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The center for Contemplative Research, as projected by Alan Wallace, may play a decisive role in a revolution of the science of mind.

Remember that cognitive neuroscience and cognitive psychology are disciplines that purport to develop our knowledge *about* the mind. Yet they are at the same time practices *within* the minds of the specialists of these sciences. They use methods that are appropriate for *objective* explanations, but their theme of investigation is inextricably linked with *subjective* experience; not only the reconstructed experience of the human subjects of experiment, but also the lived experience of the scientists who figure out and interpret the former. The recognition of this “strange loop” of the knower and the known in cognitive knowledge is usually underrated or postponed, so as to focus research on easily sorted out problems and promote fast-paced progress. But ignoring it completely is not a viable option in the long term, for two reasons at least.

*Firstly*, the objective findings of cognitive neuroscience draw their relevance for concrete human beings from nowhere else than their systematic correlation with reports of lived experience.

*Secondly*, at the far end (and right at the beginning !) of an inquiry in the cognitive science, one faces the well-known “hard problem” of the alleged physical origin of consciousness. In view of its manifest intractability, one is bound to realize sooner or later that this problem is a sort of artifact of the objectifying stance itself, and that it therefore requires a “methodological remedy” rather than a “solution”<sup>1</sup>. But, as it is well known in Husserl’s phenomenology, such realization is by no means easy, when one is systematically trained to an attitude of intentional directedness (namely to a practice of aiming at, grasping and manipulating objects).

Full conversion of our approach of the “hard problem” of consciousness is therefore conditional on a radical change of attitude and even maybe of civilizational orientation. In the suitable alternative attitude, similar to the phenomenological attitude of the “*epoché*”, our ontological standards are recognized to be underpinned by a standard of self-evidence. But such a momentous change in attitude can occur only if a non-conventional method of inquiry of mind and consciousness, by acquaintance rather than distantiation, is systematically cultivated. Such is precisely the purpose of the center for Contemplative Research to be created in Castellina Marittima. This is why I fully endorse the establishment of this center, and will be pleased to participate in its activities.

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<sup>1</sup> F. Varela, “Neurophenomenology: A methodological remedy for the hard problem”, *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 3, 330-349, 1996