# Intradisciplinarity: A First Step, Towards Peace and Transdisciplinary Dialogue

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*DON'T HESITATE*
If you walk, just walk. If you sit, just sit. But don't hesitate.

***Abstract***

*Affirming and, at times, fighting for human lives values, understanding and trying to convey the steps through which they can achieve ethical meaning, refers to the adjustment of plural elements within and outside of us. Finding the value and meaning of an existence, even provisionally, in a refutable way, implies undoing the knots of a complex fabric made up of emotions and rationality; it cannot be reduced to binary and simplistic explanations, such as those , derived from Aristotelian reason. It is not possible to choose one part of knowledge and exclude the other. One part of knowledge cannot reveal the whole. To understand the value and meaning of life, which lie beyond the disciplinary knowledge acquired, another type of relationship with knowledge is needed; it is necessary not only to understand and compute, but also to pulsate with these lives, to follow not only their mental operations, but also their insights, their desires, their sufferings, or the nostalgia they carry for a world to come. By learning a new logic, that of inclusion,*

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*we will try to follow a movement that we will call the perlaboration of meaning, to try to describe another way of thinking that does not amputate what we see and intuit, what we perceive and feel from what we think, in order to reestablish the transit between cognition and consciousness.*

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*Diary...* Twilight. Minerva and her owl.

When I make the distinction between cognition and consciousness, I am referring to the studies of biologist Francisco Varela who, taking cybernetics as an example, demonstrates that cognition, that is, the performance of mental operations by the computer, can occur without the intervention of consciousness: "According to computationalism, cognition can take place without consciousness, as there is no essential or necessary connection between them," writes the author.

This complex transition between cognition and consciousness is made possible by a reason that develops a logic of the "included third," establishing mediations and passages between knowledge and its producer, what he intuits, what he dreams, what he feels. In this way, a new modality of consciousness emerges, the consciousness of the non-intentional, which studies metaknowledge: knowledge questionning how we elaborate knowledge and what means we employ to obtain what kind of results? Through what processes? These are questions that cannot be restricted to a single discipline, raising a generic problem that applies to any discipline and goes beyond it. However, from a methodological point of view, these questions should precede interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary exchanges. "If I am not clear about this, why am I teaching my discipline? What meaning does this have for me? How can I exchange knowledge with colleagues from other disciplines?" Most likely, this will lead us into great confusion. I remember a comment made by one of my colleagues as we left one of our first transdisciplinary meetings:

"We look like Branca Leone's army, each shooting in a different direction and no one knowing where they're going!" This was one of the first to abandon ship.

Among this meta-knowledge, we highlight the evaluation of unintentional attitudes that accompany the elaboration of scientific knowledge: attitudes of devaluation or overvaluation of producers or produced objects, which make knowledge a pretext for establishing relationships of power, submission, or mutual domination, of seduction for personal gain, which can occur in any disciplinary field. We will study ways of establishing other types of relationships with knowledge that consider the unintentional, in a process of mutual composition, with oneself, with others, and with nature.

*Diary...* "What is an archer without a target?" (Deng Ming Dao in Tao, Daily Meditations).

The process of perlaborating is, at its origin, an analytical process. Following Jean-François Lyotard's proposal:

*[...] in what we call thinking, the spirit is not directed by us, but suspended. We do not provide it with rules, but teach it {sic} to welcome. We do not clear the ground to build with more light, we open a clearing where the gloom of the almost given can enter and modify its outline. An example of this work can be found mutatis mutandis in Freudian "durcharbeitung." Where one can clearly see the pain with which thought is paid to work.*[1]

In this context, thinking implies "opening up to," understanding rather than explaining or judging, listening rather than interpreting. "What is at stake here (...) is the ability to let things appear in the forms in which they present themselves." With this attitude, every moment, every now is an "opening up to."

*[...] it is a matter of opening the third ear and removing all inscriptions from the other two ears (by covering them) {sic} and abandoning established syntheses, regardless of their level, whether logical, rhetorical, or even linguistic, and allowing what passes, that is, the signifier, to work in a fluid manner, however senseless it may seem*[2].

J. F. Lyotard emphasizes the importance of "having no prejudices, suspending judgment, receiving, giving equal attention to everything that happens and the way it happens".[3] Only then can we open the way for the unthought, the unintentional discovery of new meanings. This is only possible if we have spaces of emptiness, calm, and silence within us. Jean François Lyotard refers to a new aptitude that reconnects with the knowledge of the ancient Eastern sages, receptivity: a *yin* quality, feminine, gentle, welcoming. Nowadays, few people know how to listen without immediately wanting to express themselves. How many teachers knew how to listen to us?

*Diary...* Night again. City. Traffic noises. Insistent moonlight.

*Perlaborate* therefore comes from *the* German *Durcharbeitung*. The "passing" (infinitive) in question is the German *durch* from *Durcharbeitung* or the English *through* from *working*, passing through the "trans" or perlaboration.

Freudian *Durcharbeitung* consists of an exercise in recollection: "we seek, designate, and name the hidden facts (sic) that we imagine to be at the origin of the evils we suffer", trying to "escape the repetition" of the situation that causes us suffering. We talk, and in talking, we think, we revisit the past to try to understand where we went wrong, how to get rid of the pain; we also talk to share and,

Sometimes, simply naming a suffering and having someone to welcome this trauma, or this pain, is enough to console and give courage to move forward.

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[1] Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Inhuman*. Lisbon: Novos Rumos, Estampa, 1972, p. 27.
[2] Ibid., p. 41.
[3] Ibid, p. 39.

We were heard. The simple fact of being heard and understood can heal many ills and much pain.

*Diary...* Vinteuil's Sonata. Time finally rediscovered.

"If we think," writes J. Lyotard during this analytical process, "it is because, nevertheless, there are lapses in this fullness, and we must find a place for these gaps by clearing our minds, allowing something else to come to us, something else that we have yet to think about.[1]" The listener points out the gaps, the flaws, the unintentional, and enables us to revisit our own interpretation of a particular experience, giving it a new meaning that we were unable to perceive when we were immersed in the experience.

And the author asks: "Do your thinking and representing machines suffer?"[2] Emphasizing that the process of perlaboration is carried out by a being that suffers and that "is sexualized" [...] that your machines are not only fed by radiation, but by the irremediable difference between the sexes.[3]" An interesting observation: machines do not feel pain, and we can encounter some living machines today, people who perform tasks with extreme precision without asking themselves why they perform them or for whom, they simply perform them. They are obedient and cold: orders are orders. No one taught them to philosophize, no one taught them that human beings are only human because they are beings who ask questions, who want to know where they are going and what is the meaning of what they do or do not do.

*Diary...* Woman in dark times. Memories of sad cages. Sweet tears. The door opened.

To elaborate implies reestablishing a transition between desire, suffering, and thought. [...] "Being able to receive what thought is not prepared to think is what we should call thinking. [...] To think is to question everything, including thought, the question, and the process."[4] Only then, through what emerges unintentionally from our memories, does what was unconsciously hurting us come to the surface, and we can look at the ghosts, understanding the origin of the suffering and, perhaps, freeing ourselves from the pain. Now, the cause of suffering in the classroom is almost always caused by a problem of understanding, which requires listening, but rigorous, clinical, Freudian listening to what is happening in this room. Why doesn't the student understand the teacher? Why doesn't the teacher understand their students? Why don't teachers in the school understand each other? Why are we often afraid to hear what others have to say, because they may disagree with us, and we always associate disagreement with a loss of approval and affection? Well, philosophy is perhaps the only discipline in which disagreement is good, acclaimed, meritorious, and seen as the highest mark of

[1] Ibid., p. 28.
[2] Ibid., p. 27.
[3] Ibid., p. 28.
[4] Lyotard, op. cit., p. 28.

respect and love, because those who disagree are being sincere. And if we can listen to what they have to say, something new may emerge.

*Diary...* Starry night. Quietly sitting at the bow of my companion's boat, I see a constellation. We smile peacefully.

According to Freud, when we work through something,

*[...] it is a matter of dynamically filling gaps in memory and overcoming resistance due to repression. He points out that because of the transformation of processes that were previously unconscious, they become conscious. Once resistances are made conscious, they need to be worked through and only then can they be overcome.*[1]

This analytical process, which works in an elucidative manner, will provide an awareness of our unintentional attitudes throughout a learning process; we understand those moments when we are worth everything or worth nothing as a kind of meta-evaluation that punctuates the process of knowledge elaboration. In other words, after all we have suffered, after all the harm we have caused, could we not finally become aware of the way we use scientific knowledge, how we relate to it, and use our own reasoning to dominate or subjugate ourselves, instead of using it to better understand each other? To do so, however, there is resistance to overcome, as Freud pointed out very well two centuries ago.

*Diary...* Man in dark times. Cages pile up. Flying will never again be forbidden.

*"We live in cities, in professional circles, in family circles. But the place where we truly exist is not the place where we go through life, but rather the place where we place our hope, where we sing without understanding what makes us*

[1] Freud, Sigmund. Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through. Complete Works. São Paulo: Zahar 1985, p. 194.

*sing."* Christian Bobin, Le Très-Bas ed. Gallimard-Cher 2003, p. 48.

Difficult resistance, how it hurts, how it tires us, arrives without warning; from the person we least expect, at the moment when we are most vulnerable, because thinking for oneself, in a world of machines, frightens anyone. And it is then, at that moment, in the face of resistance, that instead of fleeing or attacking, the philosopher proposes a third way: thinking, taking a break, calmness.

*Diary...* No place. No time. No form. Open doors. Empty cages.

We currently need a new relationship with knowledge; a relationship capable of establishing the topography of uncertainty and unpredictability, one that knows how to embrace the differences that make the composition of meaning possible. If we do not learn to philosophize in the classroom, in all subjects, to question the meaning of what we are doing in this classroom, we will not be able to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and the learning human being, to ensure that scientific knowledge is indeed at the service of human beings and not the other way around. The paragraph is simple, but the question is fundamental and should always be asked.

In this sense, the use of new technologies, distance learning, and all attempts to use computers to promote human development require interaction with a philosophical conception of man and the world: a conception capable of raising radical questions such as the identity of human beings and the meaning of life, and capable of pointing out the resonances between learning and the composition of knowledge.

Gilles Deleuze, in attempting to define what thinking is, does not isolate Science from Art and Philosophy, but mentions the interpenetration and complementarity of these modalities that fight against chaos, that attempt to "make a leap from chaos to composition"[1] and seek "a breath of fresh air, an escape from chaos, that brings us vision."[2] This struggle against chaos is "a struggle against opinion and clichés [...], for it is from opinion that the misfortune of men comes."[3]

It is thoughtless, unintentional opinion that simplifies or reduces, that devalues or overvalues, that magnifies or despises instead of trying to understand and compose. However, through attitudes that are not intentional meta-evaluations can be mixed with knowledge: "this knowledge is worth everything, that knowledge is worth nothing"[4] are statements that will stunt the relationships between different composers; some are masters, others are marginalized or despised. Competition and hierarchies between different disciplines are fueled, stimulating a gap between the humanities and the exact sciences, with contempt for all knowledge that comes from tradition; this becomes the sole responsibility of Science itself, which, submitting to the perverse dialectic of master and slave,

[1] Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, 1968, PUF, pp. 260–265.
[2] Ibid., p. 269.
[3] Ibid., p. 269.
[4] Ibid., p. 140.

subordinates itself in an attitude of devaluation. Borders are erected, truth is limited to a territory: it is the design of Babel; several languages are spoken, but no one understands each other; knowledge, which could be shared by all, fundamental discoveries, precious information from important research and its consequences are restricted to a small disciplinary fiefdom, which dominates and oppresses all other disciplines.

"What defines thought, the three great forms of thought: Art, Science, and Philosophy, is always facing chaos, drawing up a plan, sketching a plan on chaos."[1] Thinking is thinking, whether through concepts, functions, or sensations, indicates Deleuze, specifying: "a rich fabric of correspondences can be established between the planes", these being the three aspects under which the brain becomes subject. In this sense, "the brain," he says, "is the spirit itself".He also writes: "one does not fight against perceptual and affective clichés without also fighting against the machine that produces them. He indicates the way to combat it: "it is necessary, with art, to subvert opinion, to elevate it to the infinite movement that replaces it precisely with the concept".

Deleuze knows how genuine Science, like Art and Philosophy, is created through a painful process of composition. Now, to speak of a reason that can circulate intra and inter, through and beyond disciplines, is equivalent to the difficult attempt, "difficile liberté"[2] to endow the process of knowledge with a self, with a consciousness that feels and does not accept being converted into a machine, a piece or part of a system, that is still a unique being, irreplaceable, irreducible to definitions, however good they may be, and which raise problems.

Confronted with the massacres at Auschwitz, where reason was transformed into a killing machine, Deleuze writes, "we are not responsible for the victims, but before the victims".

Thinking, then, implies a slow process of "deconditioning," in which the mind frees itself from selfish and immediate interests, from "clichés," to pay attention not only to what refers to the human body as an object, its possessions, its clothing, its maintenance, but to the consciousness that still resists in the body and displaces it.

*Diary...* Seagulls. Wind. Sound of the sea. Laughter. Green in the eyes. A barefoot philosopher walking on the sand. Slowly.

Reason floats. Speaking simply: instead of choosing between black or white, right or wrong, we need to establish mediations, bridges, we need an inclusive reason, driven by a utopia that refers to a future people. This reason demands a faculty of clairvoyance.

*It may be that believing in this world, in this life, has become a more difficult task, or the task of a way of existence yet to be discovered today, under*

[1] Ibid., p. 142.
[2] Ibid., p. 14.

*our plan of immanence, new ways of existence, closer to animals and rocks.*[1]

We need a reason that has the strength, boldness, and durability of animals and rocks. "We do not lack communication," writes the author, "on the contrary, we have too much communication, we lack creation."[2]

What gives us the courage to face chaos with our brains is "the constitution of an absent land and people"[3] as correlates of creation; the vision of a people "to come."

The reference to this absent people, this people yet to come, is what demarcates reason as the creation of a mechanical reason that merely reproduces the elites and icons of power. In this sense, open reason remains a revolutionary reason. "It is not false to say that the revolution is 'the fault of the philosophers': the revolution is absolute 'deterritorialization' at the very point where it appeals to the new land and the new people."[4] (Philosophy thus lives in permanent crisis).

*Philosophy books and works of art also contain their unimaginable sum of suffering, which foreshadows the advent of a people. They have in common a resistance, a resistance to death, to servitude, to the intolerable, to shame, to the present.*[5]*... Van Gogh's sunflowers are becoming's.*

*Durcharbeitung* unintentionally triggers the composition of difference: another meaning emerges after the fermentation process, pointing to previously unthinkable possibilities, to the opening up of a becoming. At that moment, we escape the repetitive processes of domination or submission to a particular view of human beings and the world, or even of ourselves, to open the door to the possible, the unintentional, the morning sun. Philosophy points out that we are not doomed to reproduce power relations when we compose knowledge, which would prevent its evolution. When discoveries occur, when new meanings emerge, the relationship transgresses the position of marked places to occupy a non-place, where we are learners. It is the moment when a single sunflower appears on the screen and resists time, or when a new concept shakes up the established order. The path that leads to discovery is not an exact one, which does not exclude precision and rigor. The path is that of labor, not of building a bridge or adjusting a machine. We do not know in advance what will be born, who, a student, a child, whether a people will come to light, what will be the impact of a class, a course, or a new vision? However, this process can be the confident and serene accompaniment of a metamorphosis or the painful confusion of the formation of a human being, like the construction of a building or the conditioning of rats. If we do not know who will be born, we know that birth is possible in the same way that, one day, the river reaches the ocean and dissolves into its waters;

[1] Deleuze, op. cit., p. 130.
[2] Ibid., p. 130.
[3] Ibid., p. 227.
[4] Ibid., p. 131.
[5] Ibid., p. 142.

we know that this requires the tenacity of builders, the confrontation with countless experiences; and we know that even the awareness of the unintentional happens like a discovered line, emerging from deep waters after a long period of working together.

*Diary...* Spring. Summer. Fall. Winter. Spring.

In this sense, thinking is a complex process that brings to light the problem of the limitations of logic, also highlighted by Deleuze:

*Complex thinking recognizes the limits of logical demonstration in formal complex systems (Kurt Gödel, Alfred Tarski), takes into account the possible consideration of contradictions or aporias imposed by observation/experimentation as indications of unknown or profound domains of reality (Alfred Whitebread, Niels Bohr, Stéphane Lupasco, Gunther). The complex discursive principle involves the association of complementary, competing, and antagonistic notions. This complexity requires us to 'think dialogically and in terms of macro-concepts, linking potentially antagonistic notions in a complementary way."*[1]

*Finally, the relativity of a statement refers us to a principle of complex causality, involving interrelated mutual causalities (Maruyama), "interactions," delays, interferences, synergies, deviations, and reorientations; thereby integrat-*

[1] Ibid., pp. 332–334.

*ing random events into the organization's problems in the search for intelligibility.*[1]

Now, the zone of ignorance or uncertainty opened by a complex view of a universe where each situation is unique is precisely what can give us reason to hope. Since it is not possible to predict what tomorrow or even the next hour will bring, we can still imagine a different future, described with a touch of sentimentality: a world to come. While we do not know everything, we do not predict everything, we do not explain or solve all the big questions that occupy scientists, artists, and philosophers, we can imagine changes, openings, daring, unprecedented and beautiful growth: we can paint skies and sunflowers, we can compose what has never been heard, say what has never been said, play and laugh, escaping, through grace or an unexpected discovery, from the sadness and rigidity of relationships with marked places, which try in vain to anticipate the unspeakable and the impossible to teach.

Complexity opens the door for the person who composes knowledge and, through it, composes themselves differently. They try to escape from a totalizing and uniformizing vision of what human life "should be."

Consciousness is what will establish the relationship between knowledge and the meaning of human laws. Now, if knowledge does not convey any taste for the adventure of life, the law that demands respect and sharing will make no sense at all. To learn, it is not enough to think; one must also desire, dream, suffer, leave, return, lose oneself, find oneself again, and celebrate. To know is also to celebrate.

*Diary...* Bare feet. The scent of jasmine. The sea breeze in the distance. A glass of wine. The desire to live and to love.

The commitment that accompanies our ability to think, to make judgments and assessments, is what will allow us to reconnect, include, converse, overcome shyness, fear, rivalries, devaluations, and overvaluations, so that we can find a way to think together, to act together. To build knowledge, it is essential that people feel comfortable and trust each other so that they can engage in open dialogue. What would a classroom be like without fear? Undoubtedly, the class would not be reduced to a single "level of reality." Bet that we will be able to find meaning and celebrate the meaning we find. Maybe not together, maybe not at the same time, but we will succeed. I know, everything seems so confusing, the loneliness is so great. Sometimes we have insomnia, we have labyrinthitis, but there are clearings, days and nights of lucidity and transparency. They are fleeting, but they exist.

*Diary...* Bach. Suite No. 1 for solo cello played by Pablo Casals.

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[1] Morin, Edgar; *Transdisciplinarity Charter. First World Congress on Transdisciplinarity:* Arrábida Convention, 2–7 November 1994. Available at: <http://www.cetrans.com.br/textos/documentos/carta-da-transdisciplinaridade.pdf>. Accessed: 1 March 2010.

Researcher René Barbier suggests the development of "sensitive listening." It would be a "listening-seeing."[1] Each researcher must know how to feel (perceive) the objective, imaginary, and cognitive universe of the other in order to understand "from within" attitudes and behaviors, systems of ideas, values, symbols (the internal existentiality of each one).

*Sensitive listening implies unconditional acceptance of the other; the researcher does not judge, measure, or compare, but rather understands, which does not mean that he agrees or identifies other. Sensitive listening affirms the researcher's congruence. He communicates his emotions, his imagination, and his questions. He is present, that is, consistent. Under such conditions, he can only agree to work with groups that respect his core values and his philosophy of life.*

To do so, it is necessary to understand the weight of a concept such as interdependence in the humanities, which opens up to the existence of various levels of reality and appeals to sensitivity. This new relationship with knowledge requires revisiting the relationship between the imaginari nd thought. To stop understanding the imaginary function as simply deceptive and illusory is to recognize it, above all, as creative. Thinking is a possibility, the only one that makes us *homo sapiens sapiens;* nothing guarantees, in advance, our ability to elaborate, to face chaos with our brains and produce meaning, abandoning the repetitive patterns of power relations.

The demand for meaning lives in the human imagination, that which drives us despite failures and falls, despite defeats and losses. In the human imagination live the dreams that we could not renounce without renouncing ourselves. Ignoring the demand for meaning, censoring dreams, abolishing creation in a learning process can lead us to increasingly resemble the machines we create and give listening only to our fears or our anger. Over so many years of applying tests and submitting myself to them, I have experienced the fear we have of our potential, because it is pure strength. I have experienced mistrust in the face of the representation of the importance of "our values," the immense demands and the little care we have for ourselves. Unaware of our mystery, we intend to function as production units and not as living beings inhabited by extraordinary dreams that require care and time to come to light, a patient and lengthy labor.

The flash: fragments of essence in existence.

The word *flash* refers to the flash of a camera that quickly illuminates, in an instant, what risks being left in the shadows, what cannot or does not want to be seen. The *flash* is an everyday element, part of everyone's life, and being able to experience it, to let it emerge, can change the course of an existence. With this term, Barbier defines a specific awareness, an *insight* that can be understood as

[1] Barbier, René. *Approches transversales, I'écoute sensible en sciences humaines.* Paris: Ed. Antropos, pp. 89-90.

an ultra-fast process of elucidation leading to a state of greater lucidity.

Lucidity does not present itself as the synthesis of a multitude of fragments of reality that reconstruct a universe of meanings. It is something else, a kind of opening onto another system of vision that suddenly replaces what had been the foundation of our being until then: we rework. We arrive at moments of understanding that can even be restructuring. The unintentional becomes conscious, enabling the perception of slow processes of successive devaluations or undue heroic overvaluations, which cost us the interruption of a process of growth. By analyzing, observing, and speaking, consciousness emerges, wounds are exposed and seen, and traces of violence are revealed. It is the beginning of another class, a new process of growth during which, as we repeat the process of constructing objects of knowledge, we reflect on everything that hinders us.

The process, the class, and we seek not only to produce objects but also to develop self-knowledge during this metacognitive journey.

We can talk about what frightens us, what oppresses us, what hurts us, as well as what enchants us, inspires us, and moves us. It is so good, during a pedagogical relationship, to be able to dialogue openly, lighten the burden, and, while learning, also learn to walk more lightly, more simply.

It is necessary to be aware of the philosophical dimension of a primer, a lesson, a dissertation. What happens during this process? What realizations does it authorize or disallow? What flashes of insight might occur? What changes? What space is given to the unintentional? How can people become equal in the experience of the same process of differentiation? Under layers of fear, mistrust, sadness, or anger, the new occurs, like an underground river that requires a long process of excavation to be found in the bowels of the earth. The new, like laughter, a will to live and believe that we can improve this world, that we can be this people to come, or part of it, even if only to symbolize a fragile, tenuous, and discreet beginning, thanks to the perception of the sublime.

*Diary...* After dinner, the couple gets up, embraces, and begins to dance emotionally. Their steps are clumsy and their breathing short. Slightly panting. Slowly they discover a common rhythm. Two in one. One for the other.

The sublime as a vision is unintentional. It is a gift: it happens during the process of elaboration, in the form of *flashes.* It emerges on the other side of the world, like Paul Valéry's *"My Faust,"* who, after crossing heaven and hell, after losing almost everything, talks to the muses and begins life, like someone waking up from a slow nightmare. How can we teach the "unteachable"? How can we continue to talk about flowers, after all the wars and useless deaths, so that children do not unlearn tenderness? How can we bring the sublime into our daily lives?

The sublime, according to Longinus, is the alliance of art with nature: "Il faut que l'art vienne au secours de la nature, parce qu'en effet c'est leur parfaite alliance qui fait la souveraine perfection." (“It is necessary that art come to the

aid of nature, for it is from their perfect alliance that true perfection emanates."). In fact, according to the author, "Nature is what is most necessary to achieve greatness: however, if art does not take care to guide it, it is blind and does not know where it is going."[1] (Nature is what is most necessary to achieve the best, however, if art does not guide it, it is blind and does not know where it is going.).

This guidance of human nature by art follows certain paths that Longinus attempts to point out without, however, restricting it to rigid rules; he cites "the greatness of the soul, the imitation of classical Greek authors, or the use of imagination."[2] Regarding images, Longinus notes:

*This word is generally understood to mean any thought capable of producing an expression, and which paints a picture in the mind, in whatever way; but it is also used in a more specific and restricted sense to refer to the kind of speech we make when, through enthusiasm and an extraordinary stirring of the soul, we seem to see the things we are talking about, and when we place them before the eyes of those who are listening.*[3]

*(The concept of image generally refers to any thought that produces an expression and creates a picture for the mind, in any way possible; however, it can be used in an even more precise and restricted sense, referring to the discourse we make when, through enthusiasm and an extraordinary movement of the*

[1] Ibid., p. 369.
[2] Ibid., p. 393.
[3] Ibid, p. 390.

*soul, we see the things we speak of and place them before the eyes of those who listen to us).*

Longino points out that, in rhetoric, "the beauty of images lies in representing things as they happened and as they truly are."[1]

To achieve the sublime, certain deviations must be avoided, such as: "l'enflure, la puerilit" and in certain cases "le pathétique,"[2] "chercher trop la nouveauté" or "qu'il n'ait point l'esprit rampante,"[3] one must combat "la bassesse des termes et la décadence de l'esprit"[4]. One must avoid grandiloquence, childishness, and, in some cases, the pathetic, as well as the exaggerated search for novelty and the creeping ingenuity, and one must combat the baseness of terms and the decadence of the spirit." The sublime depends, in large part, on the choice of words:

"Indeed, there is perhaps nothing from which orators and all writers who study the sublime derive more grandeur, elegance, clarity, weight, force, and vigor for their works than from the choice of words."

(There is nothing from which speakers and writers in general, who seek to achieve the sublime, derive greater grandeur, elegance, clarity, weight, force, and vigor for their works than from the choice of words.) Contrasting the sublime with mediocrity, he even conceives that these authors, in pursuit of their goal, may commit a series of imperfections:

Where can we find a writer who never makes mistakes and whose work needs no revision?[5] (Where can we find an author who never errs and whose work needs no revision?). Referring to these authors, he explains that "their minds, which studied only the great, could not dwell on small things[6]". (Their ingenuity, which sought only to achieve greatness, could not stop at small things.). Thus, Longinus says he prefers the sublime, which has some flaws, to the perfect mediocre; comparing Ion to Sophocles, he asks which of the two the reader prefers to be? Mistakes in the sublime can be excused... The composition and arrangement of words "la composition et l'arrangement des paroles dans toute leur magnificience et leur dignité"[7] also overlap with "une certaine élévation de l'esprit qui nous fait penser heureusement les choses"[8] (a certain elevation of the mind that leads us to think happily about things). However, this elevation of the mind is impossible in a state of slavery; for Longinus, the attainment of the sublime presupposes freedom: "Nul esclave ne pouvait jamais être orateur"[9]. No slave could

[1] Ibid., p. 392.
[2] Ibid., p. 370.
[3] Ibid., p. 378.
[4] Ibid., p. 424.
[5] Helen E. Longino, *Science as Social Knowledge*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1990, p. 412.
[6] Ibid., p. 413.
[7] Ibid., p. 376.
[8] Ibid., p. 376.
[9] Ibid., p. 426.

ever be an orator"). "La servitude la plus justement établie, est une espèce de prison où l'âme décroit et se rapetisse en quelque sorte[1]" ("Even the most justly established servitude is a kind of prison..."). Such a condition of slavery, with rare exceptions, is for the author the general condition of humanity, and, having said that, Longinus provokes reflection, which is, according to him, the infallible mark of the sublime: *The sure sign of the sublime is when we feel that a discourse leaves us with much to think about, that it first has an effect on us that is very difficult, if not impossible, to resist, and that the memory of it then lingers and is difficult to erase.*

Modified by this ancient way of thinking about the world, this way of thinking as one is born, a way that listens to what desire contains that is new and better, sublime and, by working through it, we can understand the path through which life tirelessly speaks to us. The chaotic, destabilizing phases, the crises we go through during a process of learning and growth, can conceal and foreshadow a new order, anchored at a deeper level of our being: we dare to be different.

We labor as the tightrope walker invents a path over the abyss, the red thread of the meaning of life suspended between beginning and end, letting the river flow, laughter flow, and reaching tomorrow without fear of falls and new beginnings, without fear of effort, for only by crossing the void can we reap the dawn.

Perlaboration would be a new guise for the ancient maieutic, the art in which Socrates, through his actions, drew a parallel between thinking and dying. Some teachers are almost instinctively philosophers, not content with merely transmitting content: they discuss it with their students, thus following a path, a journey, in search of meaning: the meaning of sociology, engineering, geography, literature, or the absence of meaning, the problems they raise, the questions that remain unanswered.

However, the society in which we live, with its brutal inequalities and excessive consumerism, points, in most cases, to a lack of questioning, basically due to a lack of education that accepts risk-taking: the risk of not being a machine-man, a rat-man, the risk of being "oneself" and not the piece that fits into a system of oppression; that, in short, accepts taking the same old risk of philosophizing.

What would our classrooms be like if we could more often waste time on "useless" questions, those deemed "boring" or "too complicated" or déjà vu, about the meaning of life?

[1] Ibid., p. 427.