

How do we perceive the world that surrounds us? From the earliest records we have about men who were reflecting on the nature of man, this question was central in their speculations. Philosophers and theologians of all times suggested answers that revealed more their convictions on other matters than notions which would shed light on this problem.

It is only recently that this problem of perception and cognition was attacked from an experimental point of view which brought forth a wealth of new insights and with these a new philosophical position with wide ramifications into physical, biological and social sciences.

Dr. Humberto R. Maturana, who is Professor of Biology in the Faculty of Science at the University of Chile, Santiago, Chile, and who is at present Visiting Research Professor in the Departments of Electrical Engineering and of Physiology and Miller Professor at our University, spearheaded with his work in neurophysiology the experimental approach to epistemological problems. Ten years ago, with a research team at MIT, he was able to show that the neural organization of the visual system in the frog is such that one may appropriately say that even a frog has "Platonic Ideas," i.e., ideas about the world before learning and experience.

More recently, Dr. Maturana with his coworkers in Chile addressed himself to the old riddle of how we experience the world in colors which, of course, are not properties of things

but properties of the mechanisms by which we perceive of things. He makes his answer to this question very tangible indeed by demonstrating that under certain conditions various colors are vividly experienced where in fact there is only one hue.

This poses most interesting questions as to what is "reality," and Dr. Maturana will address himself to this question as a biologist experimentalist and philosopher in his lecture "Biology and Reality" on Tuesday, April 29,

H. Von Foerster

4/10/69