Para Madeleine

Quem éramos nós? Errantes, transeuntes do espírito.

Madeleine Bastide experimentou o domínio da ação homeopática das altas diluições, acumulado um imenso saber, e ainda mais intuições, e numerosas experimentações – interpretáveis na moldura mecanicista do pensamento classico – que loteavam seus armários.

Eu vinha me arrastando, em minha formação, numa filosofia não menos clássica, incômoda no pensamento analítico e na lógica tão aristotélica de nossa cultura européia, como se estivesse vestindo um casaco rígido demais, lento demais, e buscava, através da lógica, da matemática, da estética, da psicanálise, por vias mais diretas que me dessem, finalmente, a impressão de falar da realidade viva, do espírito em movimento, do corpo em ação. Encontrei a homeopatia e foi como que “reconheci” um modo operativo que eu podia praticar intuitivamente, sem, por isso, torná-lo consciente... Tarefa sobre a qual eu continuou sem interrupções durante os 20 anos seguintes.

Era, também, um temível exercício de interdisciplinaridade; cada uma devia aceitar se despojar de seu saber e suas palavras quando a outra “retraduzia” na língua de sua disciplina o que a outra havia trazido; cada uma devia, ao mesmo tempo, confiar totalmente na outra e verificar toda ideia nova em sua coerência biológica ou filosófica. E, certamente, não mais sabíamos quem havia sido a primeira a falar disto ou daquilo, não havia mais ego.

Nosso tandem às vezes seduzia, muito frequentemente exasperava, sempre perturbou. Não tínhamos medo dos riscos, nem a menor intenção de achar qualquer limite em um ou outro conformismo intelectual, nem necessidade de glória, mas, sim, necessidade dos amigos que havíamos achado e que nos haviam ajudado. Antes de desaparecer, Madeleine disse: “Trabalhamos bem”. Eu acrescentaria:...
M adeleine shook me, dragged me through all the congresses in the world, even when I was ill, translated into English, stimulated, open, she transmitted to me the life that emanated from her at all levels. I would often feel like that poor Diogenes, crossing Athens in the daylight, lantern turned on in his hands “Who has questions? Perhaps I have answers...” She did to me what no one ever did nor will do: she needed what was in my mind. She would rummage in my brain as a handyman who rummages in his reserves, in order to find the exact screw he needs. She provoked the answer through her question. My extravagant ideas would get a meaning, a real shape.

We build knowledge: fragile, unfinished, debatable, but alive at functional.

Our epistemological position never was to explain the workings of homeopathy. Our work was to build an interpretative theory which does not pretend to answer to the question “what is?”, but only to supply thinking frameworks within which the “how this happens” may be understood and worked upon. I must say that I am totally indifferent to such intrinsic limitation, as I do not believe that good science has ever done something different. By understanding that a same reality may be described in many different paradigmatic ensembles, we become necessarily constructivists... This renders us modest, thus, it is good to the spirit.

While we rejected the application on the living beings of the notions built for things, we built our own concepts to frame a more trustworthy image of life: living beings are not defined in themselves by their substance, but by their exchanges; they can only be understood as totals, inasmuch as the set of phenomena of external and internal exchange is more determinant to them than their purely physico-chemical composition which, by the way, results from them; thus, the process determinant of their physical and chemical behaviour are rather information processes; in the universe of this information, the distinction between identity and similarity is essential, at the same time closely connected and exogenous; it only exists as it is constituted by the ability of the reader to receive, it is not something in itself; the living beings do not live in the regular and reversible time of mechanisms, but in an irreversible time, from which no event, no “history” can be subtracted.

From this conceptual corpus, here shortly summarized, rules of application emerged, a consistent image of which was painted by Madeleine Bastide in her last lecture; I would feel ill at ease if talking about this, as it is not anymore the core of my field, but it seems to me, for instance, that the distinction among levels of informative action (mitridatization, hormesis, isotherapy, application of the principle of similarity) ought to be systematically applied into the interpretation of experimental results if we aspire to understand anything at all.

Finally, this work has prolongations and bets. The essential philosophical bet is of ethical and political nature; we may only understand something regarding the living beings if we respect their conditions; it is useless to experiment on dead bodies; this becomes, moreover, a scientific rule: experimentation may only inform if it is built open the reversible time, from which no event, no “history” can be subtracted. It is useless to experiment on dead bodies; this becomes, moreover, a scientific rule: experimentation may only inform if it is built open the reversible time, from which no event, no “history” can be subtracted.