

# A Plea for a Transdisciplinary Chair: Tradition and Innovation

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## Abstract

*This paper advocates for the establishment of a transdisciplinary chair, arguing that cultural transmission through dialogue, which has been present in philosophy classes since antiquity, can adopt a reflective stance across all disciplines. The central focus is on the pitfalls of philosophical discourse and the risk of dehumanizing relationships in favor of conditioned behavior. The importance of the transdisciplinary process that promotes personal development in a collective context and the necessity of dialogue to understand and apply laws, as opposed to blind obedience and exclusivism, is emphasized. Transdisciplinary training is presented as a means to stimulate dialogic thinking and create a fertile cooperation between disciplines, fostering the evolution of consciousness within educational institutions inspired by our traditional knowledge.*

**Keywords:** *transdisciplinary chair, dialogue, philosophical discourse, education, personal development, laws, consciousness, educational institutions, dialogic thinking, tradition, innovation, gray*

zone.

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## 1. Introduction

*‘The universal is the local without the walls, it’s the authentic that can be seen from every angle and that from every angle is convincing, like the truth.’<sup>1</sup>*

*Spring, maybe, because cultural transmission through dialogue has been going on in philosophy classes since antiquity, and thanks to cross-disciplinary*

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<sup>1</sup> Miguel Torga, in *L’Universel c’est le local moins les murs*, translated from the Portuguese by Claire Cayron, William Blake and Co. and Barn booth, Périgueux, March 1994.

*thinking, a reflective stance can be adopted in all disciplines.*

## 2. Specific Discussions and Developments

### 2.1. The Impasses of Philosophical Discourse

We have a trap to avoid: that of dehumanising relationships in favour of conditioning behaviour, behaviour that we reproduce by mimesis instead of choosing freely our thoughts and our attitudes. Assuming we agree with Michel Deeleay's oft-repeated assertion that 'the construction of law is the foundation of education'<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, the assertion seems a little peremptory, and in the context of the philosophical training of the transdisciplinary scientific researcher, we seem entitled to push the debate further: what law are we talking about, what is the meaning of the law, in whose service it is, and how and why was it drawn up?

Many philosophers have died 'in the name of the law', starting with the first, Socrates. In this case, the term 'law' refers the reader to an act of discourse in a democratic context, the purpose of which is to take care of human beings, to guarantee them equal opportunities, and to ensure the physical and psychological conditions that favour their dialogical development in a collective context. To encourage a dialogical development is to wish for it to be plural, joyful, intense, continuous and discontinuous, complex and, all in all, unfinished. And that's if we refer simultaneously to the two legal texts that defend this 'equality of opportunity' to which every human being, at least on paper, should be entitled: The United Nations (UN) Declaration of Human Rights and, more recently, the Declaration of the Rights of Children and Adolescents. To these texts it is important to add the recent UNESCO report, drawn up in conjunction with C.I.R.E.T. researchers, entitled 'The Transdisciplinary Evolution of the University in the World', which encourages teachers and university researchers to '*learn to be*' and which seems to be beginning to find an echo in several universities around the world.

Training that should enable people to acquire, through sometimes ancient traditional knowledge, the ability to think and live on their own and together, that too often, frequently slides into a power struggle, within a group or a society. This relationship with others, which philosophers would like to see nurtured by what E. Levinas called 'souci'<sup>3</sup>, inspired, according to him, by the Heideggerian concept of '*sorge*', could make it possible to appropriate knowledge through open dialogue. Souci could as well be translated by interest or care. Yet very often, unwittingly, in the absence of human mediation, students and teacher, researchers, and indeed the general public, are forced by a lack of

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<sup>2</sup> Develay, Michel. *Donne du sens à l'école*. Paris: Ed. E.S.F., 1996, p. 81.

<sup>3</sup> Levinas, Emmanuel, in *Entre nous ou le penser à l'autre*, Ed. Grasset 1991.

understanding into confrontation and mistrust, and even unnecessary suffering. In the face of such discomfort caused by misunderstanding or blocked communication, power relations and cultural transmissions take the form of dogmas and humiliations, leading to revolts that are characteristic of a lack of listening to others and a perverse deviation in the relationship; the weakest or the deviant must be excluded so that the group of the so called: 'best' are preserved. It's the law of natural selection applied to human training: 'The branch is rotten: cut it off,' I've heard. The paradoxes and signs of disrespect and pain pile up on both sides. In this way, our laws, instead of being learned and yet understood as emancipating, empowering, in a transparent dialogue where respect for the dignity of each person is present, which would make them acceptable because legitimised by reason, are imposed, reproduced stupidly, mechanically or rejected. This formation of the law, based on the restraint of instincts rather than on dialogue about the meaning of the law and the application of a law that is understood, leads to fanatical positions of blind obedience, based on hatred of the other seen as a competitor, or a fear of dangerous outsiders. We devote ourselves to an authority not because this means that the authority is competent and therefore legitimate, but because the authority is the authority and civil disobedience would entail a series of risks and sanctions. So, despite all the deaths for peace, people all over the world continue to fight, threaten and murder in the name of the law.

That said, from the path of dialogue, the discovery of the law could be experienced as the expression of a concern to care, protect, nourish and support one another, a concern that emancipates rather than limits. Moreover, in the classroom and at university, happy dialogues and good training for researchers, transdisciplinary training that enables them to think for themselves about the meaning of their praxis also all ready exists. And supposing that the best happens and that mankind is trained to think by themselves, to work in dialogue and democracy, have we just trained someone who will always be on the fringe, even if it is *the fringe that keeps the page?*

How will our Candide survive in companies where the directors are emulators of Machiavelli, in societies where the way up the ladder is through 'good' relationships and rather murky compromises, when his principles have been hard won in academic debate? Candide will be all the more confused because the rhetoric will always be democratic, and the practice despotic, because democracy pleases, but it is much more complex and slower to put in place than terror. Of course, anyone who has studied the revolution knows that without the period of terror imposed by the Montagne, without Danton and Robespierre<sup>4</sup>, the Fifth Republic would never have seen the light of day. How difficult all this is! In any apprenticeship there is a period of discipline and rigour, of justice, which we impose on ourselves or which life and others will teach us with pain and tears. It's true: but justice it's about working on ourselves for the sake of others, not

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<sup>4</sup> Albert Soboul, *La Révolution française*, Gallimard, France, 1984.

with brutality. Philosophical discourse reaches a dead end when it serves a power that has been obtained through fear of social sanctions, exclusion and rejection, and not through the meaning it proposes, the sovereign good, the justice, it aspires to represent. Extremely competitive organisations have a ‘code of professional ethics’ which aims above all to protect organisations protecting professional secrecy. This is the ethic of a fighter who has already lost because he started the fight. But in today’s world, is it possible to live and do otherwise?

## 2.2. Dance or Combat?

Research in the field of philosopher training has shown that the unintentional and involuntary attitudes that emerge during a human relationship are sometimes experienced as problematic, because they reveal a contradiction between the desires or subjectivity of both parties and the very complex problems encountered during a training course, which can cause the relationship to fail or go off course. As Basarab Nicolescu has written<sup>5</sup>, if we do not opt today for an authentic dialogue, capable of crossing the various disciplinary fields and re-establishing a flow between the consciousness that elaborates meaning and the knowledge that is elaborated, ‘*Tomorrow it will be too late*’. Indeed, for some, isn’t it already too late? In fact, the increasingly mechanical, impersonal, pragmatic and fragmented way in which scientific knowledge is produced and re-transmitted, the lack of space for the development of individual subjectivity in contemporary societies, the impoverishment of meaning due to the reductive levelling of cultural content transmitted without ever being questioned, the lack of problematization that is often found in highly standardising and moralising scientific projects, and the lack of dreams and vision that give life to real projects for profound and unfinished human evolution, mean that, for many people, living means carrying out routine, utilitarian and compulsory tasks, increasingly devoid of meaning and pleasure, just to survive. Nevertheless, despite the current rather tense context, the verses of the Portuguese writer Fernando Sabino encourage us to continue: ‘*Of life, three impressions remain tonight: the certainty that I am still at the beginning, the certainty that I absolutely must continue, and the certainty that I will be interrupted before I have finished. Will I be able to turn this interruption into a path, I fall into a dance step, the inescapable fear into a ladder, my dreams into a passage, the quest into your encounter?*’<sup>6</sup>

Paraphrasing the poet, the method of intervention in the field of philosophical training has very often avoided the a priori use of methodological devices that claim to anticipate with precision the stages of human development, choosing instead the least bad method based on the opportunities offered to philosophers. I think I was unconsciously inspired by the theatrical methods I learnt

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<sup>5</sup> Nicolescu, Basarab. *Manifesto of Transdisciplinaridade*. São Paulo Ed. Trion, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Fernando Sabino, *O Encontro Marcado*, Ed. Record, Brasil, 2023.

at the A.C.T. (atelier de creativity theatre) and especially by improvisation techniques. My colleague Luisa Alonso summed it up very well when we went on a training course together in the north-east of Brazil, in the Chapada Diamantina. When we were at her house preparing the course, she said to me: ‘We’ll pack everything we can use (texts, slides, etc.) and we’ll improvise when we get there. At first that seemed a bit frightening: we’re improvising?! But I have to admit that in life, it often happened to me. Although we are obliged to study constructivism, socioconstructivism, metacognition and cognitive-behavioural theory in some depth in our teaching, very often silence and almost clinical listening to the needs of a person or a group seem to be the best allies before trying out methodological devices. In order to be able to recognise, welcome and include the unintentional attitudes that arise in dialogue, we need to let go of any kind of a priori judgement and define within ourselves and around us a serene, neutral space<sup>7</sup>, like a blank canvas, a blank page, a gray zone, with the group. This will allow us to ‘differentiate without hurting each other’, in other words, to speak frankly, without attacking each other or resenting each other. However, we must systematically make a contract with the group at the outset: to avoid words or gestures that could harm the physical or psychological integrity of the subjects, thereby taking our cue from recent national and international legislation. **We must therefore try to define a minimum safe space, an empty space open to possibilities that will allow us to take real conceptual risks, to dare to calmly confront disagreements, to have the courage to freely and fully exercise our conscience in a gray zone, with an open face and in an autonomous way.** However, being aware of the philosophical problems we face is not enough to encourage mutual learning: we also need to think together about a possible way out, as we witness more violence every day at the crossroads of the labyrinth. This hierarchically and arbitrarily decreed ‘neutrality’, this gray zone is the equivalent of using buoys to enable a group to learn to swim in the sometimes-choppy waters of cross-disciplinary meetings, or having stabilising wheels to learn to ride a bike and keep oneself in balance; it is a ‘shock absorber’, **a protection against falls**, for the use of those who venture into philosophical ‘disputatio’ from different disciplinary backgrounds. It is not, on the other hand, a guarantee against crises or difficulties, but it is a way of preventing and anticipating these difficulties so that, if they do arise, we can remember that we are in a neutral context and that, consequently, we will have to subject ourselves to a process of reflection based on the strange, the symptom, which manifests itself. This contract, which defines the conditions that make it possible to form a group, must be based explicitly on the authority of the group mediator. Secondly, manifestations of power must be avoided at all costs and reliance placed on all members’ capacity for dialogue. **This contract has a maieutic nature<sup>8</sup>.** Philosophy generally gets a very bad

<sup>7</sup> Mariana Thieriot Loisel, *Les Mutations Humaines, dialogue entre la philosophie et les technosciences*, Amalthée, 2024.

<sup>8</sup> Hannah Arendt, *La vie de l’esprit*, PUF, France, 2013.

press. It has to be said that if transdisciplinary dialogue is rejected and philosophy sinks to the bottom of the sea like the Titanic, sooner or later it will sink too, because learning to think, and what's more to think together, is not something that can be taken for granted. The icebergs that lie in wait are sharp and the swell frequent. From time to time, a tidal wave sweeps away the sanity of one of us forever. Virginia Woolf drowned. Edith Stein was betrayed by the nuns at her convent and gassed in Germany, Olga Benario the communist was deported from Brazil and gave birth to her son in prison, only to be gassed in the Nazi camps. Anne Frank never finished her diary, Maria Montessori went into exile in India so that she could work, Simone Weil died of anorexia... Hannah Arendt had to emigrate to the United States far from Heidegger so as not to compromise him, Camille Claudel was interned... Should we go on?

What will a society look like where we no longer understand each other, where we simply calculate? A society that has destroyed the peaceful, reflective softness of feminine neutrality? Will we have to fight men to have the right to speak? Will we have to learn to box, the illogical logic of the stock market, etc.....? Perhaps yes, after all. Young women will tell us. Some are now learning martial arts, others are relentless scorekeepers, and oppose violence to violence, but is this the only way? Is combat inevitable? Is it an inevitable part of the path? In yoga there is a strange figure, that of the 'dancing warrior', Natarajana, which translates as the warrior who dances or the dancer who fights? A strange figure, yet one of the positions of the wise.

### **2.3. Maieutic According to Socrates**

The philosopher is by no means a fan of the phrase 'You have to suffer to grow', but he is fully aware of the effort that a group must make to understand itself. The Socratic maieutic is ultimately the method that has often inspired philosophers, a method that begins with emptiness, ignorance, silence, effort and questioning... How can we reconcile meaning and human desires? And what will that meaning be? How can we develop knowledge based on authentic, sincere, protected, almost naïve motivation? How can we obtain answers to the problems posed by our enigmatic presence in the world, answers that are not simplifying formulas learnt by heart, and how can we give way to the patience and singular reflection that these answers require? How can we create a crisis and show problems where there is only indifference, resentment, scepticism or the blind obedience of a generation that sometimes thinks that 'well, nothing's changing, it'll always be the same'? How can we awaken or rekindle the desire to live and learn, how can we keep each other company in the alleys of the labyrinth, fortify ourselves in this ordeal and keep fresh in our memories of the memory of a just, beautiful and happy life, the laughing walk in an open-worked, freshly flowered garden evoked by Epicurus?

Perhaps philosophers will always be condemned to solitude and the margins, perhaps the dice are irrevocably loaded for part of our World, but for nearly three thousand years there has been a rigorous method of questioning and searching for possible outcomes in a neutral space; a gray zone. I prefer tenderness to irony, but I've never stopped asking, in an almost conservative way, every class, every school year: 'Who are we after all? What do we want? Where do we come from and where are we going? And, between the dogmas of absolute scepticism and the prophetic answers, I have tried with all my might to awaken in everyone the desire to find their true answers, to patiently and plastically give them shape, through study thanks to the courage to face, sometimes, painful 'deconstructions', losses, comings and goings in the labyrinth, to end up saying, one day, like Fernando Pessoa: '(...) even if you judge that I am nothing, I remain, in spite of everything, a man'<sup>9</sup> and to see on the horizon a way out. And if the dice are loaded, we can answer like Stéphane Mallarmé: **'A throw of the dice will never abolish chance.'**<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, developing the art of posing enigmas, of circumscribing mystery, of 'eroticizing knowledge' according to Philippe Meirieu bold attempt<sup>11</sup>, during these courses at the I.S.P.E.F., to put together fantastic scenarios, with all the skill and seduction of the storyteller, over and above the actor's performance, can sometimes give a student the desire not only to listen to us, but, over and above the master's skilful discourse, **to find the strength within themselves to write their own discourse**, in a movement as the author of their own composition, as the protagonist of their own story, thanks to the mediation of the objects of knowledge, **the floating objects that circulate between us**.

Our constitutive plasticity means that we can learn to deal with our unintentional and involuntary attitudes.<sup>12</sup> The unintentional attitudes aroused by subjectivity or by the unconscious can, thanks to the dialogue that will signal our know-how with subjectivity, allow the interaction of the desire that is expressed with the intention and the explicit and objectified project of elaborating knowledge. This is tantamount to considering these non-intentional attitudes as 'objective obstacles' to the relationship and presenting this interaction as a possible entry point into the light. During a training course, our emotions can come into conflict with the intention of learning to live, and to live together. It is necessary to perceive these emotions and identify the nature of the conflict in order to resolve it. The production of knowledge in the position of the subject awakens all sorts of emotions that we must learn to manage, a situation that is much more

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<sup>9</sup> Pessoa Fernando, „Poema a tabacaria” In *Revista Presença* 1933, <https://www.culturagenial.com/poema-tabacaria-alvaro-de-campos-fernando-pessoa-analisado/>.

<sup>10</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé, *Un coup de dés n'abolira jamais le hasard*, Gallimard (1897 Armand Colin), [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Un\\_coup\\_de\\_d%C3%A9s\\_jamais\\_n%27abolira\\_le\\_hasard](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Un_coup_de_d%C3%A9s_jamais_n%27abolira_le_hasard).

<sup>11</sup> Meirieu, Philippe. *Leçon de Philosophie de l'éducation. Grand Anphi*: University Lyon II Lumière, 1991.

<sup>12</sup> Thieriot Loisel, *op. cit. (Les mutations humaines...)*.

complex than the passive position of obedience and repression. In the labyrinth a door opens and the warm air caresses a face. In fact, we can foresee that it will not be easy to learn to live together in dialogue and that we will probably make many mistakes, that we will risk the incestuous paths of seduction. However, thanks to countless crises and questioning, we will be able to adopt attitudes that are more complete, more dignified, closer to what seems right and good, and slowly sketch out our face as a human group reconstituted after so many wars, based on our objects of scientific knowledge which are, we must wager, inexhaustible in time and resolutely changing.

The meaning of this maieutic process by which one person, thanks to the questions asked by another, attempts to ‘give birth to himself’, exercising his judgement through the intermediary of an object of scientific knowledge, is the joy of mutual composition. Maieutic also makes it possible to engage in dialogue with our unintentional attitudes, which can sometimes make the process of cultural transmission difficult and complex, because they bring out what is not easy to manage: the desire to bring to the surface of consciousness what is latent, unconscious or ‘semi-conscious’<sup>13</sup>. The desire at the source of all discovery has a complex place in philosophy because its expression is aimed at others, almost before it is aimed at oneself. By becoming aware of the value and dignity of the human desire to understand each other and learn to be together, it is possible to give it ethical meaning, using the resources of language, art and science that knowledge makes available.

If we look closely at the Maieutic process of ‘knowing’ knowledge, we can identify two moments that alternate or sometimes overlap over time: doubt and birth. Socratic irony consists in asserting, as Socrates himself pointed out in his own defence, that the only thing we really know is that we know nothing, and also in raising doubts and confusing his opponents with embarrassing questions. One of the purposes of this irony was to encourage the humility and expertise necessary for learning, which requires questions and problems to be formulated in a way similar to that indicated by UNESCO – the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation – for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: ‘learning to be’. How can we talk to someone who already knows everything, or who thinks that any model for learning philosophy is useless or even harmful? How do you engage with the sceptics and dogmatists of the Academy? How do you explain to them the merits of maieutic?

Hannah Arendt has given two metaphorical explanations for Socratic irony: it has a paralysing role similar to that of the electric ray and an irritating role similar to that of the fly. ‘According to Plato, [Socrates] was called an electric ray, a fish that paralyses and puts to sleep on contact. Socrates accepted the metaphor insofar as his listeners recognised that the electric ray only paralyses

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<sup>13</sup> Galvani Pascal, „La dimension spirituelle de l’auto-éco-formation face à la crise écologique” dans *Présences: revue transdisciplinaire d’étude des pratiques psychosociales*: vol.11, 2018, p. 53-70.



others in order to be paralysed by itself. ‘It is not that I leave others perplexed because I already know the answers, it is that I leave them to my own perplexity.’ In this way, Socrates created a space between action and reaction, which interrupted human existence, its persistence, its insistence, in a given direction, provoking a situation of crisis, astonishment and mystery.

She also used the example of the fly buzzing in the interlocutor’s ear until it wearies and disarms him. Socrates called himself a gadfly, a large fly. The gadfly seems to have a function of maintaining vigilance, not only stinging but also irritating<sup>14</sup>. Thinking is a difficult freedom, requiring concentration and persistence. However, there are countless reasons to avoid thinking, to act as usual, to simplify, to cut things short, to solve a problem immediately, to use common sense so as not to ‘look for the little beast’, as the saying goes; to operate in semiconscious mode, by switching to the automatic pilot. But then the fly comes, annoys, torments, asks a new list of questions, repeating its refrain: ‘in the end, who are we, where are we going, what are we looking for? If need be, the fly stings! The sting swells, itches, and leaves us in no peace: we must return to the problem, return to study, return to life.

The first, ironic, critical stage of the maieutic is one of immobility. ‘What are we looking for,’ What are we doing? Whatever tactic is used, the person has to stop and listen, think, step back, distance themselves, get out of context, measure the extent of their own ignorance and think.

Of course, we will soon be looking back on three thousand years of the perplexity of the Western world confronted with its errors; we need to go beyond this, move on to the second stage of maieutic, the labour of birth: after having immobilised him, Socrates, like the wind that rises, mobilises and challenges his interlocutor: “The wind of thought has now roused you from your sleep and brought you fully awake and to life”, Socrates commented, indicating the nature of his own action: to awaken, **to pass from sleep to life, in other words, to give birth to ourselves**. Socrates thus helps his interlocutor to distinguish authentic thought, “in vivo”, epistemic discovery, from doctrine, preconceived opinion, or knowledge “in vitro”, dead letter, fallen into disuse, imitation, mimesis. Socrates, close to his interlocutor, faced with the death penalty, took the risk of questioning knowledge, at the risk of his own life.

Hannah Arendt compares the metaphor of the wind to thought, a capacity that enables us to “prevent catastrophes, at least for ourselves”<sup>15</sup>, with the power to discern evil from good, justice from injustice, truth from error. What mobilises us, or ceases to mobilise us, is a question of value, the value of knowledge, the value of the other, the value we attribute to our consciousness, the consciousness that is from the outset at the origin of thoughts and actions intended for exchange and sharing. Jacques Derrida, in his *Pharmacie de Platon* (Plato’s Pharmacy),

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<sup>14</sup> Hannah Arendt, *op.cit.*, p. 130-132.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

notes how tenuous and difficult truth is to discern: one person's good is another's evil, what is right here is unjust in other circumstances; the precise boundary is, in his words, "more than subtle, very difficult to discern, as fine as a butterfly's wing"<sup>16</sup>. However, there is a compass to be built and a route to be followed, a map to be drawn to situate oneself in the territory as one learns to listen to one's heart and to recognise oneself in one's human dignity as Thomas De Koninck<sup>17</sup> describes it throughout his work.

For Socrates, human philosophical birth is a way of distinguishing between what is worth more and what is worth less, between what is essential and what is unnecessary, between what is only for oneself and what includes others. For him, meaning comes first and then material comfort. Exactly the opposite of our contemporary societies: on the contrary. As he explains in his last words, it's a question of honour, of dignity. Consciousness birth itself is the unforeseen moment when the word begins to move, to breathe, to take on a life of its own, when the black ink of the pen is no longer ink: it becomes blood and spills out. Socrates, appropriating motherhood and the function of giving birth, encourages the discourse that unites the whole and the parts. He says in Phaedrus (264 BC):

**"Every discourse must be constituted as a living being, have a body that is its own, so that it lacks neither head nor feet, but has the middle and the extremities, so as to associate the self with the whole (...)"**

Commenting on this passage, Jacques Derrida associated discourse with a living body. An animal that is born, grows, belongs to the physics. Socrates is someone who helps others to invent rather than reproduce discourse, to inhabit his text. Unlike Plato, he did not construct a "theory of ideas"; rather, he died for them. So resisting the tyranny of meaning imposed unilaterally in a given society, or an emphatic – politically correct – but meaningless proposition, seems like a good tactic to use in higher education, but a dangerous and complicated choice as soon as you leave the walls of school, because **it's no longer a question of being a person machine, among so many others, fighting for their survival, but of people aware of their value who stand up for each other**. It's a gamble on transforming organisations in the medium and long term.

In his study of the Socratic method, Plato contrasts it with sophistry. According to J. Derrida, Plato's criticism of sophistry is not to resort to memory, but to replace living memory by auxiliary memory, the organ by the prosthesis; we must avoid this perversion which consists in substituting a thing for a limb (...) by favouring rote knowledge, mind-numbing reproduction, rather than the reactivation of knowledge, its return to the present moment for a precise reason. Derrida points out that the boundary between inside and outside, the living and the non-living, separates not only discourse from writing, but also memory as an

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<sup>16</sup> Aristotle. *Metaphysics*. In Derrida Jacques. *A farmacia de Platon*. Sao Paulo: Illuminuras, 1991, pp. 1003-1021.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas De Koninck, *De la Dignité Humaine*, PUF, France, 2002.

unveiling, reproducing presence and memory as repetition, as the nowadays access to AI. Derrida pushes the comparison so far as to oppose true to its symbol, being to model, and mentions the **risk of a simulation of “essence” that can occur in what he defines as “bad writing”**. In fact, the way our societies are organised can lead human beings to reproduce not only the form but also the essence of a discourse, its substance. Sometimes young people, intimidated or ill prepared to take the risk of having their own thoughts, don't dare or don't know how to find a foundation in themselves; as a result, they don't get used to their own discourse which, although correct, seems to them to sound risky and they prefer to keep quiet and make way for authority. At the other end of the chain, the subject who is supposed to know does not dare to question the knowledge inherited from tradition... One speaks, another thinks in secret, another act as if everything is fine and the conscience hibernates, anaesthetised or intimidated by the volume of information. Pseudo-experts, artificial intelligence information's and the media dictate the course of action. Some political speeches seem to be simulacra of thought, full of ready-made formulas, which only serve to reinforce the rise of extremism and inequality by fuelling competition.

#### 2.4. The place of philosophy in the transdisciplinary group

*“I have united myself with the courage of a few people, I have lived my mystery in their midst violently, without growing old, I have shuddered at the existence of all the others, like an floating boat above the confined depths.”<sup>18</sup>*

The hour of birth is that moment when, sometimes, after long years of study, exercise and preparation, a person recognises that, thanks to his or her plasticity, he or she is capable of conceiving something of his or her own, which turns out to be an original contribution to all that has already been said and written, and of experiencing in turn his or her quality as an author, thus finding his or her freedom of expression and the fair position that seems appropriate to him or her in a human group. The discovery emerges and reveals itself after a slow gestation period that doesn't always follow the timetable, and the expression of new knowledge comes like a tornado of risk that calls for courage and integrity to support this new, nascent discourse. The human being discovers a face and bursts out laughing in the alleys of the labyrinth: there he is, unexpectedly, at the exit: *There are no longer a treasure people, but, from one to the next, the infinite savoir-vivre of lightning, for the survivors of that people*<sup>19</sup>.

Following in the footsteps of Socrates, who died to preserve for us the right to philosophise, we must wager that dialectics constitutes an ‘antidote’<sup>20</sup> against those who seek to reify and harden the human being, to turn him into a docile and uninhabited mechanism, a toy, a statue or a person machine, and to

<sup>18</sup> René Char, “Faction de muet” Extract from *Le nu perdu*. Gallimard, Cher, 1978, p. 26.

<sup>19</sup> René Char, *Fureur et Mystère*, Gallimard 2004, p. 86.

<sup>20</sup> Derrida Jacques, *op. cit.*, p. 46, 101, 68, 69.

make him function within institutions that delight in destroying or stifling all the best that human culture has bequeathed to us: our conscience, which grounds our dignity and allows our lives to have meaning and to meet around this shared meaning. According to Derrida, dialectic is the best exorcism that can be used to counter the terror of the child threatened by ogres. Derrida carefully analyses the moment when Socrates asks Alcibiades, by way of remedy, to ‘submit to a mutual search, to seek to know himself through the diversions of the language of the other’. This other at the customs of knowledge, who opens the door of a frontier towards the unknown freedom of composing one’s own work, allowing you to pass through and find yourself...

*Pass,  
The sidereal spade,  
In the past, this was the place to be.  
Tonight, is a village of birds  
Very high, exult and pass.*<sup>21</sup>

On this arduous path, we should consider observing the metamorphoses of the objects of knowledge, the floating objects, that we create as a possible and concrete way forward. The object of knowledge carries within it the vestiges, the threads of discovery and the forms that dialogue has engendered. Depending on how the object of knowledge has been conceived, it can take on an ethical role, allow our plasticity to come into play, encourage the expression of subjects and be the support for the dialogue that enables us all to transform and evolve. Instead of dividing ourselves by confrontation, exclusion or censorship, we can develop meaning in the intervals between one crisis and another, by circulating books, letters, articles, essays, e-mails, etc., in short, by circulating knowledge and the problems it poses, by giving ourselves time to listen, and by letting life work its magic on us. Our attempts at dialogue are numerous, the deadlocks continue and multiply, **but we must not give up on meaning**. For if today’s societies, for political, economic and social reasons, refuse to make room for the philosophical question of the place of consciousness within their institutions, there are nonetheless passages that make the advent of consciousness within the organisation possible. We must do as the oriental poet did...

#### **Revisiting desire**

*I’ve been looking for spring all day,  
To no avail.  
Leaning on my cane,  
I walked for a long time,  
Crossing distant mountains.  
Back home,  
I touched a plum branch.  
I found it here.*

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<sup>21</sup> René Char in *Fureur et Mystère*, Gallimard, 2004, p. 55.

*At the end of this branch, spring blossomed*<sup>22</sup>.

The way out of the labyrinth opens up for us when we agree to look squarely at the problem that haunts us: ‘the denial of the consciousness of the individual in order to maintain the survival of arbitrary power in a group that thrives on competition’, and when we courageously decide to get together to think about ways of solving it. Philosophers are no longer at home in the cities; they have become strangers, hermits, the fringe. They present a face to others that the latter do not recognise or confuse with others... This face that thinks freely is not, however, a threat; it is a promise kept; that of the recognition by others of their humanity. ‘**Every thought is a throw of the dice.**’<sup>23</sup>

### 3. Conclusion

Transdisciplinary dialogue is essential for promoting deep and reflective understanding across various disciplines. Such dialogue can contribute to the development of a more inclusive and collaborative academic environment. Education should avoid the pitfalls of dehumanizing relationships and conditioning behavior, focusing instead on personal development through the promotion of dialogue and mutual understanding.

Ideally, education should be understood and applied through dialogue, rather than blind obedience. This approach ensures an educational environment based on respect and dignity. Transdisciplinary education empowers researchers and students to think together and critically about the meaning of their practices, leading to an evolution of consciousness and a deeper understanding of the connections between different fields of knowledge.

Education should encourage continuous, complex, and uninterrupted personal development, supported by creating favorable conditions that foster individual growth within a collective context. Furthermore, cultural transmission through dialogue is vital for improving human relationships and avoiding conflicts and misunderstandings. An educational environment grounded in dialogue can prevent fanaticism and exclusivism, promoting instead constructive collaboration.

An academic environment that promotes dialogue and reflection can facilitate the development of laws and educational practices that are legitimate and acceptable, thereby enhancing the quality of education and interpersonal relationships.

Therefore, implementing a transdisciplinary chair would not only improve the quality of education but also stimulate the development of critical and reflective consciousness among students and researchers.

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<sup>22</sup> Dai Eiki - Chinese poet of the Sung period (960-1279), quoted by Shundo Ayoma Roshi in *Para uma pessoa bonita, Contos de Uma master zen*, Ed. Palas Athena Sao Paulo: 2002, p. 82.

<sup>23</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé in *Un coup de dés n’abolira jamais le hasard*, Poème, Gallimard, 2006.

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