the cartoons for the frescoes of the only free part of the chapel - the bottom part. Unable to cope with the demands arriving from left, right and centre, Raffaello was forced to disappoint important monasteries, the Duke of Urbino, and even Isabella d'Este - a sort of Peggy Guggenheim of the time, only richer and better looking - in part because upon the death of Bramante (1514) he was named superintendent

of the Vatican Basilica, the most important job in Christendom. The first thing he did was to transform the plan of the church from a cross-shape to a longitudinal one – luckily, he decided to keep the dome. Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, who would take over from Raphael after his death, never missed an opportunity to criticise the errors in the project: envy played cruel jokes even back in those days.

Other buildings bear Raphael's imprint, but the most important is the unfinished Villa Madama, inspired by Roman antiquity, works on which were suspended during the sack of Rome in 1527. Under Leo X he was also commissioned to compile a map of Rome's ancient marbles. In 1514-16, Leonardo was also in Rome, and it seems likely that the two met, although there are no traces of the encounter.

In 1516, Cardinal Giulio de' Medici declared a competition between the two most eminent painters in Rome, Raphael and Sebastiano del Piombo, each of whom he asked to produce an altarpiece for the cathedral of Narbonne, his bishopric. Raphael, who could sense Michelangelo's long shadow stretching behind Sebastiano, worked with great care, carefully and slowly. So slowly that he actually died

before he finishing it, and it had to be completed by Giulio Romano. It is an extraordinarily innovative piece of work, uniting the episodes of the Transfiguration of Christ and the Healing of the Possessed Boy: calm and symmetry in the upper part, convulsion and movement in the lower. Raphael died on Good Friday, April 6, 1520: they didn't call him the divine for nothing. As he himself had requested, he was buried in the Pantheon, to the great dismay of the entire city, and with a sigh of relief from the other artists who saw their most threatening competitor disappearing.

CELEBRATED PHRASES
RAPHAEL WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE SAID

*I could really use some Prussian Blue. Shame they haven't
invented it yet.*

I WAS THERE.
EXPERIENCES OF CREATIVE SHARING™

LELLA ZANOTTI

Fashion & Product Designer

~

“Listening, sharing, speaking and creating. These were the actions I experienced when, as a clothing and accessories designer, I took part in a Creative Sharing.

Listening to the presentation of the company, the staff and the other contributors. Sharing your own impressions about the product with the heads of the various sectors present.

Speaking about my experience in the creative process. Creating new incentives through new encounters, in complete freedom, like posting a picture or creating a new board on Pinterest. Removing dependencies unleashes creative freedom. Creative thinking has become the most valuable skill of this century. Internet is creating the largest human community in history, and it's all designed around sharing ideas. The experience of Creative Sharing moves in this precise direction,

adding the contact and personal exchange that the net today cannot provide.”

FRANCESCO GUGLIELMO

Gianfranco Lotti - Worldwide Retail/ Sales & Marketing Manager



“I’d start with the personal feelings. The first good thing was being able to discuss in an open and constructive dialogue with people who aren’t exactly from the industry but who do similar work, and so to get real, honest feedback from outside.

The interviews were held in an very relaxed atmosphere, both on our part and on the part of the people the agency had invited to participate in the workshop. I’d say that they were very good at getting information out of us that some of us might perhaps have taken for granted, but which in that context was really useful for focusing on the overall picture of our company project and its possible developments.

The profound interest shown by the interviewers made us very happy, because in this way the workshop was not only an opportunity to open up to the outside world, but also provided useful stimulus for our future company life with respect to certain projects we’ve been developing.

We received some validations that prompted us to think differently about issues that we'd sort of put to one side but which, in that context, emerged as important. And that led us to take strategic decisions and to better communicate certain issues which, seen from our usual perspective, had seemed less important.

The thing that amazed me the most was how during the workshop we discovered things we didn't know about ourselves. Taking the time to talk about ourselves was really useful and, personally speaking, gave me the chance to reflect on how it is sometimes difficult to make communication circulate within a company, while all it takes is a one-day workshop to make you realise so much.”

DADÀ ISOLA

Marketing Consultant

~

“We all want to be recognised. And we all know how important our inner part is in the definition of personality and its translation into an effective message, both in life and in communication.

We express ourselves through appearance and content. We recognize ourselves by personal traits which make us appear unique. Often in life we lay claim to an identity which is built up over time.

I am this. I’m not that. We do it from the time we take our first steps, in the personal achievements that change us and shape our essence, making us become the people we are or have become. It sounds like psychoanalysis but it’s not meant to. It is certainly the key, though, which allowed me to enter the vortex of Creative Sharing. Due to the speed with which I was involved in the project I had to keep my antennas up and enter into a “biographical” narrative model of company storytelling that aims to

translate through an analytical and creative process a non-obvious message of identity. A message hidden in the fibres of the company, expressed by the brand and the personality which is heading for a transformation, in an evolving business context which needs to be represented.

This identity was represented by the faces and voices which together make up the company fabric and communicated their vision of the essence of the brand. It's nice to watch a group which is normally busy with their daily chores working together in a free and unusual context. A moment dedicated to directing and communicating their next step forward. I didn't know quite what to expect, but I found a diverse, multi-faceted and very, very active group. We travelled together through this mixture of creativity and analysis in a process of sharing and interaction where points of view alternated with challenges coming from each part of the room, conflicting ideas and calls for reflection. Contradiction is the wealth of interpretations of a reality.

Through the visual signs constructed by the agency and the data analysis, which accurately represent

the industry's various phases, we identified the core of an identity which reflected company life and its most representative aspects, and thus a basis for representing the essence of the brand.

It's nice to participate in the moment when you become the new person that our history has created, in a development which travels as fast as our lives. It is a process that offers you many elements to consider and dissect. And the time available to do it is concentrated into a single day.

The task of an analytical process is to transform events and facts into something decipherable, intelligible and, last but not least, feasible. In short, a challenge in which we all participated actively, with curiosity (me, above all) towards a world which I find as fascinating as it is distant.

Transformation is what makes us alive. If we do not change and adapt, we die, fall behind, or even worse risk betraying our own identity and not completing our projects.

Together with the group that I accompanied on the events of this day I experienced the process of transformation. Racking your brains and

transforming yourself is hard work! But it's worth it."

FILIPPO SANPAOLESI

TI Sparkle - Head of Global Communication

~

“Moments like that of Creative Sharing are very important and of great synthesis, getting the key people involved in the business process to think about issues which are at the heart of your work’s aims. In 2012 I had already commissioned a workshop which was similar but less structured than KleinRusso’s Creative Sharing, so beforehand I had the calm of one who is about to do something familiar, yet with a slight undertone of anxiety about what might happen during the day. We needed to do it after the change of management, the repositioning of the company and the recent acceleration of technological evolution. Company communications needed to be enriched with all this and the company itself had to identify the new essence of the brand. But I was not in control of the process: what would come out of it? What would they make me communicate? Would I believe in what I had to communicate? The colleagues we involved had been selected on the basis of their knowledge of the market and of the leading products,

regardless of role; there were about ten of us, plus five brand experts. We introduced ourselves one by one, and the thing that struck me was the immediate propensity of many of those present to join in the discussion and to want to express their own individual contribution.

Soon afterwards it was like being in a psychoanalytic group dynamics session which remained very intense though, oddly (!), always positive, without conflict, probably thanks to the ability of current management to form a team. Partly because I was the client and partly because it's my way of doing things, I had chosen to be mainly an observer, breaking in only occasionally to stimulate discussion on specific topics. Participation remained high throughout the day, which was an intense, intellectual experience for those involved in communication. It produced an excellent result with which I can totally identify and which captures the current essence of the brand, offering those who manage company communication a concentration of content so rich that it will take time to assimilate, process and define, but all strongly consistent and targeted. A new starting point for a new communication.”

ANNA MARCONI

Fashion Taster

~

“When I received the invitation to the workshop, I didn’t think twice. It was, in fact, the first time that I had been involved in a similar initiative and I was very curious. Unaware of what would happen, I took a Milan-Florence train in the company of other scintillating personalities who had also been invited for the same reason. To welcome us into an elegant historic Florentine palazzo was the KleinRusso team, hot coffee and a tasty breakfast. Time passed in relaxed and informal chatter and introductions. And then the workshop began. A lot of round tables, each with two chairs. In one sat a representative of the company, in the other, one of us. We swapped partners until the evening. We were given a certain amount of time (controlled by a timer) to ask any kind of question we could think of to satisfy our curiosity about the history of the company, its communication strategies, the development of its design, the production, the target audience and much

more. From the initial coffee we went on to lunch and then a couple of glasses of wine. It was like being at home, even though I was sitting in front of people who at the start were strangers, but were totally willing to answer any question. If I were to now ask myself if I would repeat this experience... What do you think I would answer?"

*A special thank-you to all the friends in the community
who made the realization of the Creative Code possible.*

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From an idea of
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