

INTRODUCTION¹

Will to dialogue: Transversal perspectives and complicit thought

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Let us register the memory of a space, obligatorily of transit, as a (pictorial or musical, architectonic, if you wish) composition. It reinforces the will to dialogue, that is, the will to creativity and culture (as both trace and project). A culture of tolerance, of generosity and gratitude. A culture of responsibility. Only then can one think of democratic platforms with a minimum of stability. Socially and aesthetically speaking, Mediterranean architecture is, therefore, provoking (sometimes blasphemous): flesh and stone are mixed (with the blessing of the gods or their demiurges), by using as a useful support light and sounds, singular colors and harmony. And complex forms that *show*, trap and seduce (settlers and visitors).

Perspectives are different in the Mediterranean: words and things do not exclude each other. Although the time of unidirectional assignment has not run out yet, the process has begun to reverse: so that things are not reduced to a name that assigns them an exclusive value and limits their mobility, while enclosing their circulation. It has been for a while now that the careful ear detects that it is things that tend to choose their own name.

Encounter strategies, dialogue assumptions: the digital citizenship emerges beyond the latent, non-transferred, identity forms. Identity (*form of life*) is now validated, paradoxically, according to the degree of up-rooting. All acknowledgments and encounters take place in cyberspace. Governments design management and control strategies by means of regulating information and consumption (including emotions and pleasure), that is, devaluing local structures, reducing them to hardly relevant anecdotes. What matters is not the *frontier effect*. What matters is only what it is selectively exported. The value of production is fixed *outside*, beyond the interest of the manufacturer. Price is imposed by the impersonal *laws of the market*. Legitimacy is propped up by meta-readings of texts which are fundamentally based on experience and

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fluctuating positions. Before events, before the stories that accredited actors perpetuate by recreating them.

The usage of *particular languages* is equally an anecdote. It is only digital discourse that has vehicular value of change and usage. Nothing moves along either canals or non-transferable, autochthonous (non-*globally* de-codable) corridors. Capitalism of knowledge: cultural industries in a society that subordinates knowledge to the discriminating information that it sells. Passages always lead to a (known and imposed) somewhere and generate maps that trace non-daydreamt *adventures*, regardless travel notes, logbooks. Travel notes: will to fragment that determines a literary composition (thus it is fragmentarily determined). Logbooks: will to adventure that fragments draw together. Or the other-reality seen from deformed (reconstructed), locally non-contaminated perspectives, from meta-positions and culturally contaminated spaces.

From our particular window, anonymous observers continue, however, contemplating the same landscape – which is, at times, devastating. ***All the rhythm of life goes through my windowpane... and death also passes by...*** (León Felipe). The rhythm of (our) life is determined by conductors that we have not chosen: one ought to read again Hans Jonas so that the principle of responsibility establishes the ethics of behaviors in an irremediably technological civilization. Will recognizing that our gazes merge at some point be a testimony of regeneration?

The media vomit information at a pace that impedes its discernment and, therefore, its assimilation. Perhaps that is what one is at: establishing a scale of priorities where the problems which are more clearly related to citizenship do not appear (the micro-cosmos of feelings and will, the inverted escape, the unresolved tension).

The memory of the (neo) *think-tanks* is a memory that has not been innocently reconstructed. In fact, it is suspiciously forgetful. Its reports are re-writings that treacherously deny the corresponding sources, while simulating objectivity. They are the modern *organic thinkers* that try to transmit the feeling of discursive normality: it is necessary to think an *unique, non-contaminated thought*. However, necessarily unthinkable, given that nobody can assume the risk of thinking about it as his own.

If contemporary thought is not critical, it is not postmodernist either. Even if “postmodernism” is a gratuitous term, since we were never modern. *Fin-de-siècle Vienna* is not only a promising time of resistance (nor a starting point). Beyond the (although symbolic, effective) rupture, the 20th Century in Europe is the century of tragic silence: a scared citizenship, disenchanting and incredulous, that dared to deny God moved by a feeling of betrayal by means of Nietzsche. In order to affirm itself. *Denying God is denying the negation of man*, wrote Feuerbach. A fragile and instable humanity, in tatters, that understood Primo Levi very well. Because the body lost its identity (and with it, its dignity), because the subject stopped being the subject of transcendence or the pretext to locate it, nobody dared to recognize in himself the other that one had been. Because it was impossible to forget that tragic gaze, it became necessary to keep quiet, throughout the century, as an act of rebellion.

When, in times of crisis, one today speaks of *reinforcing* the idea of Europe, it is convenient to remember that the roots of European thought are multiple and complex. Even that deep Europe, commonplace of historians and journalists (theologians and philosophers, architects and painters), would not be understood without the cultural crossbreeding that identifies it. But it is not only about interpreting the impact that migratory processes that facilitate (in whatever degree) the integration of geopolitical spaces of acceptance. It is necessary to be brave and to admit the obvious: the mythico-religious sensibility (at times rather sly than manifest) towards adjoining sensibilities, such as Islam, is irreversible. Without a reciprocally open-to-dialogue approach, in fact, without a complicit design, it would be impossible to speak today of (thinking) an Europe of the or for the 21st Century.

The Mediterranean, intensely permeable, serves as a frontier or pretext so that allegedly antagonistic interests do not flow. That frontier dissolves if what flows are economical interests, more from the South to the North than the other way around. More from the East to the West. Nevertheless, Europe is unthinkable without the Mediterranean, crucible of cultures that coexist at different levels of tension. The Mediterranean and all that has been filtered throughout history (in diverging, plural directions) and its waters.

When true demand is called “spring”, the risk of those that speak out in order to say *enough* is misinterpreted (and valued little). Enough of (neo)colonialisms concealed rather than explicit. It is a fight against the lost of identity and dignity, a macabre *process of normalization* imported from an Europe that is unable to sell cohesion models (including the economical one).

Transoceanic perspectives. Another form of flow, other spaces to verify if the (European) old order of discourse continues being valid to transform while interpreting. If praxis is only a consequence of the *strength* of the theories that are exported or, on the other hand, of those generated in dialogue with the action and conditions of the environment. Latin America is a reserve-laboratory (for linguistic-cultural reasons, for being trace/memory of the history of Europe, seen from the North towards the Mediterranean, or the other way around).

The unknown is feared, especially if it can question the integrity of what one possesses, especially if behind that apparent integrity there is impotence, and even intolerance and no will to dialogue at all.

Dialogue takes place between opposites. Saying neighbor does not necessarily mean to point towards an enemy. Education is a democratic tool that contributes to the possibility of that dialogue. Any program that offers (even if different, complementary) perspectives is dialogic. But it does not involve giving up positions that guarantee either integrity or original identity marks. There is dialogue, therefore, only between those able to listen to the word that has either not been uttered or so far not listened to. The word originally uttered, hidden behind recurrent texts, is the basis for any ulterior discourse with will to fluency. As long as one knows how to read from respectful perspectives. Provided that what transcends is not subordinated to the immediate. Education is, therefore, process and aim, but also an inalienable *a priori*, an exigency beyond any

temporary interest. Culture becomes in this way the trace behind which the speaker is recognized, behind which we recognize anybody who is listening in.

Nevertheless, the 20th Century was the century of becoming aware of gender, the century of the demand for identity (and for the rights related to that identity that had been denied) in terms of gender. That is why being a feminist is a way of life. A specific way of life if one is, at the same time, practicing and a believer. For instance, Islamic feminism, beyond the cultural space that it is supposed to have, emerges and resists in a socio-cultural and politico-ideological environment that is clearly aggressive. An old-fashioned and forgetful environment that projects its endogamic conflict to identify evil in what supposedly excludes it or threatens it. When the pillars of one's own identity totter, one tends to transfer the causes: the enemy is outside. One will have to either look for him or create him. In order to fight against him, and if necessary, to annihilate him.

When we speak of feminisms (at times from belligerent class perspectives), we are dealing with groups (rather of women than of men) that are geographically and socially located, and the majority of cases have been seriously marginalized. Even though they resist.

Because one recognizes oneself in the other (and his environment) or because one can make oneself be recognized from that which is the other. If the other is not feared any longer, when those that enrich the environment by means of different readings are listened to: Europe would be more cohesive (politically, economically and culturally stronger), if it admits that Islamic feminism is not a concealed or malevolent strategy. Nor a surreptitious form of colonialism. The fight for the equality and dignity of women is stronger and more effective if its mentors widen and diversify their field of action. Being feminist and Muslim is possible, since they are not mutually exclusive. And European classical feminism has much to learn from it yet. Even though their necessities and aspirations do not always merge. Even though their perspectives might be different, and their strategies, opposed. The ultimate aim continues being the same: that the risk of exclusion, persecution or death should not be greater for the simple fact of having been born a woman.

The ultimate aim of this publication continues being the same: that the risk to exclusion, persecution or death is not greater for the simple fact of having been born under exceptional circumstances, *somewhere else*, in *conflict zones*. Sceneries of tensions that *formally* stop being what they are by means of the (imposed) intervention of external agents. Other (invisible, clumsily transferable, and parallel) micro-sceneries of tensions are left (repressed). They do not dissolve because a macabre institutional silence carries weight in them. Because the distance that accredits the managers of the public sector before their legitimate incumbents must ignore them in order to justify their trade. That is why the *neoliberal normalization* must be understood. This is the (originally tense) equilibrium that is imposed on us. The ultimate aim of this volume is, therefore, to condemn this *unbearable lightness*, this (apparently stable) state of affairs.

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