



Molecular selfopoiety and living/living in well-being, in pandemic times - the alternative of the triple harmony proposed by Humberto Maturana

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1 INTRODUCTION

With this article we will reflect on the COVID-19 pandemic that has become the greatest health crisis of the last century. Until the moment we are writing this text (April 2023), in Brazil alone there have been more than 600,000 deaths as a result of the disease. We understand, and we will reflect on this article based on the understanding that all unrest, all human suffering - with the exception of diseases of genetic or traumatic origin - has in its origins, important factors that are of a cultural order. In this epistemological perspective, we will take as reference the proposition of the triple harmony¹ proposed by Humberto Maturana² (1928-2022) and Ximena Dávila³ to know, understand and comprehend relevant aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic, in its genesis, development and consequences for the human living/life in the search for its return to well-being.

We take as a reference the proposition that our well-being occurs when we are in the center of ourselves in the triple intimate, ecological, and psychic harmony. Only from this space we can realize the power of being beings with reflexive and action autonomy and that we relate to each other based on mutual respect, that we make mistakes, that we can apologize, that we are not perfect, but, above

¹ For the authors, our well-being occurs when we are in the center of ourselves, in the triple intimate, relational, and ecological harmony, that is, being well with myself, with others, and with the environment in which we live. Only from this space we can realize the power of being, beings with reflexive autonomy and action, and that we relate based on mutual respect, that we can make mistakes, that we can apologize, that we are not perfect, but, above all, we are human beings, that we can always choose between two paths: the path of dishonesty, lack of ethics, lack of love, fundamentalism, or the path of love in which we listen, we talk, we reflect, and we can change our minds at any moment. Whichever path we choose, it will guide our way of living and coexisting. (MATURANA; DÁVILA, 2009)

² Humberto Maturana Romesín, Latin American thinker of Chilean nationality. Born in 1928 and died in 2021. He studied medicine at the University of Chile. He got his doctorate in biology from Harvard University (USA). Professor at the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Chile. Professor at the Metropolitan University of Educational Sciences in Chile. Professor at the Institute of Family Therapy of Santiago-Chile. Invited professor at several universities worldwide. Doctor *Honoris Causa* by the Free University of Brussels. He is recognized as one of the greatest current researchers on the Biology of Knowing and the Biology of Loving.

³ Ximena Dávila Yañez is a Matrízitico Counselor, Co-founder with Humberto Maturana of the Matrízitico Institute - Santiago, Chile. She created the operational reflective field she called *Conversar Liberador (Liberating Talk)*.



all, we are human beings who can always choose between two paths: that of dishonesty, lack of ethics, lack of love, fundamentalism, or the path of loving, in which we listen, we talk, we reflect, and we are willing to change our minds; knowing that whatever path we choose, this one will guide the spiritual, academic, professional or family transformation. (MATURANA; DÁVILA, 2019).

2 OBJECTIVE

To make reflections of theoretical and epistemological nature, from a bibliographical and retrospective research, taking as reference some excerpts from the work of Humberto Maturana, as a way to know, understand, and comprehend the consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic in the disruption of the Well-Being condition of the affected populations.

3 METHODOLOGY

We will take as an epistemological reference the following assumptions: (1) to know is to know how to describe how something happens. How do we demonstrate that we know something? By showing how we do what we say we know. For example, demonstrating how a loaf of bread is made; describing the operations of the Bhaskara formula, etc. We assume that every question about knowing is answered by describing a doing. If we can't describe it, it is because we don't know what we claim to know. Every doing is a knowing and every knowing is a doing, consequently, every act of knowing produces a world. The action of knowing is a process of generation of worlds. A generation of worlds in the relationship of living with the other. To know is to be able to describe the phenomenon (problem/conflict) that presents itself in the context of everyday life. If we cannot describe how a phenomenon occurs, we do not know it, and it will be difficult to find out what to do to solve it. This would be the first step/moment for understanding a phenomenon in our daily life, that is, the first step in acquiring knowledge; (2) to understand is to recognize the local network of relations of a phenomenon. To understand a phenomenon is to perceive, to realize, the systemic/ecological relational relations of the phenomenon, in the local context where the events/phenomena happen. If we do not understand the locality, that is, the local context where the phenomenon happens, we will not be able to understand its local relational aspects and we will not know, for example, how to act in face of this phenomenon.

It is necessary to understand the relationships that take place in the local context in which the phenomenon is inserted. This would be the second step/moment for the understanding of a phenomenon in our daily life. Second moment for learning to happen, and (3) to understand is to perceive the systemic plot of the phenomenon. To understand is to perceive/see the relational systemic plot where something occurs/occurs in order to realize the possible consequences (unfoldings) of what occurs/occurs or does not occur. To understand is to know how to apply what has been learned in your



daily life, that is, to incorporate what has been known and understood in your living and coexistence. It is at this moment that learning is actually solidified and embodied. To understand is to realize where, how, and when we should act in order to avoid and/or, if we can't avoid, how to solve a certain problem that arises in the place and with the particularity with which it happens or doesn't happen. If we see a problem in the operation of a system, and if (1) we know the intimate circumstances of its operation that have changed, (2) if we understand the local relations that have interfered, and (3) if we understand how the wider systemic plot in which this (local) system operates is affected, then we can design/present a solution for this problem. This would be the third moment for the understanding of the phenomenon in our everyday life. When the understanding happens, we can conclude that we are facing the possibility of creating alternatives to solve this problem/conflict of disharmony of the Triple Harmony. This is when we can say that the systemic relations of the phenomenon have been incorporated/embodied in our ways of living and coexisting.

What we are proposing, based on the references adopted here, is that only in this way can we act on a certain "problem/conflict". In other words, if we have the possibility, as well as the opportunity, to perform the most correct/adequate actions and conducts in order to direct the resolution of a problem that affects us, we will situate ourselves in conditions to perform them in a spontaneous emotion of responsibility and we will do it without sacrifices, without suffering, that is: in complete pleasure and in the enchantment of spiritual well-being. When this occurs, the phenomenon of learning takes place in a way that does not demand sacrifices, demands, and emotional suffering from those involved in the contextual relationships of learning.

At the end of this article, we will present the proposition of molecular *autopoiesis*, created by Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (1970) and consolidated by the conversations between Humberto Maturana and Ximena Dávila (2009, 2016, 2020, 2021), as a possible alternative, to cross this real health catastrophe, living and coexisting in well-being in a constant flow of daily living⁴.

4 DEVELOPMENT

Pandemic and dark times

"The pandemic is tragedy and possibility. So we have to treat it as opportunity, or we will find ourselves living more of the same: laboratories competing for who gets the vaccine first and prioritizing the profit they can make. But if we can get something positive out of it, it can help us get out of the competition and find a common world, because we want a collaborative way of living. (MATURANA; DÁVILA, 2021, p.40).

⁴ The expression refers to life from dawn to dawn. A constant becoming. Everything flows naturally. The flow of living are the social relations that people establish in their living. Only those relationships established under the emotion of love are considered social relationships. All other relationships are antisocial. They are relationships based on the emotions of competition, envy, domination, etc?



During the course of the pandemic of COVID-19, we were bombarded by discourses that we understood to be mistaken, as the disease was spreading around the world and particularly in our country. One of these discourses was that the pandemic reached all layers of the population in a democratic way. Research has shown conclusively that certain sectors of society have suffered the effects of this disease in a much more devastating way than others. For example: the economically less favored strata of society were the ones who fell ill the most, who lost their sources of income the most, who had the most difficulty in accessing medical treatment, the slowness in vaccination, because they demanded proof of residence, but how could they have this document if they had no fixed address or lived in an illegal camp, occupation, or neighborhood? Add to this the fact that certain strata of society had a much higher percentage of deaths than others. This is the case in Brazil for some ethnic groups such as indigenous people and blacks.

In the times of the pandemic, the different media were flooded with news of all kinds. Fake news; news by half; news that tried to deny the scientific evidence about the seriousness of the disease, as well as attacks and disqualification of the most appropriate ways to deal with the pandemic. Never have the deniers and obscurantists felt so comfortable spreading their untruths in order to confuse the population. We also heard, to say the least, curious things like: the new coronavirus is our enemy; it is a ferocious aggressor that attacks us; we are at war against COVID-19; health professionals are in the front, in the front line; we have to fight against the coronavirus. We have noticed that certain expressions of warlike character have been incorporated into our daily vocabulary with the greatest naturalness. Why has this happened so easily?

Otherwise, it was frequent to hear that after the pandemic people would become more supportive, more tolerant, less aggressive; they would turn inward more; they would value the simple things in life more; they would seek more contact with the so-called "nature"; they would become less prejudiced. Almost a year after the most critical phase of the pandemic, we realize that the world is still going on in the same way, and the perception we have is that the forgetfulness in relation to the negligence in the conduction of this viral disease, and the number of deaths, is a thing of the past, almost as if it didn't exist. There was no social transformation, and violence has even increased, especially in schools, facts that flood the news daily.

As previously reported, if we pay attention to the different media we will notice news such as: the number of people buying firearms has increased in the large urban centers; the richest segments of the planet have become even richer; the impoverished sectors are more and more excluded; never before have we seen so many upper-class families buying homes in luxury condominiums; not to mention that some drugs used to support the treatment of COVID-19 have had their prices increased criminally. There is no shortage of public and political authorities spouting bizarre things like: the new coronavirus is here to decimate mankind; COVID-19 is a biological weapon created to attack the West;



COVID-19 is a punishment from beyond to atone for our sins on earth. We don't believe in this festival of news and nonsense. The justification is simple. The new coronavirus, just like any other virus, has no intention. It carries no principle. It has no desire. It does not, and could not, have anything that can be called will or intentionality.

Those who have intentions, who have desires, who have purposes are us, human beings. The question we must ask ourselves is: What desires do we want to have? What principles do we want to follow? What purposes do we want to adopt? How do I do what I do in my living/living? What do I want to keep in my living?

The moment we are going through can be one more opportunity to reflect about our way of living and coexisting on this planet. One more opportunity to reflect, sincerely and generously, about what we want to keep and what we want to change in our way of living and coexisting.

We want to invite readers to reflect on what is their purpose in living and coexisting after a pandemic that has led to the death of more than half a million people in Brazil alone and that if we don't change our ways of living, we may have already started a new pandemic.

The Coronavirus - not our enemy

"The coronavirus has no intention, no principle, no desire. It does not have, nor could it have anything that can be called will or intentionality." (BARCELOS, 2021, p.35).

The pandemic caused by the new coronavirus, among so many unravelings, has shown us some that we consider crucial. We refer to the danger of hyper-individualism and of the exaggerated confidence in a society that is totally at the mercy of the rules of an economic market that makes no distinction between profit and the ethically unlimited plundering of people. We think that it would be no exaggeration to say that human beings have faced, and are facing, a health crisis situation of unprecedented ecological dimensions in our most recent civilizational history. Perhaps we are all, regardless of ethnicity, gender, economic situation, religious belief, ideological vision, in short, regardless of everything that has historically divided and divided humanity, living a moment in which our ability to establish dialogues and promote collaborative and democratic conversations is being put to the test. And this may be a definitive test. Either we learn to cooperate and collaborate, or we run serious risks to our survival as a species. Hence the planetary ecological dimension of this crisis. Even because, as it seems, this pandemic caused by SARS-CoV-2 seems to be the warning that other events like this one or with greater severity are a real possibility.

The serious crisis caused by COVID-19 ended up showing us, in a cruel and accurate way, the fragility of our relationships with ourselves and with others, in short, with the world we live in. During the pandemic, we watched the best ways to contain the spread of the virus, such as isolation or social distancing, being polemicized, as well as, wearing masks, frequently washing our hands, avoiding



crowds, and science. It is urgent that we think of concrete actions, so that new catastrophes like this do not occur again, and one way is human transformation, and this is an individual process, where each being reflects and from that changes his way of living and thus encourages those who live with him. Small steps, but the only way to change a patriarchal culture, of appropriation and subjugation of the other and destruction of nature. As Paulo Freire, Patron of Brazilian Education, taught us, change is difficult, but it is possible (2003).

One of the great difficulties experienced by people during the Pandemic was social isolation. But we believe that this occurred due to the great individualism and selfishness prevailing in our society. Many did not understand that avoiding contact with others was, in fact, a great collaborative and cooperative act. The spread of the virus was lethal because a large number of people continued to lead normal lives, with parties, crowds, and unnecessary outings. Many deaths could have been avoided if there had been a personal willingness to cooperate and collaborate with others. And, at that moment, cooperating with the other meant physically distancing oneself from him, but not emotionally. Social distancing and estrangement are of a bodily, physical nature, and not emotional. Meanwhile, cooperation and social collaboration are of the emotion, which many call spirit or soul. It is worth pointing out that we are not dual beings. We are a single being, reason and emotion, body and spirit are part of a whole that is interconnected, so when I am in the emotion of unlove, I can make my body sick. Maturana (2004) said that the mind is not in the head.

One of the lessons learned from the pandemic was that it is imperative that we exercise cooperation and social collaboration, and this means that (1) we must take care of ourselves to take care of the other, (2) we must respect ourselves to respect the other, and (3) we must love ourselves to love the other. In moments of great suffering for people, such as the one experienced in the Pandemic, cooperation and social collaboration is what may have made the difference between life and death for thousands of people in various places on the planet, as has been amply demonstrated by various studies in several countries around the world.

For the new coronavirus, as for any virus, it makes no difference what we do or what we fail to do. The coronavirus, like any virus, has no consciousness about what happens or doesn't happen on the planet. So, either we respect, listen to, and love each other's lives, as legitimate beings that deserve our generosity, or we will continue to encourage hyper-individualism, economic accumulation, and the plundering of the human being without any ethical limits, which will inevitably lead us to extinction as a species, with or without a pandemic. The pandemic of COVID-19 simply made visible, explicit our way of living that does not recognize the other as worthy of our respect, an other not seen in his or her legitimacy and dignity, of our generosity, of our solidarity, in short, the other is not seen as a being



worthy of our love and not legitimized in a relationship of "let it appear"⁵. It is a fact that we, human beings, are the only living beings on this planet who can act consciously and reflect to reduce the disaster that this pandemic could mean - beyond what it has already meant - for our future coexistence. If there is a future. Therefore, the only remedy that can provide a democratic and fraternal coexistence among people on this planet is the emotion of loving⁶ the other, and loving each other. Only love is capable of promoting well-being among human beings and other forms of life in this ecologically mistreated biosphere.

The good news is that this medicine - love - is not owned by any big transnational laboratory, is not owned by the market, nor can it be controlled by any state institution. Love is available to us without costing a penny. This remedy, perhaps the last one we have left, is the emotion that makes us animal and human. The emotion of love.

Molecular *autopoietic*ism and the conservation of well-being

Love is the only emotion that widens the gaze and expands seeing, hearing, touching, feeling, and it does this because it is the only gaze that does not impose a preconception, an expectation, a demand, or a desire as a guide to hearing and looking in the relational conduct that is lived" (MATURANA, DÁVILA, 2009, p. 171).

The word *autopoietic* originates from the classical Greek philosophers. However, as a term to reflect on biological phenomena, it was used in the 1970s by Chilean thinkers Humberto Maturana (1928-2021) and Francisco Varela (1946-2001). However, since 2000, as a result of the partnership between Maturana and Ximena Dávila, they started to adopt the expression molecular *autopoietic* as a way to reflect on biological phenomena. Thus, the expression molecular *autopoiése* consists of the

⁵ Letting it appear is a disposition, a way of living and coexisting without demands, without expectations about oneself and the world one lives in... this is not easy in a culture of competition in which one seeks to own the truth, my truth, the one that would give me power in obeying others and that, since it gives me power, I am not willing to give up. Letting it appear is not a vision that is given from a theory, doctrine or ideology. It is an encounter in which one sees the legitimacy of what exists...we do not see without letting it appear and letting it appear is what we refer to when we talk about loving. (MATURANA; DÁVILA, 2019). In short: letting appear is not something from the field of a concession, of a permission, in short, of something that I allow to the other. Letting it appear is an action of respect for the other; a recognition of his or her legitimacy; an action of welcoming and mutual acceptance, without demands and/or expectations of any kind. To let it appear is an action of loving the other. To love without imposing conditions. It is an expression of unconditional love.

⁶ Love is not an eventual phenomenon, but a basic, everyday condition that defines the relationships between humans. Love is an attitude in which one accepts the other unconditionally and does not demand or expect anything in return. Loving implies caring for the well-being of the other and of the environment. Rather than offering instructions on what and how to do, to love is to respect the other's space so that he or she can exist fully. Love is the fundamental emotion that made human history possible. It determines human behavior, which, in turn, weaves the fabric of social coexistence, understanding here emotion not as a feeling, but as forms of relationship. Love gives us the possibility to share life and the pleasure of living experiences with other people. This relational dynamic is at the origin of human life and determined the emergence of language, which is responsible for communication links and includes actions, emotions and feelings. To sum up: Love is the emotion that constitutes the actions of accepting the other as a legitimate other in coexistence. Therefore, to love is to open a space of recurrent interactions with the other, in which his/her presence is legitimate, without demands.



association of the Greek words *auto* (oneself) plus *poiése* (to create). Its creation, as the authors themselves report, arose with the intention of connoting, specifying, the creation by oneself (MATURANA; VARELA, 1997; MATURANA; DÁVILA; 2016). The molecular *autopoietic*, explains the organization of the living being in the flow of its daily living. What this proposition states in biology, is that a living system is constituted in operationally closed molecular networks, which produce themselves and, in doing so, define their limits. A living system "functions" in correlations between molecules, and the changes that take place, in this dynamic, define what happens in that living organism. The dynamic of relationships between molecules happens around themselves, with nothing external to them that determines the outcome of this dynamic. The contacts between the molecules of the living system and external elements only cause changes - in the living system - they do not specify changes in the molecular activity around the maintenance of the living. This is why it is said to be a closed system. A system said to be operationally closed, because its *autopoietic* realization is defined with the dynamics of its own molecular processes from the relationships they establish among themselves, that is, everything happens inside the organism of the living being. It is an internal process, from the inside out.

Importantly, *autopoieticism* has been disseminated as a notion, with repercussions in other disciplinary and thematic fields. Among these, it has been applied in arguments and theories about human social phenomena. In applying this notion to social systems, what has been done is to employ a pertinent and useful notion, to the understanding of molecular systems, in a system whose elements are not molecules. The elements that constitute a human social system are human beings, not molecules. Molecular *autopoieticism*, as Maturana personally stated in a class in 2008, should only be applied to molecular systems, and therefore is not suitable for use in social systems. For Francisco Varela (1946-2001) a Chilean researcher and Maturana's partner in the 1970s at the University of Chile, the use of the idea of *autopoietic* in areas other than cell biology (for example in the human sciences) could only be done as a metaphor. For him, the boundaries of events of the processes of *autopoietic* interactions are much more precise, delimited, than the boundaries in which the processes of relations between individuals in a given society take place. Human beings produce themselves, societies do not. Human societies are produced and organized by human beings. They are not an independent entity, they do not produce themselves. Human beings are molecular *autopoietic* beings, societies are not.

By using the notion of *autopoietic* relationships as an explanatory principle of the human social phenomenon, one would be assuming that a network of relationships between human beings could be analogous to a network of relationships between molecules. The notion of *autopoietic state* evokes a system in which its elements act around the conservation of the organization, and therefore of the identity of the system. This means that the molecules are self-produced around the maintenance of the



organization of the living system as a unit that is defined in the web of relations of elements that operate with minimal autonomy with respect to the identity of the unit they configure. Considering human communities as systems, the degree of autonomy of the elements with respect to this system does not correspond to the degree of autonomy of the constitutive elements of a living system with respect to the living system as a unicellular or metacellular unit.

A human being, as an individual integrated into a social system, is characterized precisely by his possibility of autonomy as a constitutive element in the social system. We know that to the extent that a person needs to submit, to conform, to maintain the identity of a social system, he disappears as a person. To the extent that I cannot say yes or no to what I do, I disappear as a person. With that, something that Maturana and Dávila (2020) define as something fundamental in the relationship of loving: the "letting appear" ceases to happen. A knowledge system about the socialization of humans that relies on and proposes a theory in which people disappear, what can be the result for people? Annulment, submission, in short, not having their legitimacy recognized as such - legitimate. Among humans, what is known, through the history of theories and social systems, is that denying the indenitarian characteristics of individuals is typical of totalitarian systems. A coexistence guided by democratic relations presupposes the presence of individuals, as well as the recognition of their legitimacy as such (MATURANA; PÖRKSEN, 2004). Regarding what was written above, it is worth highlighting what was explained by Maturana and Dávila:

The desire to look at and treat human organizations as living beings or organisms arises from the desire that one gives them the internal operational harmony that one sees in the operation of a living being as an *autopoietic* system. What one does not see is that the operational harmony of the internal dynamics of an *autopoietic* system arises from the fact that the molecules or cells that compose it, like a living being, exist in it as robots subordinate to its conservation and do not complain. In contrast, human communities or organizations are composed of people who are individuals who may reflexively or complain about not wanting to be there or not having a presence. If one forgets this, in the search for theories that help to realize this internal harmony in a human community, one always, or almost always, ends up generating a tyranny (MATURANA; DÁVILA, 2009, p. 315-316).

To summarize: (1) Living beings are molecular *autopoietic* systems configured through cyclic dynamics; (2) social systems are not molecular *autopoietic systems*, because they are made up of people, of individuals; (3) when a molecular *autopoietic* process breaks down we enter into molecular disharmony; (4) every time we fail to resume the molecular *autopoietic* process, a disorganization in the natural harmony of the organism happens, and we enter into malaise, generating bio-psychosocial sickness.



The possible welfare, post pandemic...

In the face of psychic or physiological suffering, love is the first and the last medicine. It is the fundamental remedy capable of generating our well-being in our daily lives. When love is lost, intimate disharmonies occur that only disappear with the recovery of love in loving oneself. (MATURANA; DÁVILA, 2021).

Taking the above quote as a reference, we will reflect on the search for human well-being in everyday life, particularly after the period of the COVID-19 pandemic that ravaged the planet earth and catastrophically struck Brazil. For Maturana and Dávila (2021), the action of loving is the first source for the daily construction of our well-being. For the authors, it is the emotion of love that will provide us with the realization and conservation of our molecular *autopoiesis*, for the realization of our living in sensory, operational, relational and ecological harmony, as a living organism in its Organism-Niche Ecological Unit⁷. We live in a matriarchal/patriarchal society⁸, where the demands are always extreme, from birth. The child learns that he/she needs to be the best since Kindergarten. Competition ends up being part of the daily doings, we have to be better mothers/fathers, better professionals, etc. The pressure evoked by competition is part of our culture. To reduce the impact of all this on our living and coexistence, we need to stop and reflect on how we do what we do and what we want to keep in our lives. It is worth mentioning that reflection and the action of reflecting are taken here in line with what Humberto Maturana (2016) proposes, as processes that are not limited to thinking, to reasoning, but, rather, seek to act in order to know, understand, and comprehend the

⁷ The way all living beings operate. What is peculiar in the operating/living of human beings is *reflection* and *conversation*. The living being exists in two domains, namely: (1) the molecular *autopoietic* system and (2) the interrelational domain in its *ecological niche*. Organism and ecological niche form an ecological unity - *Sensory, Operational, Relational*. This unity is dynamic (organism-niche). A living being exists only as part of the organism-niche ecological unit in which it lives, and lives only as long as its particular way of living is realized in coherence with the structural changes that arise in the multidimensional dynamics of its encounter with its niche in the realization of its living. The living of a living being occurs only as long as the structural changes that take place in the organism-niche ecological unit that it is part of follow a course that does not interrupt the realization of its molecular *autopoiesis*. When this ceases to occur, the organism-niche unit disintegrates, the niche disappears, and the living being dies. Each person lives in a particular ecological niche.

⁸ The patriarchal/matriarchal culture, according to Maturana, is a way of life that originated outside of Europe. It is a cultural living maintained by human groups that came from Asia, Indo-European groups called Kurgans. Herder/knight/warrior groups. They lived around control, domination, the use of violence and warfare, from the earliest stages of history. This is based on archeological research, mainly conducted by Marija Gimbutas. From this historical way of living arises distrust. From this mistrust, in the material environmental conditions for survival, one starts to live a mistrust that is culturally passed on to other generations. In this mistrust and fear, a cultural change begins, with actions guided by morbid fear and repeatedly maintained mistrust. These ways of living are incorporated by humans who start to guide their living outside the basic trust of living beings, in a cultural living that denies the biology of loving. This patriarchal/matriarchal living even today manifests itself with our doing/feeling. We live around control, appropriation, competition, domination. However, in this context of relationships lived in patriarchy/matriarchy, the desires around Democracy and citizenship emerged. For, although patriarchy/matriarchy is central to our adult lives today, we were born, and grew up, in maternal tenderness and warmth during the first years of our lives. This way of living in tenderness and loving, is still maintained within the patriarchy we live as a cultural living that preserves our biology of loving. Our adult desires for a democratic living together emerge in us with sincerity to the extent that we learn about the biology of loving in this living together without demands, lived in a way that we learn to feel seen/heard/respected. In this living together is the origin of our sincere feelings around Democracy as ways of living/convincing equanimity to make equity in human communities.



meaning of our own existence as human beings, and to realize the loving nature that founds us. Reflection is to understand and feel what we perceive through our senses. Reflection predisposes one to change one's mind, if one is not predisposed to change one's mind, there is no possibility of reflection. "The invitation is for reflection, to ask questions again. The answers can only be found in ourselves". (MATURANA; DÁVILA, 2021, p. 48).

Today, in our doing, we constantly enter into conflicts of desires, that is, we do things that we don't want to do over and over again. We need to work, this is a fact. We often need to do things that we don't like to do. During the Pandemic, it was necessary to deprive ourselves of physical contact in order to keep the SARS-CoV 2 infection under control. For well-being to happen, even in moments of uncertainty, doubts, fears, and isolation, we need to learn to diminish the conflicts of desires. Living in well-being is our normal condition as human beings. Unease, or illness is not part of our biological nature, when it happens it is because there is a disharmony in our organism, our *autopoietic* molecular process is not happening the way it should happen.

Unease is not part of our physiology. We need to free ourselves from the cultural ties generated by self-deprecation, unlove, and denial of self, which causes malaise. In Maturana's words:

The organism as a system, exists in harmony and internal coherence that is lost when its relationships and interactions are no longer congruent with this harmony. The denial of love breaks this congruence and gives rise to physiological alterations that make possible processes, such as alterations in motor, endocrine, immunological, neural dynamics, or tissues in general (...) I think that most human suffering, and most illnesses have their origin in the denial of love" (MATURANA, 2005, p. 51).

To live and coexist in well-being, some principles are fundamental: 1) We are the only ones responsible for the worlds we create. Nothing happens outside of me. 2) We always have a choice, even when we say we don't, we are making a choice. We are beings with autonomy. To realize this is sometimes painful, to realize that the life we have, the problems we have, are our own responsibility. It hurts, but it also liberates. Because if I am the only one responsible for the life I lead, I can change the way I do things and, with this, change the way I live. Thus, I stop living in a system of co-dependence. 3) Change is only possible by reflecting on what I do. When I ask myself how I do what I do and start to notice my actions when facing daily situations, I start to notice myself, and when I notice myself, I start to change small actions. One step at a time. Maturana and Dávila (2009) point out that our BEING is unattainable, because we can only change it by changing our DOING. This perception is very important for attitudes to be taken, for there to be a transformation. And transformation is a process that begins with noticing. 4) From the reflection, answer the question: What do we want to keep in our living? What we want to keep, I keep, and what we do not want to keep, that makes us live in a state of discomfort, we look for alternatives to change it and, from there on, the whole life will be transformed from what we decided to keep.



5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The world has suffered the consequences of a Pandemic. We have suffered, we have become distressed, anxious, and afraid of the future. But there is good news: we can diminish these reverberating after-effects by living one day at a time. Living in the present moment, the only moment we really have. Living in the future, only in science fiction movies. Impossible. Those who live in the future live in anguish. Living with the so-called evil of the century: anxiety. Waking up at night suffocated, unable to breathe, tachycardia, pre-occupations and insomnia are some of the symptoms of the excess of the future. The past is gone. The future, who knows?

We think too much. Too many expectations. We populate our imagination with things that don't exist and suffer for it. We idealize happiness. We idealize passions. We idealize people. Nobody is happy 24 hours a day. What we can have, are moments of happiness throughout the day. It is normal to be stressed. It is normal to feel uncomfortable with conflicting situations. But we seek perfection. We look for the life of a margarine commercial, where people are always happy. And this frustrates us and causes us suffering. The nostalgia of a past that we imagine to be perfect and the excess of the future is making us sick and putting an end to our relationships. To live the present for Maturana is "not to have aspirations or desires. Living life in harmony with its circumstances. This does not mean to live floating in disorder and chaos. Doing what you do because you want to do it, and otherwise it results in doing something else" (MATURANA, 1994, p.56). Decrease expectations in relation to others and, mainly, in relation to oneself. Decrease the demands. Let yourself appear. Be free, with autonomy and the ability to choose. LOVE YOURSELF! If I don't love myself as a complete being, flawed, fragile, who falls and gets up every day, and don't even love my mistakes, it is impossible for me to love and respect the limitations of others. I become too critical of the mistakes of others. Everything starts from myself. How I see myself, how I feel, how I behave in relation to myself is exactly how I mirror myself in the other. Many times we make up for our lacks in the other, so only if I love myself am I able to love the other unconditionally.

Unfortunately, we live in a patriarchal society where competition is the founding basis of relationships between people. Times, where negationism, homophobia, feminicide, racism, xenophobia, and so many other forms of discrimination, oppression, diminishment, and annihilation of the other are still a large part of our relationships. More than half a million people have died from complications of Covid-19, a situation that could have been avoided if there had been massive vaccination of the population. Dark times, but, we can make a difference by living differently. By doing what we do, differently. Living and coexisting, respecting oneself and, consequently, respecting the other.



We can only transform ourselves by acting with more love, living with more empathy, ethics, and social commitment. We can transform ourselves, and live in well-being, if we sincerely wish to do so.



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