

Dialogue Between Two Mirrors Towards Venetian Transdisciplinarity

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Abstract: The article is a „photographic snapshot” of the interweaving between personal history, cultural heritage, and the concept of transdisciplinarity through the metaphorical lens of Venice's enduring beauty and struggle. The narrative journey reflects the author's Brazilian roots amidst political turmoil, the formative experiences of her European heritage, and the evocative environment of Venice. By intertwining personal anecdotes with broader reflections on history, resistance, and cultural preservation, the article proposes a transdisciplinary approach that bridges past and future, art and science, to address contemporary issues such as the safeguarding of collective memory.

Keywords: transdisciplinarity, Venice, cultural heritage, personal narrative, global warming, resistance, historical memory, Brazilian history, European heritage, art and science integration.

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The Serene One

*Morning rises in the mist, showing the meaning of their lives
Like a complex puzzle, attaching oneself to one piece
To another, they must fit together
Everything seems interdependent,
The drawing gradually emerges, the game becomes more fluid
As the action unfolds, the major lines appear
Suddenly, there it is: it's finished*

*Forever? ... Pieces she wished frozen: she arrives in Italy.
 Another comes to add pieces, the puzzle widens
 From lineage, couple, friendship, critique.
 Implications. Divisions. The viability of the form.
 One must step back to see better, and the puzzle
 Continues becoming work, prayer, or chaos when
 A hand comes and undoes everything...
 Then they start again,
 Slowly, one continues the work of the other,
 We find the old marks,
 The matrix, Venice!
 Does the puzzle have a beginning and an end?
 No, it continues, humanity placing pieces on the table
 We still poorly perceive the accomplished meaning of all this,
 But we perceive that there is meaning to be marked,
 Intermittent and fleeting unveiling...
 Before everything collapses.
 It is the very small day of consciousness that knows itself:
 It takes a lot of patience,
 The day will be long before the plunge
 Of stars into the profound night.*

1. Introduction

I walk the narrow sidewalks of Venice along the emerald canals, and I recall what brought me here, what intuitive force, what blood: strangely comfortable in this architectural gem that temporarily hosts one more stranger. A pious grandmother, a devoted godmother, also cradled my childhood. From the nourishing milk of prayers, the firm and nurturing sweetness of hope, and yet Venice flows slowly...

From the kitchen, my mother's employee watched over the light energies above the crib. I was born in the sixties, in Brazil, amidst military dictatorship and the crossfire of urban guerrilla warfare. Violence was omnipresent with its deadly bleeding. The religious faith was overlaid with the fragile and strong faith of comrades, guerrillas, brothers in arms and values, and the bellicose anger of the extreme right. Something of the fury of the Doges, the ferocity of lions in battle. Their feverish struggle showed me at a very young age that there are causes greater than oneself, and life is only worth living if it carries the fight for all freedoms.

I learned to calm the storm between furious adults, singing, dancing, doing theatre. The arrest of a judge before my eyes, and a shift had just occurred in my frail yet strong life. The judge, a friend of my parents, gifted me with the fire he could no longer bear, extinguished by the torments of political imprisonment.

Shortly after being dropped into the Vosges, the reinforcement of my

human values intensified. My grandfather J. went through both wars, four years as a prisoner in German camps; his house was self-sufficient. He hunted in the Black Forest, and his garden was more abundant than a supermarket. His freezers housed wild boars and snails. Outdoor life, mushroom picking with him, shook me from my stupor.

And then, the ski school, like a daily battle. Mediocrity and complaints were banned from the program. Marcus Aurelius lingered in my childhood: endure and abstain.

Thus, Venice endures the sea that will eventually bring it down. Times were tough, but the adults around me had precise compasses. My mother floated, a beautiful translucent young woman, a wounded artist. My father had an obsession with this child defying fate. He taught me chess, books, calligraphy, the passion for writing. Far away, a judge endured and resisted. I knew it... I still walk the echoing sidewalks of Venice. My mother is the permanent absence in this story. She compels me to silence: you will speak of me only after my death. So we will not speak of my mother. We will speak of Venice.

We will speak of transdisciplinarity as well, in a Venetian way: with the resistance of beauty, culture: past and future connected to save the memory of a city from the global heating and keep alive our strongest vows of love.



2. A Smouldering Fire in Venice

On both sides, the elders watched, swiftly into boarding school, summer

with them, I grew up in the shadow of the old trees of the garden, gnarled, rooted, deep, and resolutely vertical. Nothing wavered in a precise and austere education – simplicity, effort, transcendence, vocation, at all costs. Humanity of lions, beasts with skin as smooth as polished marble. Flashback to a grandfather, an academic in Rio, and his library that smelled of old books, and to a great-uncle, a one-legged fighter pilot who used to take me for drives ... he loved to drive. Before, long before the forests and the men of bronze, I believe it was the ocean that toughened me. My family also includes the rolling waves, the breakers, and the scorching sand of Rio where I tasted the torrid summer holidays, a preview of the Mediterranean heat. The infinite concrete of Sao Paulo is the complex labyrinth where I screamed for the first time. Venetian statues with faces of beasts: ‘Endure,’ murmured my ancestors, with a placid and implacable gaze, who taught me to swallow my tears and stand tall during the debacle.

Remission?

Life paves its way,
Between the cracks of being
It slips into the draughts

Words of water
That irrigate the earth’s paths
Scorched by the sun
Where almost nothing resists

Words of wind
That circulate and rustle
Without wounds or offences,
Between the gaps and distances
Light as the truth

Words of Fire
Subtle and happy clearing

Final sharing of waters,
Between the lagoon and the sea
Imperceptible and decisive
Between life and death.

It is my mother who taught me to doubt everything.

I certainly owe my vocation as a philosopher to her. You don’t have children. No.

I take care of those who are here and have been forgotten. I don’t believe in maternal instinct. I’ve seen these street kids suffer so much, condemned to dumps, my poor and combative students, drowned in fatigue and debts. I became passionate about education to understand cruelty and repair its wrongs, with the

precision of a watchmaker. The water of the Grand Canal irrigates my dreams.

Yes. Unintentionally, I am always propelled by the momentum of a judge, the fiery passion of my distinguished translator father, the resistance of my grandfather, a hunter and valiant soldier, by the composure of my great-uncle, a fighter pilot... By a face from the past that resembles me. I am always cradled by the gentleness and faith of those I watched over until death, my grandmother, and my sweet godmother, unforgettable companions. As adults, we developed an unwavering complicity beyond territories, beyond the laws of words. My ancestors explained to me that all my actions would be judged, and my next life would depend on this: when I was twelve. Spirits, astral journeys, energy – a palpable fact in Brazilian culture: images that have both always surprised and attracted me... Because of this, I intuitively know that we are carried, and thus the beauty of Venice still carries me. There is something greater and stronger than us within us... My first soul-to-soul exchange in Venice was with a Lion who alerted me: an iceberg is heading for the city.



3. Under the Portico's Shade

My father built a wall of 15,000 books around us; he compelled me to uproot myself. Equally erudite and clear-headed, he was a great sceptic and my first reader. Stern, he rarely praised me and taught me to be wary of flatterers. He taught me Epicurus and Marcus Aurelius, made me recite by heart the maxims of Descartes, Heraclitus, and Nerval: I think; therefore I am, one never steps into the same river twice, a dream is a second life. My ally in everything, he behaved in chess and in the face of others like my worst enemy. He was ruthless and passionate; I owe him my confusion of feelings. He is my first outlawed love: we

never made love, but our minds were drawn to each other like magnets. He infused culture into me like infusing a lethal poison, a hard drug, an eternal addiction to letters and poetry. His death devastated me. I almost died of sadness after him.

Venice inscribed itself on my body like an indelible and painful tattoo. I didn't inherit a single book, but I learned, like stacking bags of cement to build a dam, to create my own library, which I bequeath to my husband's children like a perforated target.

My mother, I am forbidden to speak of her until her death. That says it all. I keep her at a distance to preserve a garden or maintain the clarity of the waters within me. But the blind spot in this story is a man without a name, without presence, without belonging to a homeland, an esteemed professor at the University of Law, who spied on me until his death and encouraged my work so gently: maybe her lover? To prove it, one would have to unearth his bones. His discipline: civil law. I won't speak of him anymore.

From him, I've learned that I must avoid lawsuits at all costs and stay away from fratricidal wars. From him, I've also inherited my mistrustful thoughts. The feeling that there's someone always following me in the Italian alley. He followed me all my life. Wealthy, erudite beyond erudition, with an elegance that turned heads, he accumulated passions, his sons all born men and acknowledged... For my part, he connected me to nobility without bequeathing me anything else, possibly, except, maybe, the secret bond of blood.

So why have I always kept a course for Venice, despite this multi-referential paternity that would have confused many? A great-grandmother of German origin, Maria Muller, as upright as an I. She was the daily discipline of prayer and care. Obsessive, she always watched over me. As a child, I called her Mum, mixing up the roles, much to my mother's chagrin. This mother disguised as a grandmother had an unyielding will. She called me every day in Brazil. It's my best soil. The fertility of my hope, not a wrinkle in this perhaps overly blameless life. She raised me without a shout, without a slap, by example. Until the end.

The Venetian lion listens to me, in chance encounters in the city's alleys.

Her best friend, my godmother, took over from my grandmother. Hands of both fairy and iron. These two women were soulmates, an almost flawless sisterhood connected with them. As a child, I was either at one's place or the other's. Always watched over... From them, I received so much love: that's why I escaped to Italy.

Aurora in the Plain

'Say it, do you know, you who listen and watch me.
Do you know what I don't say and never will, and it's
There between us, like an evening falling and
Obscuring us.'
Despite the sobered consciousness
Of that morning

She still believes
'In the promised plain'
In a different truth
at the
break
of day
A new morning
A water-green morning
A happy morning
A Venetian
Liquid
morning
Clear but without bitterness
She tries to declutter hell
To rediscover
The hues of dawn
The devils have loaded this future
with an excess of dreams
With scarecrows
With a jumble of sophisticated projects
Forgetting to live
the colour and thickness
The love vows
of the present hour
Between 'now and now'
Perhaps the values are too
INFERNAL
So distant and sealed
So high
That man
Constantly sends them back
And lose themselves in themselves
Lighten the expectations
Simplify the colours
Understand the ambitions
Give voice
Without possible evasion
To the dawn along the water
To pose or undo naked gestures
Display true touches
Or keep
So heavy and precious,
The difficult secrets
But pronounce
In a complete and irreversible way.
AURORA IN THE PLAIN
Remain with that voice

In an infinite harmony
 Always close
 Even at the cost of silence
 Of the solitude
 Of the infamy of rejection
 Even at the cost of damnation
 Under Satan's blinding fires
 YES
 The tenacious voice
 Broken
 And worn out
 Impoverished
 By so much human cruelty
 Will repeat to you
 Will sing to you
 Will stammer to you
 Will deliver to you.
 THE AURORA IN THE PLAIN

4. Against the Winds

Enchanted by the beauty of Venice, I embody within me a strange blend of the exercise of Cartesian doubt, as I have been practicing philosophy since 1991, and yet also carry the popular madness that bequeathed me a fervent faith, the assurance that we are not alone, and that there is something greater than us in this world. Belief that has weakened me a lot because of naivety or blindness, I believe that humans have an ever-present potential for learning. I believe that human goodness is possible. I believe that we can achieve a better day together because we can learn to think together for the good of all. I believe that one should never despair of anyone and give everyone the benefit of the doubt. I believe in a good life with and for others in just institutions. I believe that the law can prevail over brute force. I believe that money is not the sole motive of human actions. I believe that freedom is an experience to be lived. I believe that destiny can be swayed by an unwavering will. I believe that life is beautiful and worth experiencing. I believe that a Venetian oath of love can prevail against all odds.

But I know these are beliefs, even utopias, and they are debatable. However, they help us float during drowning. Thus, my steps resound on the pavement of St. Mark's Square. So many steps have trodden this mythical place overlooked by a winged lion, a lion that wants to rise but will collapse sooner or later into the salty and deep waters of the lagoon.

Her phone is a permanent link to the world with him. She texts him a few words, but above all, she inundates him with photos of Venice. She literally bombards the city with her lens as if she wanted to quench an unquenchable thirst for this architectural masterpiece.

Why 'beliefs'? She has suffered very harsh defeats in her life, always for

the same reason: she thought to change others, convince them to adhere to her values, a worldview: freedom, brotherhood, equality in difference... Beauty, serenity, creativity, sharing, common creations... Fidelity, to oneself and to others, reparative truth above all. In a recent conference, she elaborated extensively on this human plasticity of redoing, rereading, retelling, and by retelling, confirming or denying, but in any case, repairing the wounds of one another. Yes, she believes in it. The light entered the room... She had left the door open, and the walls brightened.

The lion responds immediately. A red thread of life that connects them to each other much more than to themselves.

FINALLY YIELDS TO THE STARRY CANAL

LET HER LIGHT FLOW

The list is long of the utopias, superstitions that she cultivates in her secret garden. Taunted, threatened, betrayed, rejected for wanting to keep a flame alive, her revenge is an Italian city that testifies to our humanity.

Thus, a Venetian stranger resides in me, stronger than myself. Gradually, I learned to defend myself, to fight as well, to combat with ideas, acts of commitment, inclusive gestures like dams to contain the sea. Always against the current, against time, against the wind.

Must we always silence the insult
 Cowardly ... done at night
 In front of a disarmed saying.
 It is easy to insult
 And art is difficult.
 Nothing is given in a lifetime,
 Nothing.
 To write a single verse
 To trace a meaning, however, small
 You must have seen Icarus on the ground
 And crawled with him
 In the mud of the fall
 Dance with an empty stomach
 Cry from fatigue
 Not flee one's mediocrity
 Evil will always surprise her
 Born from a last rain
 Cried from a last tear
 A woman on the ground struck
 By fate,
 But standing again
 Vertical
 Under the Venetian sky.

I choose sharing, interdependence, almost instinctive candour. I really had to force myself to understand that I will change nothing and no one, that cruelty is part of our human baggage, and that evil is a concrete experience that

comes to hurt the flesh of all of us, a scratch from the beast at a given moment in our history. That it is in us as well as outside of us and that the biggest job to do is sometimes to sweep in front of our own door. So maybe I often, too compulsively, take examinations of conscience, and I have not completely given up on the idea as an educator that if someone close to me is not doing well, I can help them help themselves. I know it's presumptuous, sometimes inappropriate, unwelcome. Like the rising water. But I resist letting life be as it is, people in pain, the world adrift, towards collective drowning. The flame is there, it dances in my eyes that refuse to pretend that yes ... everything is fine. I do not accommodate who I am, who we are. I always try to move one step further, even if it's just a tiny step, in the city that sways, a stranger nestled in the arms of a lion.

Peaceful

In the palm

Of the waves...

She lifts her eyes

Awakened abruptly

By arms

Of marble

A face of a wild beast

A holy lion

Fierce and beautiful

That announces

Our metamorphoses

On the steps

Of the Doge's Palace

And then the other women are there, parading on the almost immortal streets, sisters, rivals, maternal... Beliefs of pious women transmitted by other women: a sense of inferiority, inadequacy, the need to surpass oneself physically: one must suffer to be beautiful... Sorority that has often failed... Sometimes, however, a pioneering solidarity, but one that will be woven at the expense of the masculine. Still, tough battles against windmills, women and philosophy a few leagues from Rome. Almost everything remains to be done or redone. She holds from astronauts that absolutely nothing should be built with crossed fingers. Energy, according to her, is neither believed nor superstitious. It is palpable, perceptible; for example, that of the Lion is relentless combat to track down vulnerabilities before devouring its prey. It's good ... but it's also exhausting, this mistrust as a clinical approach. The night has passed on these unresolved questions... I think that if there is one last immovable bastion within every human being, it is the belief in the healing or at least conciliatory power of human love... We say to ourselves: they will eventually understand, they don't know what they're doing... And we try again. While the water rises, the lion's gaze softens. I tend to try a lot, I think of the football or tennis games won during overtime, I tell myself the wheel turns and the game can always change. It takes time for a wounded and hurting person to trust others and live again. Sometimes you have to give them

that time. Mutations are possible, but at the beginning, you start by believing in them. Of course, cruelty, bitterness, resentment, envy is serious opponents for many researchers or clinicians ... who 'believe' in the evolutionary plasticity of humans. However, you have to stay the course without losing sight of the horizon. Amen, Venice. Amen.

5. The White Pebbles on the Path

I have received several codes of honour, the most recent being often sworn by my surgeon husband: *primum non nocere*. Simple, short, sharp as a blade, it emphasizes the suspension that one who has power over others owes to themselves. Venice glows red, I walk almost alone in the city... I am a widow.

I have respected it to the point of harming myself not to harm others, locked alone on New Year's Eve 2020 during the pandemic, I celebrated there all my defeats. My years of analysis have taught me that the code that matters most to me, 'The unconditional preferability of others,' can lead me towards dangerous slopes of sacrifice, of 'see how much I suffer for you', and bear within it the seeds of narcissism and the delights of suicide. A restful and sedative death drive. Trying not to harm oneself and not to harm others when dedicating one's life to others, a sweet sapience of daily life, limits that shift: openness, closure; *dia-logos*, to support and be supported in existence.

The profession I have chosen, philosophy, love of Sophia, wisdom, draws our attention to the beauty of the gesture, the slightest gesture when laden with meaning. I got my master's degree in 1991. A time when I made the bet of the educability of all subjects, long before the doctorate or post-doctorate. The educability of all subjects, including mine. Ethics is one of my favorite areas, so I can push the exercise quite far, sometimes too far. My weakness: not defending myself, giving up all the space, and then being surprised that the garden is trampled, the flowers torn, and trying to resurrect it afterwards.

This morning, my numb and sore body reminds me to get back on track. My post-doctoral supervisor, Thomas De Koninck, wrote a very beautiful book on human dignity. We are always worthy, even in dishonour, we are worthy of being buried because we are human.

So, I unwittingly respect a code of honour, sometimes despite myself, despite fatigue, despite repeated humiliations... I have often taken the blame upon myself to protect others.

Subliminally, the unconditional preferability of others continues there: obsessive.

Almost despite myself: others come first. A man still follows me.

The shift has occurred only recently: I dare to defend myself. I take close-ups of marble lions. This is a new fact.

I have been severely assaulted in my life and have never filed a complaint. I prefer to keep injustices silent; I entrust them to time.

I have relied heavily on the Tao, the silent wisdom of life that acts for us, even despite us.

So, like a little thumb finding his white pebbles in the thick forest to escape the ogre, I walk in Venice a little every day, as one finds their steps often lost between saying and doing, between the infinity of possibilities and the limits of a situated action; always below the depth of a desire¹.

'A celestial incense floats beyond the clouds.'

'Teaching through non-speaking, the advantage of non-action... Under heaven, few are those who can achieve it.'²

Tao: undoubtedly a constant inspiration over the years, becoming clearer as the veils of time give way to the secret of our finiteness. Thus, through observing the silent variations of skies and seasons, one understands the value of reprieve and the luminous and obscure silence that envelops the creations of nature. If there is hope in Italy, its texture seems to be silent and reserved. Lao-Tzu describes with perfection and precision the sagacity of non-action. At a certain period in my life, I spoke too much; I was talkative, teaching in the morning, afternoon, and evening. Gradually, my energy drained, exhausted, the impact of words diminished; confusion invaded my mind, and I felt the need to write and be silent for a few years to restore the balance of the scale and regain the striking power of living speech. Withdrawal, calm, listening to oneself and the world, renewed contemplation of dawn and Canaletto, carried me to the shore of wisdom: this unheard-of love for life and others that one offers like the gratuitousness of a smile to a stranger, fierce.

'Where no one expects me, I am expected.'

Jean-Yves Leloup in 'Seeds of Consciousness' – email of July 23, 2021.

Why sometimes prefer others to oneself? Why establish codes of honour? What is the meaning of our meager human laws in the face of the unstoppable logic of the universe: to be born, grow, diminish, die, disappear ... why human dignity, up to the right to a burial. To depart... To return? Big questions remain unanswered. Deep down, we know that a star shines in the darkest and coldest night. And we are crossing dark times together or separated. We need the honour of the heart and the heart of honour. Achieving this is like playing a subtle instrument in the antechamber of death. Intuitively, we know that we are going to cross. Every morning, I see bodies at the end of life in the hospital, bent, paralysed, exhausted... Struggling, struggling, struggling. I know there is a path for each of us. Secret of infinitude. The body at rest, the spirit breathes and passes. We are the wind. He texts me: he fell, he is deeply wounded.

¹ Sung Chi Wen (656–712) in *Tao Poétique vrais poèmes du vide parfait*, Ed. Bilingue Moundarren, Mars 1986.

² Lao Tseu, *Le véritable Tao Te King*, p. 36, translated by Eulalie Steens, Éditions du Rocher, France, janvier 2002.



6. Disobey to Respect Oneself

However, has the other always comes first in my life? No. This ethic of peaks, where one gives for the simple pleasure of giving and where reciprocity is the other's concern is extremely difficult. To love the infinite above all things and one's neighbour as oneself... Priority to absolute otherness, very difficult to achieve. Unhealthy? Perhaps that's why I delved into the question of evil and the fall.

*And if the Latin word for beauty
Had its origin in the word for war
Bello
Old saying
Suffer to be beautiful*

*And if she slipped to the other side of the mirror
Upside down of the painting
What battles and what graces
Await her on the
Path of beauty
'Veni, vidi.'
She seems to have lost the game
Once again*

*Doomed to departures
Doomed to hell forever*

*A body falls gently
A battlefield*

*Snow-covered and deserted...
But she will reach Venice*

For Pascal, the self is hateful... In psychology, the ego and the personality of the Jungian Self are distinguished ... the centre in oneself of otherness or the soul. Trying to experience oneself as another. Putting oneself in the place of others. How many times in a day do I fail to do this...? In fact, it's an element of 'self-torture' for me, I undergo recurrent and exhausting self-examinations. Generous to others, I remain adamant with myself. I have to learn to cut myself some slack.

*In the distance
A point outside the set
a projector perhaps
A beam of light sweeps across her body
And illuminates a magnificent sailboat
It emerges in the mist
Its flag is black.
Le nave va.
Fellini forgot to turn it off before leaving
A shadow approaches
Places the damned on the ship
The stranger navigates by sight in the fog
With the injured one
Cause of the fall
She refused to fight
She hated military aesthetics
She breathed an unparalleled beauty
With the scent of wet earth
A beauty
Dizzying
Cleared
Of standards
Symbols
Ideologies
Labels*

*She identified with nothing
Nor anyone
She fell from it
Cursed
Chased
Exhausted*

Another important point, I have often lived in non-recognition: non-recognition of the value of my writings, of my hard work, non-recognition of the paintings often given, as well as the books given. I do not appreciate selling, the business of ideas and works, undue profits, but it plays tricks on me. So, I found one of my paintings in a public restroom. I have been mocked, devalued, pirated, dishonoured.

So, I am slowly learning to set limits, to claim my lioness share, to preserve my sacred place. My Judeo-Christian upbringing taught me humility, acceptance of non-recognition, the gratuitousness of giving, good faith... Yes, one can live without money, hungry, tired, and still give a lot around. But in the long run, suicide is guaranteed: pushed to the extreme, the unconditional preferability of the other is a narcissistic attack: see how much I have suffered for you. In this sense, I have much to repair: much to legitimise... Copyrights to claim and strengths to rebuild: a man to join. A lion. Twenty-four hours of vertigo in her life as a woman. Life passes so quickly; will I have the time? Reborn from a tear that life shed She rises She moves. She speaks. She writes. She even quotes and accepts the fight. Finally, like him: SHE HAS SURVIVED EVERYTHING³.

*Her silent ship seems like a ghost ship,
The angel and a stranger come from so far for her
A devil maybe or a hermit
Two ghosts
She breathes in a forge
Writes tombs
Floats
Her hell is liquid*

*She dances the dance of the dead
And she learns with them
A rainbow leads them to her door
A magician dresses them
In purple
In gray
In orange or in black
Red is a sign of life
She is wary of it
Her sobered heart
Dares just to chant
A discreet rhythm
To leave
She refuses
Never without him
A vaporetto crosses the lagoon.*

³ 'Nous sommes revenus de toute' expression of Mario Cyr in *Dans les soirs parfaits*, Ed. Écrits des forges, Canada, 2017.

*The price of honour, the price of peace has often been solitude. Yet one afternoon she clings to him,
Sweaty, she squeezes her trembling chest with all her might, in a long embrace she
Forgets herself, then catches herself just steps from the abyss and gently pushes him away.*

Her insubmission remains her signature

Even in exile

Even in the hells of Venice drowning

She knows the Grail among the damned

She knows the labyrinths of her time

Her spools of thread are multicoloured

Ariane's treasures

A lion slept in her arms ... tamed

Tired of always playing the villain

Elsewhere they are a legend

Imprisoned by the linearity of their history

Here

They finally find each other

At peace

Abandoned

They have become wallflowers

Books carry them from one place to another

Men

Women

Children

Her paper people have laid down their lances

And carry the weapon on the left

They are elusive.

Their step is light

Their laughter luminous.

They have no defined features

But she always recognises them

In all languages:

It is a people to come

Who haunts the sea

Who populates the forge

Who survives in old grimoires

Who breathe in hell

A people to be reborn in Venice

ANIMA MUNDI

Yet he knows

That she will have to

Come back to earth

And rise from her fall

The ladder is stretched

Towards the opaque reality

At the end of the night of nights

*He assures her
That she will never be alone again
And that the paper people will carry her
Tenderly,
In their arms
To the other shore
The Serene
At the level of water and sky.*

*They will sail smoothly
with caution
he has learned to be wary
Of the cape of storms*

*A Grail against their hearts
They will glide over the lagoon
imperceptible*

Flesh and ash at the same moment⁴

7. The Remnants of God

The research in philosophy is aimed at finding the authenticity of speech, the meaning of language. Indeed, a being transformed when they are capable of daring their own speech – intuitive, personal, authentic, inhabited, and logically understandable. A speech to which the other can respond with their vision, intuition, and logic. Thus, the immanence of individuals reveals itself in facts: their singularity.

This exhaustive exercise in logical understanding allows access to a ‘mediate evidence’ constituted by an ‘empirically oriented psychological phenomenology’. Perhaps, a historical first definition of psychoanalysis, yet one that does not break with philosophy.

Indeed, Husserl introduces into the philosopher’s profession the consideration of the reality of empirical psychological facts and into the psychologist’s profession, the method of philosophical investigation. Facts are studied in a context of implication, reflecting values or a lack of values, making sense or not. Phenomenology constitutes a method that is both philosophical and psychological in research and can become a transdisciplinary method, capable of better understanding authentic (because loving and sensible) mutation and the plasticity of humanity in its incompleteness: masculine in search of the feminine, feminine

⁴ Ducos du Hauron *Danse Macabre, Memento mori*, p. 152, anthologies prepared by Florian Balduc, France, 2016.

in search of the masculine, with the help of the neutral.

Within it, she carries a lion. A lion carries her within him.

The danger that awaits us and that this text seeks to thwart is the gradual cessation of research on major existential questions, in favour of research focused on what is utilitarian and can yield concrete benefits. This occurs due to a lack of understanding of the importance of giving meaning to our lives, animated by a thought for others, where we, 'make room for the one who comes'⁵.

This is the problem posed by a scientific education devoid of the contribution of philosophical reflection on the meaning of that education. It is an education that aims to adjust individuals to their environment without questioning the mutations of both individuals and the environment.

Time passes, and Venice sinks day by day. An iceberg drifts in its direction. They both know it.

This situation reflects the desire of some experts for finished and definitive results, assigning everyone a role and a place, thereby depriving us of the possibility of evolution. Evolution involves changing positions, having the courage for this change because it raises ethical questions about the place we occupy, the stakes for the people involved, and the environment around us.

Of course, one thinks of the universe described by Foucault, a universe aimed at 'surveillance and punishment'⁶, this is to make the gears of a society built on the logic of the law of the strongest and the market economy function. However, in this universe devoid of questions that would propel it forward, humans resist, malfunction, experience crises, depression, they 'dysfunction'.

A lion is dying.

Philippe Meirieu writes: 'What is "normal" in education is that it "does not work", that the other resists, evades, or rebels. What is "normal" is that the person constructing themselves in front of us does not yield easily, sometimes seeks to oppose us, simply to remind us that they are not an object we construct, but a subject constructing themselves.'⁷

However, it is in the face of this resistance from individuals that the path of philosophical problematisation and dialogue can open up, in vivo, in a critical context. Dialogue appears to be the only alternative to confrontation, exclusion, or avoidance. Only through dialogue is there a chance to transform situations where conflicts have their *raison d'être*, where the resistance of individuals brings us back to fundamental questions, to problems of meaning.

Indeed: 'No one can decide for anyone else what they should learn.'⁸
And 'This decision is precisely what enables each individual to go beyond the given and subvert all expectations and definitions in which their surroundings

⁵ Meirieu, Philippe in *Frankenstein pédagogue*, ESF, France, 2012, p. 67.

⁶ Foucault T, Michel in *Surveiller et punir*, Paris, Gallimard, 1975.

⁷ Meirieu, Philippe, *op. cit.*, p.63.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 67.

*and themselves so often tend to confine themselves.*⁹ Indeed, 'It is a matter of not confusing the educator's powerlessness over the decision to learn and their power over the conditions that make this decision possible,' emphasizes Merrieu.¹⁰

It is indeed on the strength of the demand for meaning contained in the desire that the decision to learn ultimately rests, a demand for meaning, irreducible to a need to please, because what is at play in this demand is the act of understanding and being understood.

*The conflicts explode
The planet ignites
Religions harden
Easter is celebrated,
As an absurdity.*

*The gratuitous gift is the utopia
Of a poor fool,
Who screamed to the four winds
The way,
The truth,
Life,
Empty phrases
Repeated uselessly.*

*Cold wars persist
Bombs continue to fall,
Frequent.
Evil is written on the lips
Of the closest,
Blood continues to shed
Its share of misery.*

*We fight for labels,
For nothing,
We compete consistently,
With brilliance,
Forgiveness is a sham,
The permanence of Easter:
The story of betrayal.*

⁹ Ibid, p. 69.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 74.

*To uncover a ruby
On the wounded flank
A cup gathers
The remains
Of God.*

*A Grail
On the horizon,
Shines
In absolute indifference.*

*Only the song can
Resurrect
In her broken throat,
Calm
And transparency,
Of a naked smile.*

She thinks of him, he thinks of her. But they don't say it anymore...

8. Heritage

There are so many lineages within their lineage: the family of blood, the family of spirit... The one less mentioned, recognised between words; at the turn of a gaze, of a phrase. Once again, a long silence has passed between the question and the answer. There are those who give us birth through blood, and then there is life through the human spirit: this second fundamental birth by peers who resemble us; awakened, smiling in the disasters because they know the 'non-paths'. I inherited from Philippe Meirieu, my first mentor in thinking, the wager of the educability of all subjects, which he received from Guy Avanzini, the certainty that humanity can humanise itself, and that everything must be done so that everyone has access to education and knows our best and highest values, the luminous dignity that inhabits us forever, so dear to Thomas de Koninck, the red brotherhood, the white equality, the blue freedom... Everything must also be done to ensure that the conditions for the possibility of health are also present, as my Siamese brother, my surgeon husband, so well taught me, ceaselessly empowering people to do without being able to do it, to discover that they can do it, despite adverse fate, that yes, we are endowed for life, the work done together, the peace of the brave, and profound happiness. Human values: that is the most beautiful heritage; the compass that points to the north of existence, its freedom. With these values as arms and foundational baggage of my humanity, I track the truth like the light at the end of the dead-end: the one that repairs, the one that

connects, the one that, like damp earth, carries us all, clay that binds us and collects our remains. First and last values acquired and transmitted by these familiar friends who elevate us, these strangers who care for us, these unknown ones who pray for us during great sorrows, an unforgettable blessing from our soul brothers... What would we be without them? Socrates, because he makes us think, disturbs us. He disrupts the oppression of false certainties, of biases, and opens the path of the spirit through the values he embodies. Let's continue to pass them on... Our beautiful values, our poor human values. Keep our compass close at hand to continue the journey into the dark night, dare tenderness in these very dark times.

She raises her head and feels that the manuscript is pointing towards the end. The earth trembles beneath her feet. The sea level continues to rise. She rolls her suitcase towards the misty dock, a lion's scratch on her shoulder. He is so present by never being there. She is going to lose him like Venice is lost in the sea, the painful memory, an arm pulls her towards the inside of the vaporetto.

L'ÉTOILE

*Moved tears return,
A solitary apnoea,
—And without any grip*

*A smooth wall
Where she slides,
Towards a blue depth,
To find, without air,
—The starfish*

*Resurface
In his damned arms,
—These arms that have rolled so much*

*Stones into hell,
Naked Sisyphus, unchained,
Saved
—By a drowned woman*

He starts screaming on the dock... Wait for me! She dives and starts swimming in the water of the lagoon towards the dock. She cleaves the water with all her strength towards him who is screaming. The vaporetto driver throws her a lifebuoy, the lion is seriously ill, the parts of the city begin to crumble.

They meet in extremis. She is wrapped in a half-dead blanket. A gentle woman asks her, do you accept resuscitation? No. They die in Venice.

9. Venice and the Transdisciplinary Learning. Instead of Conclusions

A) The Transdisciplinary Body. We often speak of a corps d'armée, a body of soldiers, or a corps de ballet to refer to a group that fights or dances together. Throughout my encounters worldwide, I've met individuals sharing democratic and humanistic values, concerned with balancing science and conscience, life and meaning, ecology and economy, education and democracy. Becoming transdisciplinary seemed to me like daring to engage in a collective dance for peace, the joy of being and doing together. Never would I have imagined that I would have to learn to fight: valiantly uphold our fundamental human values and sometimes put our image at risk because refusing to choose sides easily labels one as cowardly or a traitor.

The transdisciplinary position demands the sacrifice, as defined by René Girard: 'One has to make a distinction between the sacrifice of others and self-sacrifice. Christ says to the father: you want neither Holocaust nor sacrifice; then I say here I am. In other words, I prefer to sacrifice myself than to sacrifice the other. But this still has to be called sacrifice. [...] I prefer to die than to kill, but all men prefer to kill than to die. But you will be killed because a man wants to kill you, not because you volunteered.' (Apocalyptic thinking after 9/11, an interview by Robert Doran with René Girard, Board of Regents, University of Wisconsin's System, 2008, substance, 115 vol. 37 n. 1)

This is an essential clarification.

B) Heritage. Being part of a transdisciplinary group has armed me with courage to peacefully defend democratic values and human rights, for women, children, animals, nature, and our Earth. The difference between disciplinary research and transdisciplinary research is that it demands the ability to yield to another discipline when their argumentation in solving a problem is better, regardless of the researcher's socio-cultural background and academic level. This is an essential requirement. We wanted to dance, and we often had to fight. The water is rising in Venice. The birth of new representations requires immense efforts alternating between the balance of the dancer and the endurance of the valiant resisting soldier... Another way to evoke a learning body: a resilient body.

C) 'So far, So near': knowing how to leave, being able to return. Often our encounters are ephemeral, and I had to accept varying the distance: accepting that the sum is greater than the parts: the sum of the individual and the sum of the group. Sometimes you have to forget yourself for the group, or vice versa, retire to isolation. I found myself somewhat like a tortoise carrying my house on my back, a foreigner, speaking several languages, and I discovered that being part of a transdisciplinary team meant being a translator: the one who says, 'Don't get upset, it seems he meant this,' or 'Is that really what you meant?' Venice, a gray area: between resistance and inevitable collapse.

D) Scars and floatations. Today, the terminology of invisible wounds

is in vogue. The wounds inflicted on the transdisciplinary researcher because he refuses to judge and prefers to understand, to be a mediator rather than a customs officer of knowledge, are numerous. Transdisciplinarity leads him to thwart the pitfalls of vanity or excessive modesty and be able to occupy a unique and singular place in the academic world, both privileged and often targeted. Therefore, we need to have a transdisciplinary skin, to breathe, relax, float... Take the time to heal and sometimes even to be reborn: not to sink. Real dialogues are difficult and risky. You can drown in them.

I participated with Paul Ghils, Marc Williams Debono, Ubiratan D'Amrosio, and Patrick Loisel in developing the concept of a transdisciplinary chair to teach transdisciplinarity in universities. I am convinced of the importance that this chair is collective, that several lines of thought from different cultures and scientific disciplines are present in the form of relays: like life jackets.

E) A transdisciplinary linguistic and philosophical effort. Michel Cazenave invites us to forge a new language. I imagine this new language as a mix, the result of the encounter of different peoples, but all equally human. Capable, as Susan Sontag indicates, of perpetual self-questioning to avoid being trapped in a rigid form. According to Susan Sontag: 'It is, so to speak, Flaubert corrected by Gide: a more educated, lighter rigour; a relationship of avidity and cunning towards ideas, excluding fanaticism¹¹.' I would dare to add a lucid language like that of Bazin in, 'La mort du petit cheval,' or visionary like that of Rabindranath Tagore, who challenges us: 'Let them be useless and prosperous, and let me be useless and mad...'¹² For can we conceive human happiness without its pragmatic utopias?' This chair calls for a further effort in the philosophical foundation of the human, capable of going beyond ideologies to provide an ethical, dialogical, and cooperative foundation for human education. In this sense, I don't think the idea of a transdisciplinary chair consisting of a single subject, no matter how cultivated, is relevant or sufficient.

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¹¹ Sontag Susan, *L'écriture même: à propos de Barthes*, pp. 29, 30, Ed. Christian Bourgeois, Paris, 1982.

¹² Rabindranath Tagore, *Le jardinier d'amour et la jeune lune*, Gallimard, Paris, 1997.



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