

Please forgive me for the “pidgin English”, the disordered character of this text I wrote in order to present myself as proposed by Mario Blaser, and for the many mistakes that must still populate what is only a draft written in rush and not even carefully re-read and verified. I had a sudden very heavy task to complete and am now leaving Brussels for one week. So sorry, but I hope it may be of some use. It consists in six “notes” loosely connected but that may function together better, I felt, than a continuous text.

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A first commitment

In order to participate in what has been presented more as a “witches” convent than as an academic meeting it may be important to present ourselves, or more precisely the path that brought us here. I divided this past in some “notes” and the first of them is about a commitment I made without understanding it was a commitment, because it came under the guise of a “no, this I will never do”.

At that time I was working with Ilya Prigogine as an apprentice learning how to become a philosopher in the very milieu I had left when after I got my diploma in chemistry I turned to philosophy. Turning to philosophy does not make you a philosopher. I would characterize myself at the time more as a political refugee from science, defining philosophy as the place where I would be able to learn how to pose questions about sciences that would have disqualified me as a scientist. In fact I had just obeyed my training as a scientist which includes that if you are interested in such questions you are lost for science and can as well go where people seem to have time for such questions. This, by the way, is a rather strange but common version of class division – the honest hard workers and the leisure people who enjoy delving into pointless non decidable questions.

I will not insist on this aspect, which may be of secondary importance, but I would just underline that when thinking about modern sciences, as they have been institutionalized into disciplines, that discipline was first used for the monastic refusal of the world’s temptations. The “get out”, “go to philosophy” I enacted is not only a principle of disciplinary order, it is also something like the exclusion of the one who has yielded to the temptation, producing quasi-phobic reactions from those who stand true to their vows. This phobia against “grand questions”, ingrained in the scientific training, is very important when we deal with the questions of the role of scientists in our society. Here it means that my possibility of coming back was only due to the fact that Prigogine escaped this

phobia, but that my stay in his department was something like a field experience for ethnologists. I was there to learn the terms of the discussion my guests would accept. But I was also at the interface, often dealing with the outside visitors after Prigogine was tired with them. And it may well be that my most crucial experience was that of the divorce between what made Prigogine's team thinking, hesitating, getting excited and what many visitors came to get – a “new science”, connecting with the vision of a world active, complex, creative and all that.

I learned there never to think sciences without their milieu, without taking into account the kind of interest they generate. This makes sciences an unknown – which I tried to activate in my book with Prigogine, *Order out of Chaos*, where I intended to feature an adventure of questions, the questions that physicists create for themselves and not the at last “right” questions that would make them the brain of humanity deciphering the laws and mystery of the universe. To no avail. What was mostly celebrated was the new freedom to address uncertainty, bifurcations, the appearance of order without a blueprint (cf. tornadoes), as if all this was not there, in our common world. Prigogine was proud to have produced a new relevance for physics but people would not listen to him as such, rather as a prophet telling about a new world. For Prigogine as a scientist the point was the construction of “good” question, a question that would both be novel and satisfy the very exacting demands that determine the acceptance of “theoretical beings” in contemporary physics while what he proposed was accepted as some quasi prophetic or metaphysical “vision of the world”.

This experience committed me as a philosopher to working at a radical disentangling between scientific and philosophical creations, with the utmost indifference towards the classical question of epistemology vs ontology. There are no answers without questions and the questions produced by philosophy and by science must exhibit their divergence. The point is neither that they would address reality in different ways, nor that each would create its own reality. In both cases what still prevails then is representational categories centred around the answers, or perspectivist categories centred on vision. What does matter for you? is a more interesting question, because it does not start with abstractions as knowledge vs reality but with a mode of engagement that distributes its terms. What matters for a physicist is not what the successful demonstration that neutrinos exist makes to his experience and when the question is settled he will bloodlessly dismantle or discard the apparatus associated to the success. What matters for the pilgrim is a transformation of his experience and since there are pilgrim sites, it seems that there were “souvenir shops” as if bringing something from the site was part of the operation.

This commitment turned me into a “constructivist”, but not a critical constructivist, that is a deconstructivist, leading back what claims to exist for its own sake to something more general, whatever it may be. I would say a

“pragmatist-constructivist”, addressing a construction “by its milieu”, as Deleuze said, by the “pragmata” or the “matters of concern” that characterize both its relation with its milieu and the relation of its milieu with it. No independence from the milieu, and no functional explanation by the milieu will do. None are illusions but both are “effects” of the construction and are to be maintained as is the relevance of any abstraction. As such there is no “beyond” constructions, the abstractions they make relevant and the way they situate their milieu including those who characterize them. However, this is far from being the last word. There is no neutral way to address a construction, because neutrality is just ratification, accepting the role they assign those who address it. But this means that each address involves a pragmatic choice about the consequences. Do they aim at deconstruction, which means destruction, at promotion, or at proposition, testing the possibility of new connections or a modification of “how” what matters matters. As Whitehead insisted, we cannot think, and I would add, exist, without abstractions, the challenge is to pay attention to our *modes* of abstraction. (SMW, 58)

A pattern making event

Patterns and event are at all scales, and I would propose that the pattern associated to an event is marked by heterogeneity. The pattern includes, indeed, all those for whom it made a difference in the strong sense, that is all those who inherit the event in a way that produces a “before” and an “after” that connects them to other inheritors – in Whitehead term, all those for whom the event was “epoch-making”.

Reading the papers presented I understood that we have to be lexically explicit because they do not have the same lexicon. Thus I would make clear that I understand connection as distinct from relation. I may have relations, even crucial ones, to beings with whom I have no connections. For instance lethal bacteria and human history are related and bacteria have very strong connections with our cells’ functioning but for a long time we, as thinking beings, connected with epidemics in many different ways. We still do, as all connections are partial connections, but the connection which made bacteria a vector for epidemics marks an epoch, both for humans and concerned bacteria. (See Latour, the historicity of Things, in PH), and a new epoch will probably come rather soon, when most concerned bacteria will be able to resist antibiotics.

I do not wish to tell about events in a general way but to characterize what was for me an event that made me belong to a pattern I may share with some other participants. This event has been dubbed the “Science War” and it is sufficient to make it clear that events are not to be confused either with chance or unpredictability. It may well be felt or known that something will happen, and after it does, it may become perfectly explainable. Nevertheless when it happens it creates the choice about the way to inherit it.

As we know, Bruno Latour for instance inherited it under the guise of sociology’s *felix culpa*, when critical sociologists doing what was for them business as usual had to confront the outrage of the scientists they had taken as their object. He was surprised because till then, he thought that what he was confronting, and happily so, was epistemologists, and the normative version they proposed about scientists’ activity.

I myself was not surprised by the outrage, rather by the anxiety of scientists accusing critical thinkers not of misunderstanding their science but of activating a rising tide of irrationality. It took me some time to take the measure of what was happening during those years first in the US, then elsewhere under the name of the “Knowledge Economy”. What Latour had described in PH as “Science’s blood flow”, with the five entangled loops of “Alliances”, “Autonomy”, “Mobilization of the world”, “Public representation” and finally “Links and knots”, may well seem not to be endangered by the Allies’ new demands. Scientists had always been on the look out, speculating on the

possibility to recruit Allies' interest in their current research. However to me the relation between the Sciences War and the Knowledge Economy became what I had to inherit. Indeed what critical studies, even Latour's, had ignored, which made scientists furious, the very specific nature of "Links and Knots" was precisely what was being attacked. In other words, sciences, and I mean here theoretico-experimental sciences, could well come to verify the critical analysis, not because this analysis would have been right or lucid, but because the very strange adventure, which had begun with Galileo, was in the process being destroyed.

I had occasion to experience how difficult it was for some people to envisage this possibility of destruction as they contemplate an ongoing and even hyperactive research enterprise. The idea that science is adapting to its new environment is very strong. Strangely enough, while sciences' allies did respect some distance, waiting for the famous goose to have laid a egg that they would maybe turn golden, the associated threat, do not kill the goose, do not use your power to try and take command, had some efficacy. It is now seen as part of the rhetorical armoury of scientists defending their privileges, what they now have to forsake because of the general mobilization in the global competitive race. But were these privileges? Yes, certainly but not only. My conviction is that what experimental scientists defended was a condition for what I will call their practice, the very specificity of which had been denied when their science had been characterized by critical thinkers as a "social practice like any other".

Practice as used here is part of my lexicon. I did choose because of its two associated meanings, which I wish to retain both. When figuring in the opposition with theory or principle, practice usually means "yes, but in practice..." I wish to retain the crucial difference between general ideas, visions or interpretations and the questions scientists can effectively ask in the lab or to their equations (theorizing is a practice!) When used in philosophy, since Kant, practical questions are questions that engage meaning and value (what should we do?, what can we hope?, who are we?) I use here the term "obligation" which is not a normative one because norms are discursive and communicate with judgments, while obligations communicate with hesitation and the possibility of betrayal and have as such no definite discursive formulation. These two associate meanings do not characterize only scientific practices. They are by the way meant to exclude those sciences that define themselves in terms of a "method" ensuring "objectivity". They are meant to "dramatize" that no practice is like another, to pluralize practices and the way each is characterized by its way to diverge. Practices are collective and those it collects are those who know the difference between general norms and the "idiomatic" question that gathers them.

Practices should not be confused with scientific activity. In Latour's scheme, they correspond to the specificity of the links that binds competent colleagues and the knots they create together with what they deal with – no obligations, in other words, bear on scientists' relations with the public, the allies or the members of other "autonomous" scientific communities. I will not describe here the particular obligations that specify theoretico- experimental research, just to underline that it makes "objectivity" a consequence of rare and demanding successes, divorcing it from a norm or a standpoint. What I would emphasize rather is that considering that scientific practices may well be destroyed may change some perspectives in our meeting. The point is not to characterize them as innocent victims, that, they are utterly not, but to avoid any confusion between destruction and empty great words as rationality, objectivity or universality as they are meant to be illustrated by the scientific enterprise.

I know that the notion of "flat ontology" is sometimes associated with the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, and his struggle against any position of transcendence. To me it is a bit curious because I cannot but associate this expression with a "levelling" operation, while the Deleuze operation is a creation. The creation of a plane that affirmatively selects what it gathers. I would propose that practices as put on one and the same plane all affirm that they may be destroyed. The pattern I would associate with the "Science War" as I inherited it is a pattern of destruction. It directly poses the question of the part played by the "critical mind" in the process of destruction.

Who is responsible?

We are not responsible! This may well be the protest of critical thinkers. And they would be right of course. As Whitehead wrote in *Science and the Modern World*, since philosophers as Hume demonstrated to their own satisfaction that it is impossible for science to discover an order in nature, “scientific faith has risen to the occasion and tacitly removed the philosophic mountain” (4). Or again, science “has never cared to justify its faith or to explain its meanings; and has remained blandly indifferent to its refutation by Hume” (16). Or, as Steve Weinberg, who was soon to become a furious science warrior wrote, “To tell a physicist that the laws of nature are not explanations of natural phenomena is like telling a tiger stalking prey that all flesh is grass. The fact that we scientists do not know how to state in a way that philosophers’ would approve what it is that we are doing in searching for scientific explanations does not mean that we are not doing something worthwhile. We could use help from professional philosophers in understanding what it is that we are doing, but with or without their help we shall keep at it.”¹

In other words, critical thinkers demonstrating that “reality” is mute, and that scientists themselves, one way or another, from the Humian habits to the power relations, are responsible for the order they decipher, are as such nothing new, and if their many demonstrations had had the power to impose their own consequences, what we call modern science would be a medley of correlations, observations and blind measurements, while engineers, craftsmen and machine builders would maybe freely and happily explore and put to work technical possibilities that would be described using the Renaissance register associating genius, wonder and magic. It may well be that the absence of a dramatic difference between so called rational techniques as justified by science and crafts that work without being able to explain why they work would have produced a very different world, and maybe a more interesting one. Maybe. But the point here is not to speculate in terms of “what if?” It is to emphasize that the clash between critical thinkers and scientists was from the beginning about responsibility. The rare and demanding success of experimental sciences corresponds to the possibility of creating experimental situations such that the responsibility for the scientist’s interpretation can be attributed to what he interrogated. “Nature has spoken” they say, which means the situation authorizes us to be their spokespersons. To which critique will rather monotonously answer: “Impossible! Nature is mute, and you are thus yourselves responsible. Our task is to free you from your illusions”.

The meeting point between scientists and critical thinkers is what I would characterize as a poisonous one. Here also, scientists are not the innocent

¹ S. Weinberg, *Dreams of a Final Theory*, London, Vintage, 1993, p. 21-22.

victims because ever since Galileo, the scientific propaganda turned the rare and demanding successes it glorified into examples of a general definition of an at last objective knowledge, all other forms of knowledge being only fictions, human fabrications. Objectivity is then no longer the affirmation of a success, but the claim that the subjectivity of scientists is not responsible for what they claim. It has become the polemical watchword opposing science and opinion.

To accept relating the philosophical problem to such a “public representation” is to fall in a trap. If one accepts the claim, be it respectfully or critically, or both as Kant did, one will accept and relay the polemic stance about other forms of knowledge. And the way philosophers accepted the trap may tell us that they were part of the same world as scientists, a world in which the question of assigning responsibility could be activated as the crucial, even mesmerizing one.

It is very interesting that one of Bruno Latour’s answers, when discovering the scientist’s outrage, was the notion of factish. The factish is what is dismembered as soon as the question of responsibility arises. And it very interestingly connects the way we judged others, those who believed that the fetishes they were fabricating were nevertheless gods, the very strange success of experimentation, when facts fabricated in the lab get the power to designate the ones who fabricated them as their spokespersons, and the whole of our common sense experience, when we feel that the either... or... challenge is irrelevant. Am I the author responsible for this text or is this text exploiting me in order to come into existence. The experience of “what is demanded now” not only designates writing as a reality-making practice, but it also signals the equivocation, to use Viveiros de Castro’s term, that I would propose may be associated with practices – in the practice of writing for instance “reality making” must be equivocated. I confer its reality to the text I write but the text being written is what makes me its writer. Similarly, but in a much more dramatic, unmistakable manner, mathematics, this epitome of rationality, is also the queen of equivocation. The power of the written articulated signs is such that many mathematicians, who would not dream confusing formulas and magic, nevertheless cannot refrain from conferring some Platonic mode of existence to the beings their formulas define.

I do not aim at some general theory of factishes/fetiches as I am an empiricist at the heart, a political heart by the way: I do not see how theoretical claims in this matter can avoid transcending the plurality of equivocal beings that scandalize our judgement about responsibility. Their only common point refers to this scandal that may be turned into a wonder, the kind of wonder that naturalists experience confronting the plurality of living beings and the diverging ways they turn their environment into a milieu, making aspects of it matter, and the diverging ways they behave with regards to what matters for them. As an empiricist I would propose that we do not need to theorize, but to

learn, as naturalists know how to do, in irreducibly ecological and ethological terms. What we may learn cannot transcend their *oikos*, the way they are called forth, installed, addressed to, protected from, and their *ethos*, their power to affect and to be affected, what matters for them, and what they make matter. In other words it is possible to extend here the word “experimentation”, as distinct from “experience”. We may all experience strange dreams or clairvoyant intuitions. Such experiences are neither facts nor illusions and scientists should never go further than to state that they cannot do anything with them. This is the exact point. To go further would need an experimental culture, learning what they demand in order for something to be done with them (for the better and the worse). The only common point about such (diverging) experimentations is that they must be protected from the question of responsibility which always targets equivocation.

The interest of Latour’s proposition in our context is that it enlightens the violence of our categories, as articulated around the question of who or what is responsible, not only when they apply to others, but also when they apply to “us”. When Kant stated that reason has to address its objects as a judge, and not learn from nature as from a master, the image is that of a violence that took as its first target our relation with what we know and feel. As Whitehead deplored in *Modes of Thought*, “The question, What *do* we know?, has been transformed into the question, What *can* we know?” (74), a transformation that did not happen once and for all, but that must be imposed on each generation through brutal policing operations, learning to despise experience in the name of what Whitehead again called “misplaced abstractions”. Here maybe the critical anti-fetishist mind made its word, always on the watch for infraction, sniggering when a lady claims that her dog “understands” what she is doing or telling or when a scientist claims that neutrinos really exist.

This may help to try and think “us” in a way that does not put us in a lonely position as Descola is doing when characterizing us as “naturalists” (in the contemporary US sense as what he means is indeed “dualists”) – and recognizing that only “us” would ask the questions that lead to his fourfold partition. This, to me, is what I would call a dirty trick – the seeming modesty of putting us together with “others” in a classificatory scheme, but the regaining of the usual superiority over others by being the only possible authors of such a classification. My point is rather that something very violent did happen to us, which escapes classification because it cannot be cultivated, only propagated, feeding upon what it destroys. As Whitehead wrote about dualism, enhancing both the responsibility of human mind and the all-encompassing explanatory power of physical mechanisms, “there is Aaron’s rod, and the magicians’ serpents; and the only question for philosophy is, which swallows which; or whether, as Descartes thought, they all lived happily together (SMW, 142-142) - our “position” in Descola’s classification is a fairy tale. It is a similar point that

Latour proposed when he referred to “the invincibility of the Moderns” in *We Have Never Been Moderns*, referring it to their forked tongues (38). What Latour is staging in this passage is organized around the question “who, or what, is to be regarded as truly responsible”, and the assignation never stop mutating in an infernal dance that in fact correlates with the discordant voices of our dominant “rational” sciences, in a state of perpetual cold war.

I would leave to others the telling of the story of our obsession with responsibility. It probably implicates many trends, philosophical ones, starting from Greek philosophy and its struggle against sophists, from the Roman juridical traditions, from the monotheist obsession against false gods, from the theological problems dealing with human freedom and divine grace. Other may be added, the important point being that they explain nothing independently of the way they were activated – for instance when Galileo re-enacted the heroic struggle against the power of sophists, in the guise of the struggle of one man armed with “facts” against a multitude of rhetoricians. But the main point is that I am not trying to define here who “we” are, what defines “us” or the way we are thinking. Leibniz wrote that everything is not alive but that there is life everywhere. What I am trying to diagnosis is not “us”, but what we are vulnerable to everywhere, a power of capture that can be recognized when we honour truth as sad and hard, what we have to conquer and accept, but which is unable to save us – the definition Michel Foucault in his *Herméneutique du sujet*, gave to the “Cartesian moment” marking the history of the relation between truth and subjectivity production.

The smoke still hanging in our nostrils

All those who are gathered here have probably experienced the slightly incredulous or pitiful look on the face of dear colleagues. “You believe that ?” As a philosopher I would have no problem discussing Leibniz’ monads or Malebranche’s vision in God, as I would then work in the history of philosophy. The problem is already a bit different if I am interested in the speculative philosophy of Whitehead, as he is a 20th century philosopher and appears as superbly ignorant of the fact that a contemporary philosopher should abide with Kant’s condemnation of speculation. But the worse comes when daring to declare my political and philosophical interest in the Reclaiming movements of US neo-pagan witches. I am not then protected, as some of you may be, by the knowledge that one way or another we should respect the “beliefs” of the people who stand as our “victims”. Neo-pagan witches are Californians and most are white, Whitehead was an academic. They are due nothing but snigger, because they endeavour to deny the most powerful academic order-word, “we no longer can”. This may be uttered with pride or sadness, the same way as when we invoke children dreams. One way or another, the old myth of the paradise lost is played again, as it was already in psychoanalysis, in diagnosis against drug-use and in colonial rhetoric. We can no longer believe and to deny the ultimate truth that we are alone in the world is escapism.

To transform what happened to “us” into a fate we should bravely confront is exactly what the “reclaiming” practices resist. And I would follow the neo-pagan Starhawk in proposing that it is important to expose ourselves to the snigger in order to experience that 'The smoke of the burned witches still hangs in our nostrils' (D or T, 219).

Starhawk’s cry is not about victims, and it is not either about the direct memory of witch hunting and the stakes. It is rather about the way we classified the event, putting in the same category the hunters and the hunted, as belonging to a same epoch, when one still believed in the devil. This classification produces both a secure distance and the academic stance corresponding to the “we no longer...” But the efficacy of the cry is to make it perceptible that the produced distance is the inheritor of the violence. To make perceptible is not to demonstrate. It does not mean “to see better” but to see differently, to experience the strange fabulation that disturbs the classification. It creates what is to be reclaimed, not “beliefs” but a destroyed world. The act of naming themselves witches, in the Reclaiming tradition can be disconnected with the question of belief, because it is an answer actively resisting the Great Sad Tale that transforms modernity into some kind of an anthropological epic, when Man after He rised on his two feet, finally dares to walk without the crutches of beliefs.

The neo-pagan witches tell about a crucial experience, when as militants they came to participate in a struggle against the appropriation of Amerindian

lands. And old woman told them: you are all very nice to come, but where are you from?" It was a hard question to answer if you think of it, because it was impossible to answer "where we are coming from is of no importance, we go wherever there is a just struggle against imperialism". This would have told the woman that she and her people were nobodies, just the victims of injustice. This was not a possible ground for civilized encounter. Where are we coming from? What kind of story can we tell that would not insult those we address?

It seems to me that such questions are crucial. It is not sufficient, it seems to me, to work with the resources of philosophy, for instance the Deleuze and Guattari conceptual apparatus, because it permits the economy of the exposure. It may make academic colleagues furious but not sniggering. It has become, without problem, food for the academic dissertations producing US machine. We have to learn and write not so much "devant" Artaud, or a dying rat, as Deleuze wrote – this is vulnerable to a feeling of *nec plus ultra*, not a matter of sniggering - rather "devant" the old Indian lady, telling her stories about what happened to us. Of course such stories must be crafted, just as the stories narrated by her people. When I first read Starhawk I was ready to close the book and snigger at the first "New Age" sign. When coming to its end my perception had changed about the "us" to which I belong.

I would also, and for the same reason, propose that we take seriously that Starhawk refers the efficacy of the smoke in or nostril's cry, as changing our perceptions, to what she calls magic, the craft that was destroyed, and that it is a question of reclaiming. It is crucial not to classify magic with the supernatural, rather to stop and wonder about this opposition natural/supernatural and about the sadness and stupidity it produces. Let us stop speaking about a "disenchanted world" – always the same heroic, *nec plus ultra* touch. Let us consider the contrast between the proliferation of new strange beings and ideas created in sciences that address "matter" and the monotonous boredom produced by the ones where the opposition between natural and supernatural, or the anti-fetishist obsession rule. Those are the ones which in the name of rationality have condemned crafts in terms of fiction and beliefs but ever since craft maleficent spells, separating whatever they touch from its power to become.

I, who am not a witch, can understand the manner in which they invoke this immanent goddess, who it is not a matter of believing but to whom all the powers of change are attributed: "she changes everything she touches, and everything she touches changes". The efficacy of this refrain is to attribute the power of changing to her, above all so as not to attribute it to oneself. To honour change as a creation, instead of making it something "natural", a matter for "science". The goddess is not "supernatural", she does not "know better", she doesn't take the place of a theory and is not a reference in an argument. The efficacy proper to the recipes that invoke her and call for her presence, is the capacity to resist their identification with techniques following from a theory that would explain and justify their claim to work - whatever the theory and we

know they are many. What makes people uncomfortable, what is difficult to accept is that witches are pragmatic, radically pragmatic: truly experimental technicians, experimenting with effects and consequences.

Magic is one way to name what all creators know, that what empowers their creation is not theirs. The important point, whatever the name, is to affirm the debt, not an infinite one but one that must be honored. To honor is not to believe in a transcendent power but pragmatically to call forth what is required by any creation. At the very end of his life, in *Some Problems of Philosophy*, William James wrote: “We can and we may, as it were, jump with both feet off the ground into or towards a world of which we trust the other parts to meet our jump – and only so can the making of a perfected world of pluralistic pattern ever take place. Only through our precursive trust in it can it come into being. There is no inconstancy anywhere in this, and no ‘vicious circle’ unless a circle of poles holding themselves upright by leaning on one another, or a circle of dancers revolving by holding each other’s hands, can be ‘vicious’. The faith circle is so congruent with human nature that the only explanation of the veto that intellectualists pass upon it must be sought in the offensive character to them of the faiths of certain persons.” (230)

Pragmatism and Cosmopolitics

It was for me a shock to discover what William James meant by pragmatics, the way he linked it with the idea of a “universe in the making”. As we are gathered around the idea of the pluriverse, a Jamesian idea, I would like to defend it against the notion of some “free play of differences”, pacified differences which would coexist in some kind of Rortian conversational universe. About his “ironist” successors, James could well have written : "If *this* be the whole fruit of the victory, we say; if the generations of mankind suffered and laid down their lives; if prophets confessed and martyrs sang in the fire, and all the sacred tears were shed for no other end than that a race of creatures of such unexampled insipidity should succeed, and protract *in saecula saeculorum* their contented and inoffensive lives, - why at such a rate, better lose than win the battle, or at all events better ring down the curtain before the last act of the play, so that a business that began so importantly may be saved from so singularly flat a winding-up" (WB, 168)

We have not to try and tear off our own skin. We are concerned to the point of dying or killing by this very elusive question, which is called “truth”. To deny it because of the crimes, stupidity and blind disqualification it is to be associated with would be again to consider that we should be able to do what we know we should not ask from others. Again we would be the “adults” ones, able to ironically tolerate those who are still unable to behave, to entertain their own beliefs in an innocuous, playful way. Old, wise and a bit bored. I am always surprised by the many tricks we use in order to retain a standpoint where we can understand everything, that is, take all the places. The “democratic” figure of the pragmatist is one of those tricks – our truths are what satisfy us – it is the case for everybody, but we, at least and last, know it.

I would propose that we reclaim William James as one who tried to “civilize” our history, but not by neutralizing its passions, by making them accountable relatively to what they participate in, a universe in the making. Accountability is what I tied myself to induce through the prefix cosmo in cosmopolitics. Cosmopolitics is the opposite of the cosmopolitan ideal, when we would be citizens of the world, at home everywhere. Cosmo- alludes to what cannot be appropriated – not a transcendent yardstick measuring the worthy but what demands situated immanence, that we take actively into account the way our truths, including the sceptical ironic truth that here is no truth, situate others. Accountability does not mean peace, only the possibility of peace, while when we take all the places we can only dream of “pacification”, be it in the name of a universal reason or a universal scepticism.

William James gave an example of this situated immanence when he addressed moral philosophers who struggle with moral scepticism, with the claim that all morality responds to the law of the most powerful. He first dissolves any hope to transcend the idea that "the essence of good is simply to

satisfy demand" (WB, 201). But he then transforms the problem. What rises up before the examiner, he writes, is "a tragic situation and no mere speculative conundrum" (WB, 203). What I called accountability is nothing else than the feeling of the tragedy that all demands cannot be satisfied, the resistance to the anaesthesia that follows from the (our) very concern to justify our definition of the good. "If we follow the ideal which is conventionally highest, the others which we butcher either die and do not return to haunt us; or if they come back and accuse us of murder, every one applauds us for turning to them a deaf ear. In other words, our environment encourages us not to be philosophers but partisans." (203)

Let us not be mistaken, this is not a deep but a crafty move, the truth of which is in its effects, what it makes matter. What matters for the one who feels the tragedy is no longer the way to ratify it, to expel the ghost of the vanquished – our environment is up to this task. It is to feel as an event, and to celebrate as such what may happen: that an ideal is formulated in such a way that it demands less victims. What James thus envisages is a link between morality and a large-scale collective experimentation, the making of connections between what was mutually exclusive. Such a link has nothing relativistic about it. One could even say that it requires that ideals do not give way because they lose heart or faith. Sad renunciation is closing the door to the event; it may produce no "gain", no apprenticeship. Instead the truth of the idea of a universe in the making is the refusal to consider any formulation of an ideal, however dominant, as definitive. It is the trust that no last word can ever be said.

What James' craft has made perceptible is what cosmopolitics tried to express. Politics, the ideal of an effective democracy, is part of our tradition, and we should neither consider it innocent nor as guilty. Non-innocence is accepting to think in the presence of what this ideal excludes. But it is not guilt because guilt makes us responsible and demands again and again that we take the whole room, the others being simply "our" victims. What matters instead is that the collective experimentation passes through us, that it opens what Whitehead called interstices in our relations to what matters for us. These interstices are not for us to appropriate, rather to learn how to cultivate. This is why the only Christian tradition he loved was the Quaker one, because their art of making silence is, as is also the witches rituals and maybe the different ways of consulting the invisibles in many traditions, are cultivated ways to honour and participate in the universe in the making.

Ecology of practices

Boaventura de Sousa Santo asks for cognitive justice, and I can but agree if we take “justice” as a matter of concern, as what demands that we abstain using words that directly vectorize the claims of a particular mode of cognition, nature, subject and object, for instance. Such a concern implies that each mode defines what matters for it, that is its own space, its own “practical ontology”, not a world vision but the requisites, consequences, obligations that together characterize it. This concern corresponds to the possibility of what I learned to call “civilized” relations, where no term is admitted that pre-empts the issue of an encounter. However, it also separates “justice” from any idea of an institution with rules defining the possibility of an arbitrage in terms of conflict. If we want to avoid “pacification”, if we think in terms of a “pluriverse” in construction, no peace-making instance can be designed as ensuring “justice”. This is why the reference to “ecology”, to ecological situations of coexistence between heterogeneous beings in multiple relations.

This reference keeps some features of natural ecological situations. First heterogeneity, meaning that the fact that all beings are “alive” is not a relevant point: they must be characterized through their diverging ways of having their milieu, including their relations with others, matter. Divergence here does not mean diverging from because there is no standard: existing is diverging. Second the situation is never to be identified with a system, always a metastable entanglement answering no global functional definition (no equilibrium, no optimal, no warrant about any definitional stability). As a result nothing transcends “fact” and authorizes a judgement.

The events marking evolutionary ecology concern the manners of entanglement. The simplest situation is predatory/prey, and it corresponds to what seem “normal” from the modernist point of view – objective knowledge as defining everything else as its prey – this characterization is the first outcome of the concern for cognitive justice – to mark the disaster of the situation, and also that what is called “objective” needs to prey on what it defines as “subjective”. But what matters is not to criticize, but to underline that, as Deleuze wrote, only divergences communicate, in the sense where communication marks a creation, a novelty, not a redundancy as with is the case with Habermas. The concern for justice is a requisite but a requisite for events, for transversal connections between heterogeneous as such – symbiosis as a pluriverse-making event.

Events cannot be anticipated. However there is an art of the event and I named the corresponding practitioners “diplomats”. There is no diplomacy without an issue, the probability of a conflict, also when parts wager that in spite of probability, a chance may be given to peace, and finally all this presupposes and locally actualize the concern for cognitive justice as peace as possible needs part

to be defined and accept each other as “equal” – or what is negotiated will be only deal with a form of “surrender” whatever the niceties.

It may well be that the practice of ethnologists and other adventurers risking strange, precarious and always transversal connections we will be talking about may be approached from that point of view. I would even propose that we consider them as pioneers in a knowledge producing practice that may well illustrate how it is not by trying to mimic experimental sciences that so-called “human” sciences can join the “experimental” adventure, that is, a very selective adventure where knowledge is always relative to the successful creation of knots that are never “neutral” or “methodological”. We may reclaim “experimental” in this case, because the point is the creation between heterogeneous as such. However, while in experimental laboratory sciences the event is forgotten as it is a posteriori “normalized” by definitions that look like explanations of the knots they build on, it is the adventure of the multiverse in the making that should be celebrated here.

The price is, as I think we all admit, stripping themselves from the strange idea that we can give to so-called humans a definition that would not be a very uncivilized war declaration. I will finish with Whitehead’s very civilized “ancestral” proposition about us calling ourselves humans. In *Adventures of Ideas* (p. 148) he underlines an epoch-making event : Plato in his *Symposium* dialogue defined the human soul as “sensible to the Idea”, to the erotic power of Idea, and as able to entertain it, that is to realize it. And he concludes “It is obvious that he should have written a companion dialogue which he might have named *The Furies*, dwelling on the horror lurking within imperfect realization.”

I would propose those who called themselves “humans” did it so as “captured” by what they called idea, and that even those who since have passionately argued that idea is mere generalization or can be correlated with the normal functioning of the brain still testify to the power of the idea. But they also testify for its imperfect realization. I think it would be a way of conveying to others what is not a fate but a very dangerous adventure. Many civilized traditions know that nothing is more dangerous, even foolishly imprudent, not to honour what make us who we are.