

## TRANSDISCIPLINARITY AND THE FUTURE OF CIVILIZATION

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#### Let me start with two simple questions:

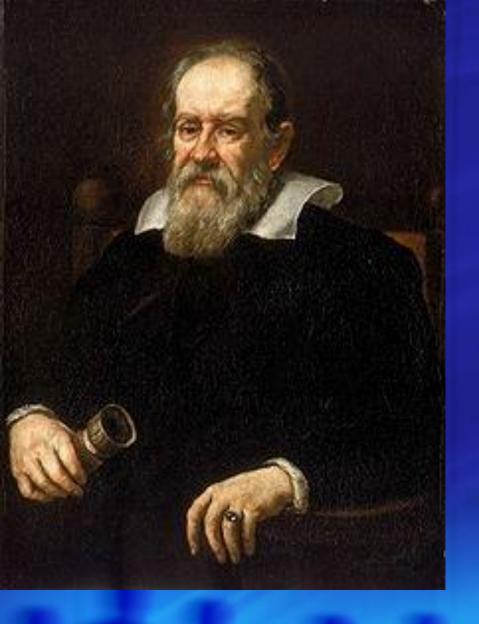
- 1. Can I be happy if inside me there is violence?
- 2. Can I be happy if there is violence in the world around me?

If I look at myself, I discover that the roots of violence are inside me. My thoughts, feelings and instincts are in a perpetuous conflict.

The key in the process of becoming non-violent is to enter in dialogue with everything – around ourselves and inside ourselves.

## Can we really dialogue?

The word "dialogue" appeared in fact at the foundation of modernity, but it refered only to nature.





Galileo Galilei (1564 - 1642)

1632 – Birth date of modernity

Each person has his/her prejudices, his/her convictions, his/her subconscious representations. When two people try to communicate there is inevitably a confrontation: representation against representation, subconscious against subconscious.

As this confrontation is subconscious, it often degenerates into conflict.

Language is the vehicle of these subconscious representations. We use the same words, but their meaning can be radically different. We are manipulated by our own representations. The dialogue is strictly impossible in the absence of a methodology of dialogue. We can only monologue. It is almost impossible to be at the place of the other.

- The same considerations apply in the case of nations, cultures, religions and spiritualities: interest against interest, representation against representation, dogma against dogma, hidden spiritual assumptions against hidden spiritual assumptions.
- This situation is aggravated by the large number of languages (more than 6000), which displays each its own systems of representations and values.
- A completely accurate translation from one language to another is impossible.

This is also aggravated by the contemporary immense means of destruction and the continuing destruction of the environment.

The inevitable conflicts could lead, for the first time in the history of mankind, at the disappearance of the human species.

A new model of civilization is necessary, the keystone is the dialogue between sciences and humanities, human beings, nations, cultures, spiritualities and religions for the survival of humanity.

#### **QUESTIONS:**

- -What is the methodology of dialogue?
- -The suspension, during the dialogue, of our prejudices to arrive at a "fusion of horizons"(Hans- Georg Gadamer (1900-2002)) is it necessary?
- What is the role of the spiritual dimension in this dialogue?

We can answer all these questions by adopting the methodology of transdisciplinarity

WHAT IS TRANSDISCIPLINARITY?



## Unprecedented increase of knowledge

Number of disciplines:

**1300:** 7

**1950: 54** 

**1975: 1845** 

**2020:** > 8000

National Register of Scientific and Technical Personnel, National Science Foundation (NSF) archives, USA, 2000 MULTIDISCIPLINARITY: studying a research topic not in just one discipline but in several at the same time

**INTERDISCIPLINARITY:** transfering of methods from one discipline to another

TRANSDISCIPLINARITY: studying that which is at once between the disciplines, across the different disciplines, and beyond all disciplines

Latin word « trans » = between § across § beyond

Goal: understanding the present world

**UNDERSTANDING = KNOWLEDGE+BEING** 

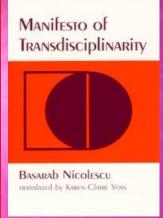
Finality: unity of knowledge

Dignity of the human being

TD → study of the interaction of Object and Subject

→ new knowledge















Manifiesto BASARAB MICOLESCU

O Manifesto da Transdisciplinaridade METHODOLOGY OF TRANSDISCIPLINARITY

3 axioms

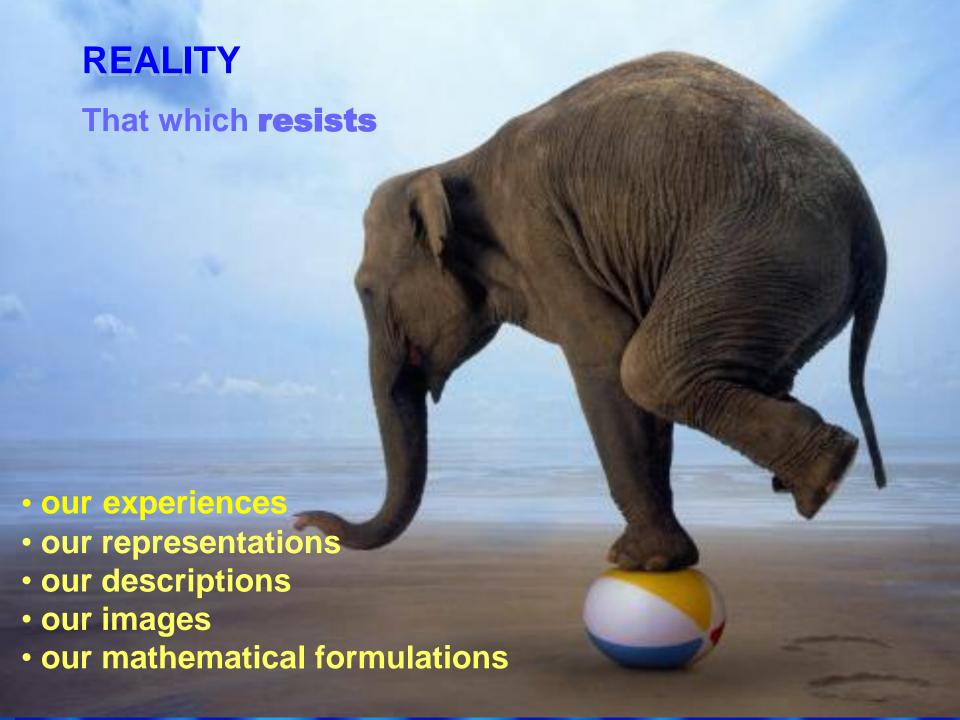
- 1. The ontological axiom
  - 2. The logical axiom
- 3. The epistemological axiom

Rigourous definition of TD



# THE ONTOLOGICAL AXIOM OF TRANSDISCIPLINARITY

There are different
levels of Reality of the Object
and, correspondingly, different
levels of Reality of the Subject

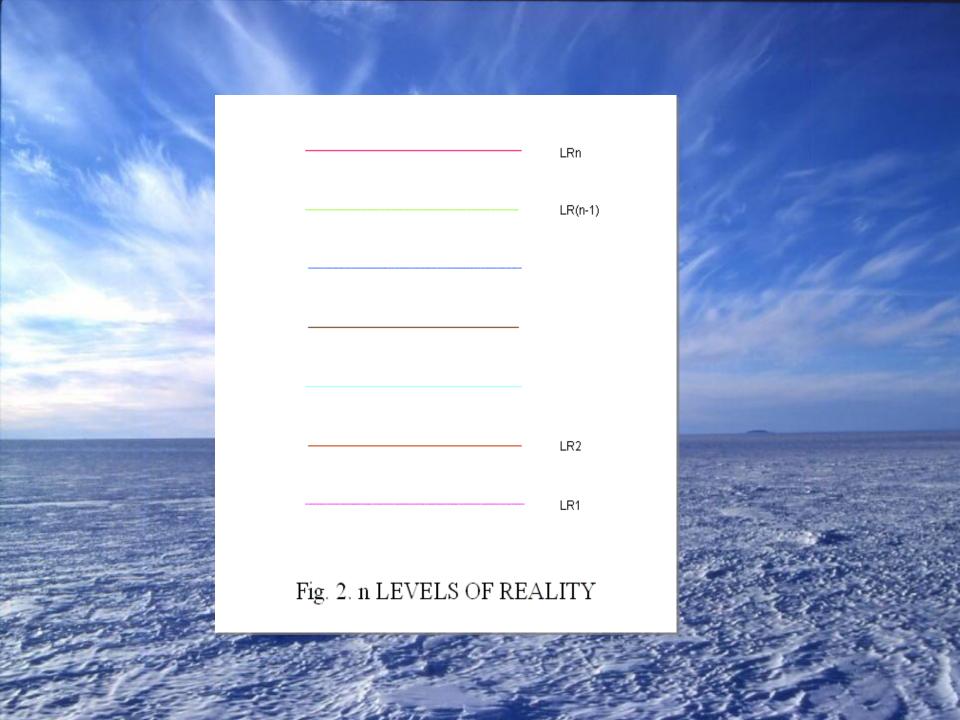


# REALITY that which resists - accessible to our knowledge + trans-subjective dimension



REAL that which is - veiled for ever





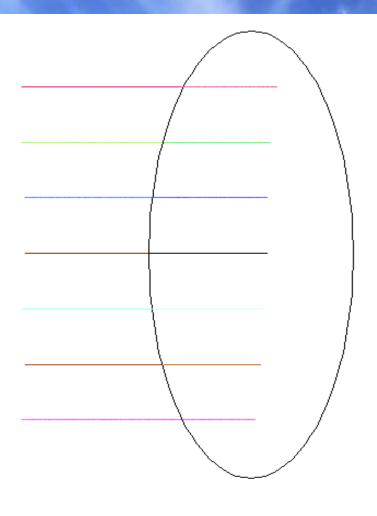


Fig. 3. OBJECT

Levels of Reality of the Object + Zone of non-resistance

Restores the continuity between levels

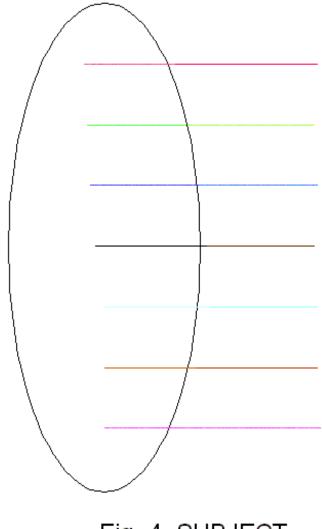
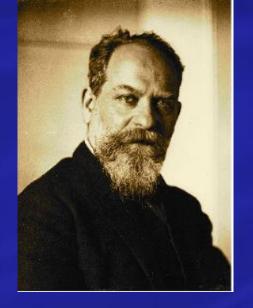


Fig. 4. SUBJECT



**Edmund Husserl (1859 - 1938)** 

Levels of Reality
of the Subject +
Zone of non-resistance

#### **TRANSREALITY**

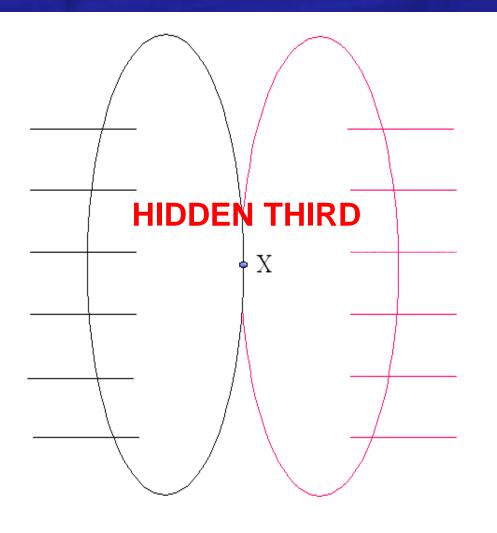


Fig. 5. TD REALITY

Knowledge is nether exterior nor interior

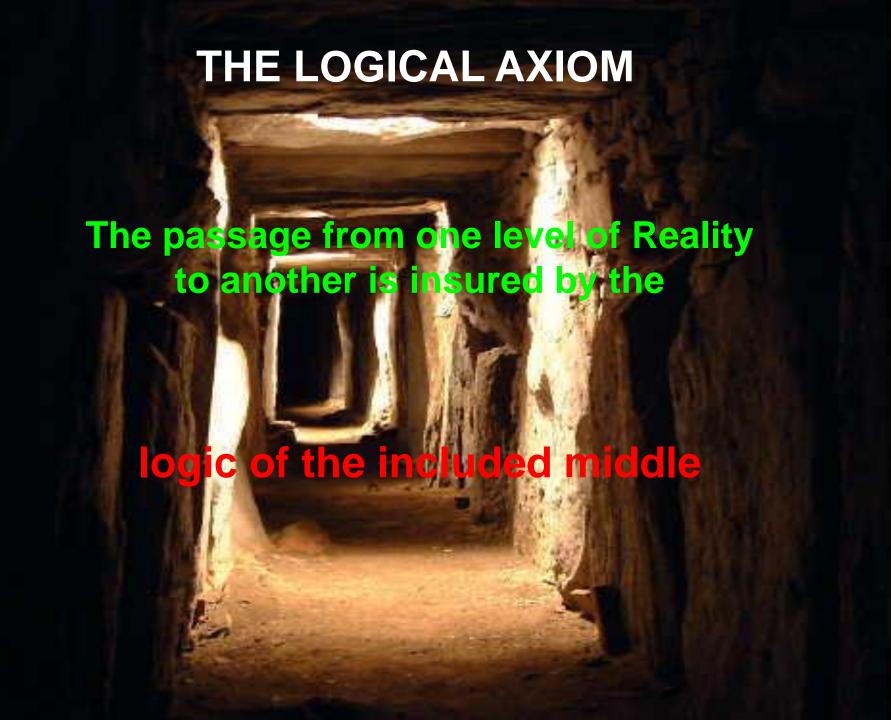
#### **Examples**

#### Natural systems:

- quantum level
- macrophysical (classical) level
- cyber-space-time level
- superstring level

#### Social systems:

- individual level
- geographical and
- historical community le
  - (family, nation)
- cyber-space-time community level
- planetary level
- cosmic level



### Stéphane Lupasco (1900 – 1988)

- axiomatic formalisation of the logic of antagonism
- axiom of the included middle
  - there is a third term T
    which is at the same time A
    and non-A

#### Included middle

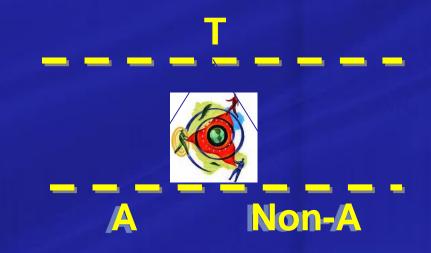
There exists a third term

Т

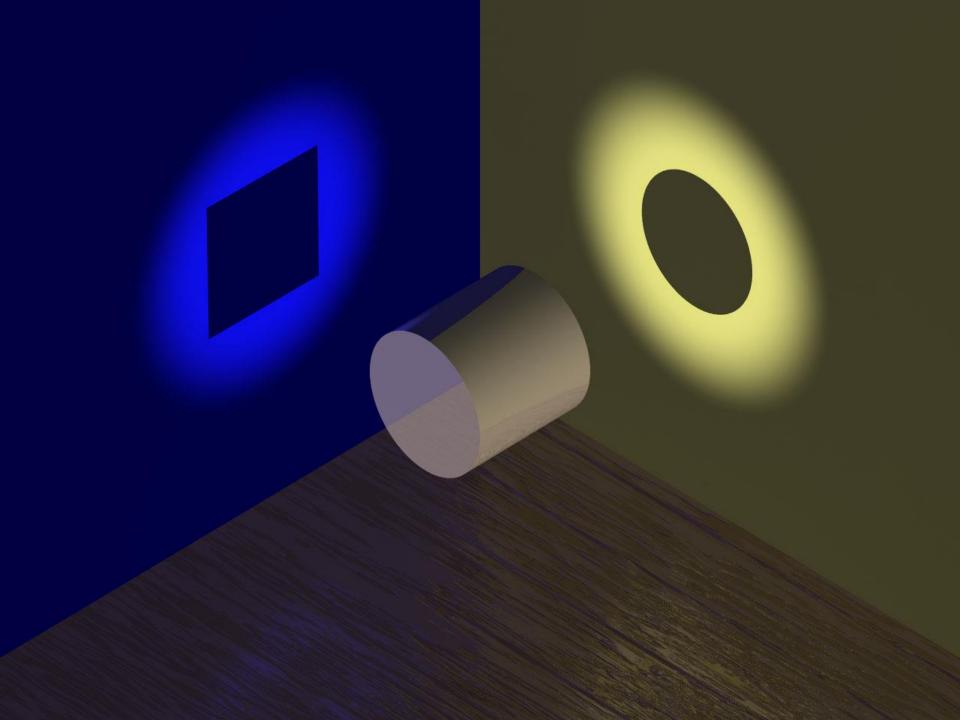
which is at the same time

A

Non-A



Symbolic representation of the action of included middle logic



# THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL AXIOM (COMPLEXITY)

The structure of the totality of levels of reality and perception is a complex structure:

Every level is what it is because all the levels exist at the same time

#### **TRANSREALITY**

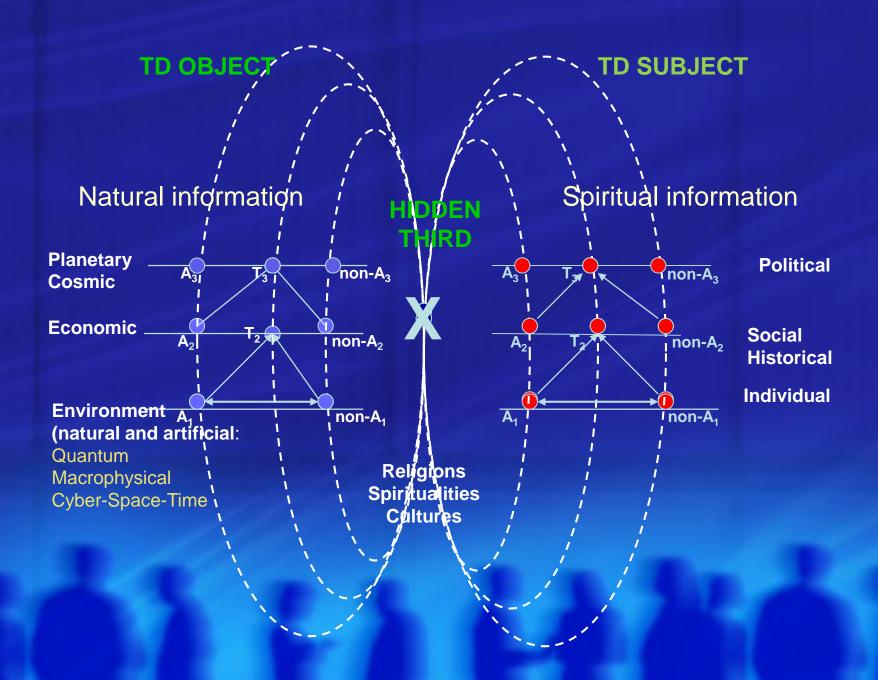
- Levels of Reality of the Object
- Levels of Reality of the Subject
- The Hidden Third
- organization
- structuring
- integration
- confusion
- language
- representation/ interpretation
  - ignorance
  - intelligence
  - contemplation

- objectivity
- subjectivity
- complexity
- knowledge
- understanding
- being

- Levels of Contextualization
- materiality
- spirituality
- non-duality



#### **TRANSREALITY**



In the transdisciplinary approach, the Hidden Third appears as the source of knowledge but, in its turn, needs the Subject in order to know the world: the Subject, the Object and the Hidden Third are interrelated.

The human being appears as an interface between the Hidden Third and the world.

The eradication of the Hidden Third in knowledge leads to a one-dimensional human entity, reduced to their cells, neurons, quarks, elementary particles, and electronic chips.

The Hidden Third between the Subject and the Object denies any reasoning. Therefore, Reality is also *trans-rational*.

The role of the Hidden Third is to establish the link between Reality and Real.

The Hidden Third cannot be known because it is the very source of knowledge.

Catalyst of movement, it possesses an infinite number of faces.

The Hidden Third is the guardian of our irreducible mystery and the only foundation of human dignity.

Without this Hidden Third, all is nothing but ashes.

Important remark: the presence of the Hidden Third in transdisciplinarity shows that the methodology of transdisciplinarity is not limited to the dialogue of the academic disciplines.

THE METHODOLOGY OF TRANSDISCIPLINARITY IS AN UNIVERSAL METHODOLOGY: it applies to any situation but, of course, has to be contextualized.

# What is the situation today?

We are confronted with the desire of eradication of the Hidden Third - the New Barbarism

### THE NEW BARBARISM

- Panterrorism
- Anthropocene
- Biodiversity and the destruction of life
- -Transhumanism



# ANTHROPOCENE

There is a danger today, for the first time in the history of mankind, concerning the extinction of the entire human species. Human beings can change the composition of the atmosphere of the earth to a point of destroying their own civilisation and also the human species.

The anthropocene without spiritual dimension will lead us to the brink of the abyss.

# BIODIVERSITY AND THE DESTRUCTION OF LIFE

Scientific UN report (IBPES) in May 2019 of 1800 pages written by 455 scientists

Huge dangers, as a result of human activities:

- -1 million of animal and plant species go towards extinction
- 25 % of mammals,41% of amphibia, 19 % of reptilians, 13 % of birds, 7 % of fishes, 16-63% of plants Every of these species has a role in the equilibrium of life on earth.

If we destroy this equilibrium, we destroy life on earth.

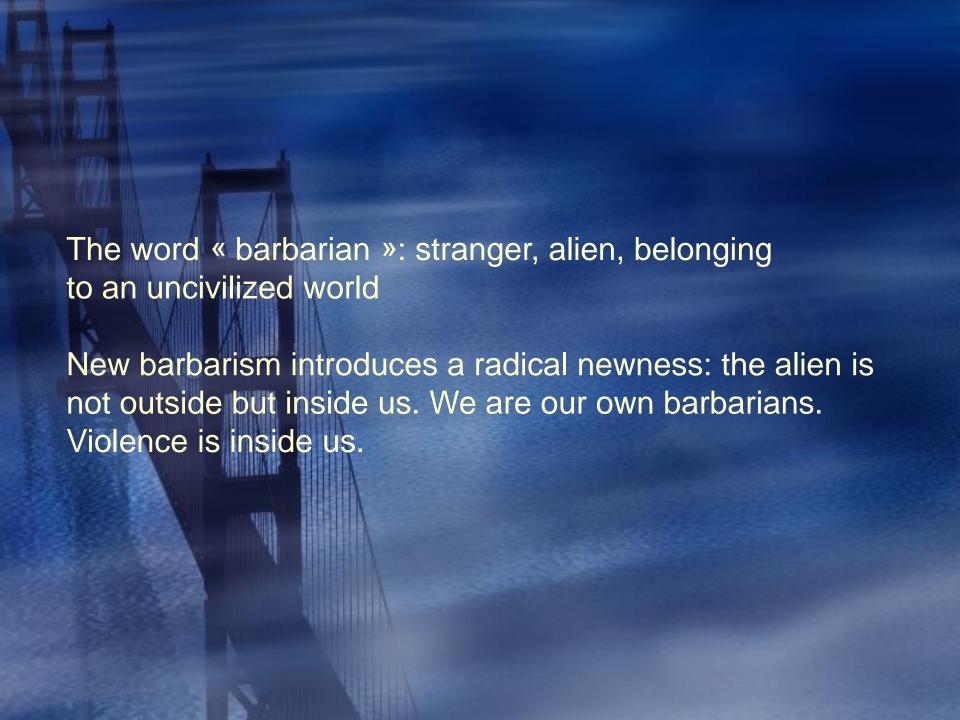
## **TRANSHUMANISM**

Human beings will become increasingly more as a machine and the machine will become increasingly more human

Natural selection is considered to be outdated and it is replaced by technological selection: future society will be divided between transhumans and old humans – antidemocratic society

The transhumans, which certain philosophers and ideologues call by oratory precaution, "improved humans", will constitute a new biotechnological species and the future society will be divided between "transhumans" and "ancient humans". The ancient humans will inevitably be the servants of the transhumans.

Religion itself will be completely different if the vision of *homo deus* is required: it will be a god of algorithms, unknown and inaccessible, but without any transcendence.



### Triple barbarism:

- 1. Ontological barbarism: the desire to reduce everything to a single level of Reality
- 2. Logic barbarism: refusal of any other logic than that of the excluded third
- 3. Epistemological barbarism: refusal of complexity



# The ethical imperative of transdisciplinary civilization: togetherness

Only through transdisciplinary dialogue can we face the challenges of the contemporary world

- -Dialogue between human beings
- Dialogue between human beings and non-human forms of life (animals, plants, etc.)
- Dialogue between human beings and the cosmos
- Dialogue between human being and the divine
- Dialogue between cultures, religions, spiritualities

# Big question: WHAT COULD BE REALLY SUSTAINABLE?

- Environment? Economy? Society?
   Education? Politics? Religion? Spirituality?
   Future? Nation? World order? ⇒ No one in itself. All of them are inter-related.
- Transdisciplinarity (TD) is therefore a necessary approach.
- TD ⇒ The only known sustainable system is the cosmic system, in all its dimensions, from the quantum particle till the most distant galaxy.
- EVERY LEVEL OF REALITY SUSTAINS EVERY OTHER LEVEL OF REALITY



### THE ROOTS OF VIOLENCE

#### THE KEY POINT OF TDSS:

As I already said in the beginning of my talk, the roots of violence are inside the human being. Our thoughts, feelings and instincts are in perpetuals conflicts. The confusion between the levels of Reality of thoughts, feelings and instincts generates violence inside ourselves.

Only if we can harmonize our thoughts, our feelings and our instincts we can discover a new intelligence which erases the violence in ourselves. And only when we become non-violent in ourselves, by accessing to a new level of consciousness, we can act to erase the violence in the world.

In other worlds, the key-point is the access at a new level of Consciouness, individual and collective. This obviously requires a new civilization, which does not suppose a revolution but a gradual transition from our own civilization.

This new level of consciousness involves a global education for TDSS, which must be a noble aim of UNESCO and of all countries.

TDSS revolves around the problem of violence. Violence made to the human being by acting on his nature and made to the earth, everywhere today, by the modification of the cosmic conditions of existence of our planet. Violence is everywhere: poor countries against rich countries, religious and ethnical wars, terrorism, urban violence.

TDSS is incompatible with violence. Violence eradicates the Hidden Third.

We therefore are able to formulate a Strong Sustainability of Peace (SSP).

TDSS offers an overall methodology for SSP in the world.

The most extraordinary proof of the violence is the fact that there are currently a number of nuclear weapons (more than 25,000 nuclear warheads, divided among nine countries). A small fraction of them could eliminate life on earth. The man invented the balance of terror. an agreement between all those who have the nuclear weapon not to use it, because that will lead to the disappearance of the adversaries. In English the title of the agreement is "MAD" (Mutual Assured Destruction), which, by a funny coincidence means "crazy" in English. Who could prevent a dictator from triggering the nuclear apocalypse?

SSP requires the destruction of all nuclear weapons.

### What we learn from the Coronavirus pandemy?

Everything happens as if a "STOP! had been given on a planetary level. Of course, it was not this too simple and unconscious entity of the infinitely small, the coronavirus, which gave this order. This order seems to emanate from the cosmic movement itself disturbed by the mad dream of the human being to dominate and manipulate Nature.

Everything stopped suddenly for half the countries of the world.

This immobility did not fail to reveal to us all the flaws of globalization centered on profit and money. But which of the world's politicians and leaders will be the ones to see?

We are plunged into the blindness of the darkness of our habits of thought and the ideologies of progress, totally out of step with reality. How do you open your eyes to what's going on?

In my opinion, the only solution is the spiritual evolution of the whole of humanity.

It alone could take into account all the levels of Reality and the Hidden Third.

It also happens as if a "STOP! had been given on an individual basis. An extraordinary opportunity for awakeing. We are suddenly in front of ourselves, before the mystery of our being, thus giving the exceptional opportunity of a spiritual evolution for each of us. This spiritual evolution of each human being conditions that of humanity.

We thus discover that the spiritual underdevelopment of the human being and humanity is the real cause of the crisis that we are going through and that we are going to go through.

But what spirituality is it? It is a radically new, transreligious and transcultural spirituality. Transdisciplinarity offers the tools for the establishment of such a spirituality, based on the community of destiny of all beings on earth.

We must make, with great humility, a new pact of partnership with Nature and with all beings on earth - humans, animals, birds, trees, plants. We must stop defying Nature with our excessive pride and our desire for omnipotence. All war should be declared a crime against humanity and all means of destruction should be destroyed.

All this can be understood as a utopia which goes against the principle of reality.

But a realistic solution exists. *Man must be born again if he wants to live*.

Our task is immense. Let's try not to be hypnotized by the multitude of doomsayers and apocalyptic thinkers of all kinds who predict the fall and the demise of our world. The word "Apocalypse" does not mean "end" or "destruction", but "Revelation".

Transdisciplinarity - hope for a new era - cosmodernity – founded on TDSS by the fruitful contemporary interaction between science, culture, spirituality, religion, and society.

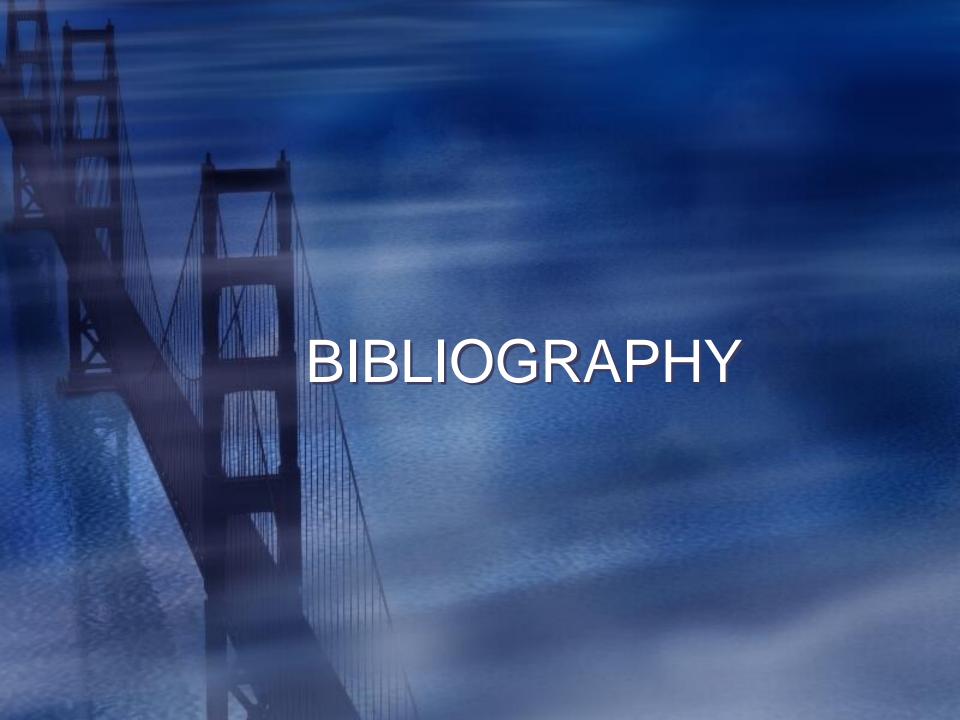
A new spirituality, free of dogmas, compatible with all existing spiritualities, is already potentially present on our planet. This would give full meaning to the already existing notion of sustainable spirituality.

The old idea of cosmos, in which we are active participants, is resurrected.

Everything is interconnected.

All levels of Reality are interwoven.





Basarab Nicolescu, Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity, SUNY Press, 2002, translated from the French by Karen-Claire Voss.

