

Dolfi Trost

THE DEEP MEANING  
OF A DREAM (III)

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING that we must particularly oppose the cosmological data to the historical data. In the battles of antiquity, if a solar eclipse occurred, the fight to the death stopped. We see in this example that the historical data, which contains all the social and vulgarly scientific elements (astronomy, chemistry, quantitative physics), usually veils the cosmological data. But it is enough for it to become active by some accident, for everything that is historical to be erased as totally devoid of importance. The same goes for the dream, where after the flood of memories of the day before, its true meaning appears, by decantation.

But it is only when history ends that thought can be truly *free*. The relationship it creates with itself is no longer treated as a logical contradiction, twisted by occasional sophisms, of quasi-biological origin. In its turn unto itself, consciousness can freely choose to be or not to be, without getting lost in the fabric of historical error. Because it then becomes cosmic consciousness.

In the most elevated regions of the intellectual atmosphere thought ceases to suffer<sup>19</sup>. It is the end of melancholy (sadness transferred to the self). It no longer comes up against, as in a cage, the mere fact of existing involuntarily.

In the cosmological data, prophetically realized by dreams of universal anxiety, thought, by projecting itself freely everywhere, can come up against the mere fact of existing without hindrances. It is no longer up against the wall by the affirmation that somewhere escapes from Nietzsche's pen: what I would have liked the most is no longer possible, because I would have liked not to be.

The cosmic consciousness, which then rises, becomes the center of the revolutionary vision by dethroning the virtual character of *suicide*.

Because over all current thought hovers, like an insurmountable necessity, the possibility of non-being, with its anesthetically neurotic character.

The mental dominant enhances the fact of thinking, from the logico-psychological domain, in universal necessity<sup>20</sup>.

Many "signs of the times" show that, in a sense, this process has begun. Beside the Romantics, where the feeling of nature,

exoticism and poetic melancholy are only approaches to cosmic consciousness, from Baudelaire onward the anxiety of thought about the possibility of not being is forced to transgress the limits of self-accusation and of purely theoretical contradiction. Although thought can still postulate the possibility of non-being, the gratuitous character of this evolution comes out from the simple opposition between the vital fact of being and the virtual dissociation of being by thought, which is also conceived as non-being<sup>21</sup>.

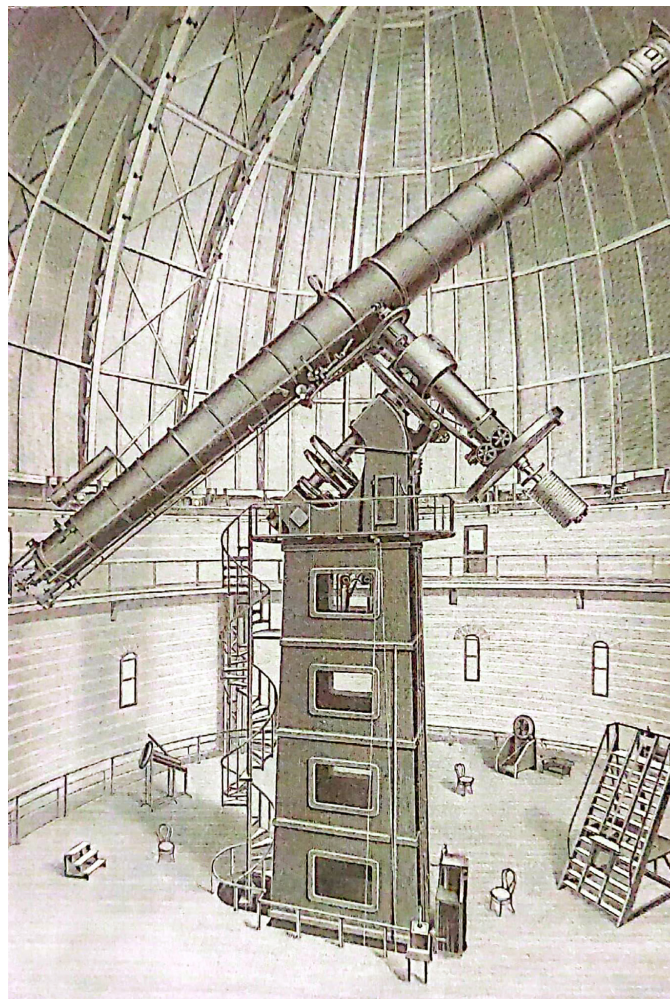
Insofar as a spiritual attitude can be heralding, by getting rid of its historical connections—and all the more so now, when what one can accept to call the Kali-Yuga invades the thought externally—as soon as the stultifying vital-social everyday life is repulsed, the deep aspects of the dream arise in the waking thought. And as in a dream, thought *thinks* without destroying itself.

Akin to dreams in their content of cosmic consciousness, delusions stripped of "historical" content (mania for social grandeur, strictly memorized daily facts, influence of exogenous culture and education) contain the same revelation. Above all, schizophrenic delusions without a socially protesting appearance contain to varying degrees the unequalled "need for infinity" cited by Lautréamont, just as alcoholic delusions especially contain Poe's "never, forever."

In dreams and in madness, when they are emptied of mnesic and social content, the consciousness of belonging to the world of stars and planets appears with virulence. This consciousness opposes, by at

the same time containing it, the disease of suicide by melancholy, which is the highest summit of philosophical thought.

As soon as historically determined obnubilation is relegated to the background, the "anywhere, outside the world" imposes itself. Once the immediately diurnal material is defeated, the universal data inevitably appears<sup>22</sup>.



Dolfi Trost, Frontispiece.

[Trost intended to use this image, together with the following ones, to illustrate his text.—Editor's note]

Regarding all these visions, as well of the dream ones, one must believe in their *objective and revealing* value. Not just as meaning, but as higher order realities. If we wanted, in such cases, to find an imitation of a positivist explanation, of the oneiric or astrological type, and some symbolism, we would have to say that in the purified visions of dreams and authentic delusions the seeds of previous perceptions, or the seeds of a future life, develop through the intervention of certain phylogenetic or mutative psychic strata<sup>23</sup>.

The value of the scenes seen in dreams is a value of perception. This possibility of the infinitely small is just as tenable in the whole of the mental sphere, as in the physical sphere of the microcosm.

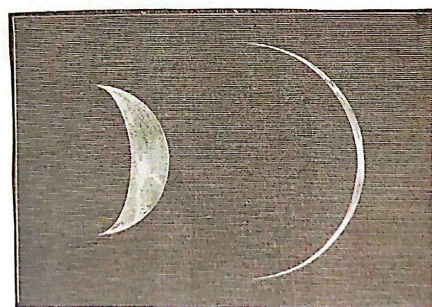
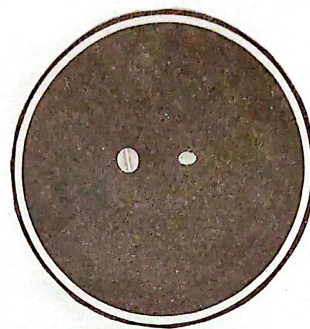
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Consciously belonging to the cosmos becomes, by these different routes, an invading and tyrannical thought.

It acquires the same acuteness and prepares for the same long preoccupation that appeared when thought turned onto itself and opposed to voluntary life the *challenge* of non-life. It creates an ontological difference between beings and, without their knowledge, has organized a series of spiritual *races*, compared to which, the scientific or other differences established between humans seem derisory<sup>24</sup>.

In truth, all the so-called functional neuroses are basically only reactions against suicide, or more precisely the result of the struggle between the unconscious vital tendencies and the desire to die, which is the ultimate fruit of thought that turns unto itself. For, freed from its exclusively vital function, thought becomes melancholy and tends automatically toward self-annihilation.

The first voluntary suicide, the first refusal to use thought to maintain life, the denial of existence as original and indisputable, created a separation between men much deeper than any biological, social or economic formation. From the emancipation of the ideation vis-à-vis its purely vital functioning, the fact of living is no longer based on any theoretical reason, being maintained only by instincts, social relations and the obsession



Dolfi Trost, By leaving its exclusively vital role... (p. 9).

of consciousness. The process of differentiation that appeared in the human species through the first voluntary suicide, without external motive, with the resulting human line, is a greater leap than that which separates primitive man from apes. The fact of using thought no longer to persevere (even in the self-death that the scorpion gives itself to escape fire, which is still a vital attitude, or to escape real danger), but as a means to question life itself, has separated as a *mutation* the human ramifications<sup>25</sup>.

It will be noticed on this occasion that the thought of the dream has remained an attitude only erected against the external life (in this case the dramatization) and that, although we think all the time in the dream, we do not grasp the fact of thinking. For this reason, the dream still anticipates ulterior life. In fact, thought, from the moment when it places life back in the cosmological order, goes beyond the process of self-annihilation, on the one hand, and enters, on the other hand, just as in dreams, the cosmic consciousness. In dreams, death always comes from outside<sup>26</sup>.

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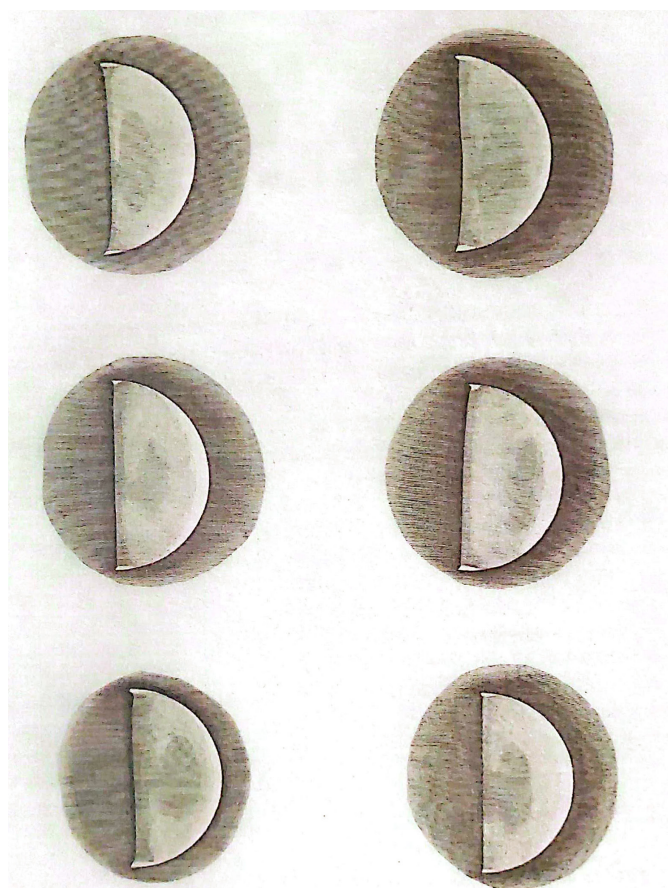
In diurnal life, as in dreams, the irruption of the cosmological data begins with a strange anxiety. This is only an obscure or veiled consciousness of the cosmic, which is subliminal.

Whatever explanation given to this phenomenon by psychoanalysis (and which may be valid in its sphere) by relating this strange anxiety to accidental movements of old and appeased unconscious complexes, or to inadvertent painful attacks which revive a buried traumatic past, from the perspective of the mind this strange anxiety is based on an accidentally virulent contact with the cosmos. Thus the painting of metaphysical towers is preceded by the mystery and melancholy of a street. Extraordinarily diverse images!<sup>27</sup>

Besides, the very basis of the infantile personality develops in this strange anxiety, starting with the neurotic emotional stage of the fear of the dark.

The strange anxiety is triggered by the fortuitous encounter of an object with the cosmological data. It is therefore explicable that the fear of the dark can only partially be reduced (and on a certain level) to the crisis of birth. The consciousness of belonging to the celestial sphere, revealed above all by dreams, enters the revolutionary consciousness.

The apparent immobility of the celestial vault, contrary to evolution, posits the turn of thought unto itself as a contained



Dolfi Trost, The more we reconnect with the day... (p. 6).

and suppressed moment. The outside world is again chosen—this time for no reason—as the object of thought, and the duality me or not-me is replaced by a kind of revolutionary action.

It is obvious that *automatism* has taken the first big step in this direction and that it can therefore only maintain itself within the limits of the absurd.

Then thought, purified both of vital need and of antagonistic self-accusation, truly decides to live or die.

The very fact of existing becomes revolution.

It is then that the process of decomposition, which thought has suffered for more than two thousand years, stops. Thought no longer opposes itself and, as in a dream, its destination is returned to the cosmic order that it has to accept or deny.

*Love*, after this absence, becomes the sphere of concrete relationships, because the strictly biological function of thought is no longer necessary.

Remembrance and anticipation as projections into the past or into the future to bring about the annihilation of the present disappear, because specifically personal duration must be measured against astronomical durations. Divorced from its instinctive and nervous origin, from its morbid accumulation, thought turning onto itself turns in reality onto the entire universe. It thus becomes both more independent of its human carrier and more attached to him: the same as in the dream<sup>28</sup>. The oscillations between the vital extreme and the opposite suicidal extreme are overcome to correspond to the *over-consciousness* which, abolishing the conflict of the conscious and the unconscious, is announced by the poetic work of our time.

Without overcoming the division of thought against itself and against the fact of existing, human life is really only a survival of some kind. Present beings only live, beyond a degree of historical stultifying, despite their thought, surrounded by a vast conspiracy that maintains life as a commodity of exchange. The various goals proposed by historical life seem to this historical thought only instinctive lures, traps<sup>29</sup>.

On the other hand, modern industrial development, with all the lights and sounds that surround it, serves to maintain the drug of involuntary survival<sup>30</sup>.

From a certain height of the mind—illumination—it is noticeable that for a century all poets have invariably come to this point of fusion: madness or death, or both at the same time. Because all those who have crossed the last shore of history have found themselves before the nothingness of life or before the cosmological data. But we undoubtedly see that madness is only the pretext that automatically stops the spiritual questioning: why be? to be, not to be?

And it seems that a challenge of unknown origin, produced by hostile forces, forces the consciousness to recoil in madness or death before responding. Only automatism has hitherto been able to break through this *ivory door*, going beyond the point that always led to the destruction of thought and its bearer<sup>31</sup>.

With each attempt at liberation, the revolution collides head on with suicide, which is the most concise and most pure form of negation. But the cosmological data leads to cosmic consciousness, therefore to the point from which any return is truly rendered impossible<sup>32</sup>.

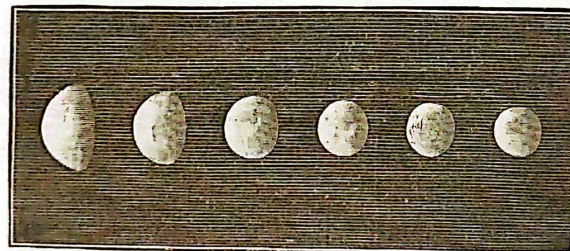
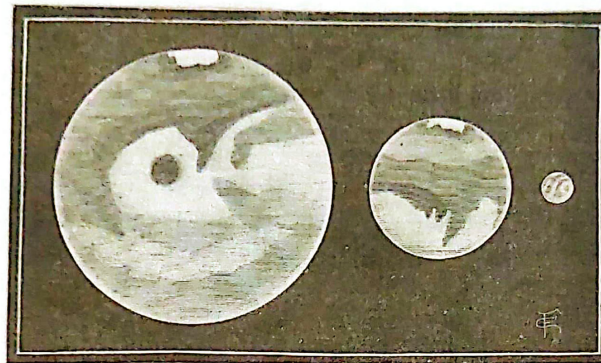
Cosmic consciousness forces thought to shift its destination again and it no longer finds its highest spiritual point in self-destruction.

Anticipated by dreams, it appears in balloon ascents, in the gaze of telescopes, in celestial maps, in the infinity of the unconscious<sup>33</sup>.

Thought, freed from doubt, enters into automatism as into the initiatory mystery, but without the bad conscience of living in spite of itself.

And the outpouring of the dream in life, which was mentioned many times, separates itself from dread in order to follow the intoxication of love at first sight<sup>34</sup>.

It is found again in the automatic text: sadness floats in the void, your red wings cry in the shadows, come and lie down in the darkness of red, and your nails will change color, your lips seek in vain the deserted shores, for you step towards white infinity...



Dolfi Trost, It seems that a challenge of unknown origin... (p. 16).

#### FOOTNOTES:

<sup>19</sup> Technique of simulation in *N's* case: she had constructed a fiction where her role was to centralize the very real desires of those around her, but paranoically magnified. Naked, standing on a steep rock, to which she had attached a window overlooking the sea, a window on which *doubt* was displayed in large capital letters, she succeeded, after a few years of obstinate maneuvers, in reducing the portion of indisputable contingent reality to the dimensions of fiction.

The dizziness of the heights made her dwell later in vicious circles, in the influence of the anguish of her lovers who could no longer resist her calls.

The fiction consequently became real: a borderline case where, objectified by so many contrary winds, *N*, alone in the midst of perpetual danger, built her fundamental abstract principle: Act as if you were loved by all!

Gradually, this principle replaced the capital letters of doubt, and the rock melted. Then, for the first time, the image of the *past* no longer resembled loneliness, of which the fall of leaves is the most frequent symbol.

<sup>20</sup> Her schizophrenic desire was really just a sharp point aimed at the present. Her skirt, like her psychic constellation, took side roads to reach the goal.

<sup>21</sup> I first see her at a distance, and then I stop seeing her, to suddenly recognize her in front of me.

<sup>22</sup> Agnosias are disorders of knowledge, perception, understanding. Touch agnosia is also called stereognosia. This tactile phenomenon can appear at night, on a couch, when touching the body of Miss X, although we feel the smallest details and know to whom they belong, we still do not recognize them.

<sup>23</sup> The role of peyote (mescaline and other similar substances) is particularly suggestive in this sense. I give here an example of delirium provoked by the absorption of drugs, thus illustrating the possibility of the awakening of old abandoned memory, reappearing in exceptional circumstances. It is a contemporary who describes his vision: "The plants were not analogous to those that I could have created by representation, I was amazed by the beauty and the grace of their forms; there was something grandiose about them, as if ordinary plants had only been their degenerated descendants. The animals resembled antediluvian species".

<sup>24</sup> To echolalia (of words) corresponds echopraxia (of gestures): indefinite repetition of the same movement; the very fact of living becomes an echopraxia in the eyes of consciousness.

And also: *N's* special echopraxia: she cast her gaze indefinitely on the image of the loved one; or better, her gaze cast and recast on the beloved is an infinite echopraxia.

As long as the gaze lasts, she performs a gyratory movement of her arm and neck.

<sup>25</sup> The more madness goes upwards, like female hysteria at the beginning of the century, the more it is uniquely functional and

clearly expresses the tendency for and against suicide. At the extreme limit of the known, we immediately notice, in this case, the increase in the *gracefulness* of gestures and attitudes. On the contrary, the somatic psychoses show the loss of gracefulness.

<sup>26</sup> Having been excessively kissed at the age of fourteen, her lips swelled up. The explanation is as follows: the swollen lips now serve her for the unconscious justification of very many erotic lies.

<sup>27</sup> As the light dims, the lies turn to obscenities. Which proves that obscenity is a form of mythomania.

<sup>28</sup> During the act of love, X, usually dismissive and silent, begins to speak in a low voice. It is on this occasion that she creates a *private* language, incomprehensible or almost incomprehensible.

You understand what I mean: she makes neologisms! These erotic neologisms have a lively allure, stemming from the elevation of the worst obscenities and lies to the rank of initiatory word-symbols and passage keys.

To my question: why do you do it?, she replies that the usual language does not have the necessary terms, such as: to overfinger the gaze, to garter the mouth; or yet others: the cosmo-fall of the stockings, I precisely feel, ah! the yin-yang *table* in my emerald bosom.

<sup>29</sup> Crevel writes: Suicide is a means of selection... those who do not have universal cowardice commit suicide...

<sup>30</sup> The innocence of the gaze as a means of enjoyment and the reverie of the evening as protest and the forgotten dream in the center of the

night and the memorization of a face as psychopathy and the handshake along the river as accumulation of fatigue and drunkenness in oblivion as the overall pattern.

<sup>31</sup> Melancholy perplexity: whirlwind of ideas. Alas! Where do all these silk stockings come from?

<sup>32</sup> It is in Kafka's poetic work that the mists of cosmic consciousness begin to lift.

<sup>33</sup> Erotic phenomenology depends on meteorological circumstances: influence of the storm on female excitement and abandoned attitude when the sky is very low; good weather and coquetry; relationship between morning desire and amorous simplification; forest and lust; low atmospheric pressure and tendency to orgy (as in the mountains or by the sea); irradiated solar heat and sexual cynicism, haste, complicated with exhibitionism (as on the beaches in summer); autumnal melancholy and amorous nostalgia projected from a distance; erotic somnambulism during extreme seasons, in exotic landscapes; filtered light and amorous position; cruel characters during the full moon, rain and consecutive tears; passion doubled by the winter cold, the aurora borealis, the eclipses; snowfall and the need for warm nudity; rage of the tropics and preference for young girls.

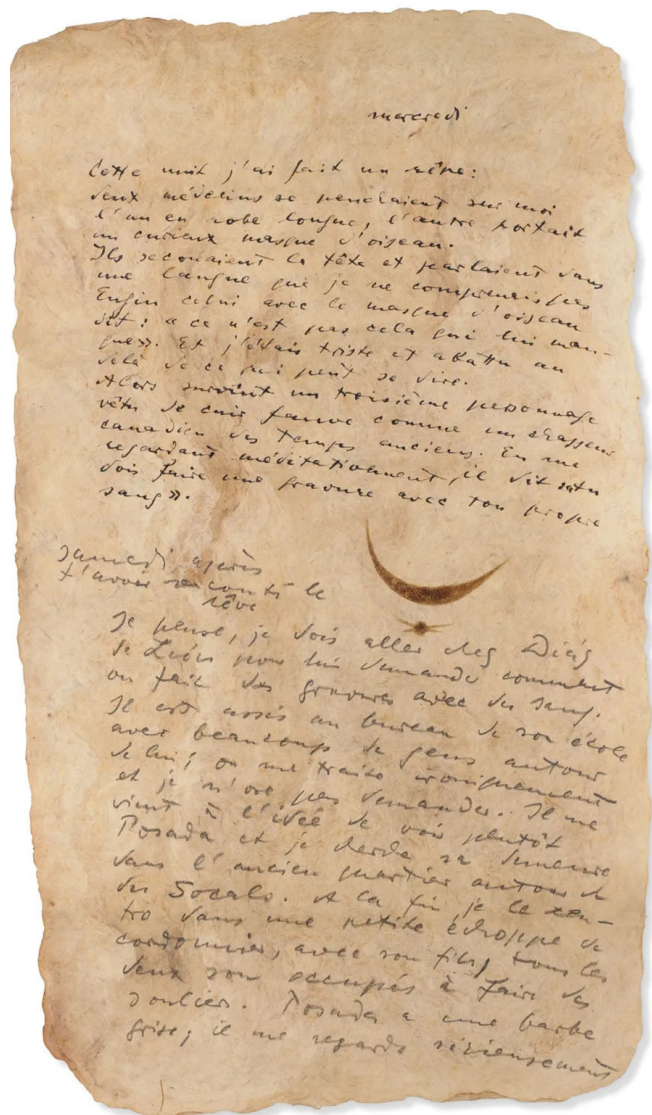
Finally, the over-determining importance of the *time of day*.

<sup>34</sup> She still believed that the wind was produced by the movement of trees.

(Translated from the French by Sasha Vlad)

## A DREAM BY WOLFGANG PAALLEN

Wednesday



Wolfgang Paalen, (Dream), 1945.

Last night I had a dream:

Two doctors were leaning over me, one in a long frock, the other wore a curious bird mask.

They were shaking their heads and talked in a language that I did not understand. Finally, the one with the bird mask said: "That's not what he's missing." And I was feeling sad and dejected, beyond words.

Then a third character appeared, dressed in tawny leather like a filthy Canadian from the distant past. Looking at me meditatively, he said "You must make an engraving with your own blood."

Saturday, after  
having told you the  
dream

I think I have to go to Díaz de León\* to ask him how to make engravings with blood.

He is sitting at his school desk with lots of people around him; I am treated sarcastically and I dare not ask. It occurs to me that I could see Posada\*\* instead, and I am looking for his house in the old neighborhood around Zocalo. In the end, I find him in a small shoemaker's shop where, together with his son, they are busy making shoes. Posada has a grey beard; he stares at me with a serious look.

\* Francisco Díaz de León (1897-1975) was a Mexican graphic artist who specialized in engraving and illustration. (Translator's note)

\*\* José Guadalupe Posada Aguilar (1852-1913) was a Mexican graphic artist who used relief printing to produce popular illustrations. (Translator's note)