

LAUDATIO*

of Basarab Nicolescu

Ceremony of Doctor Honoris Causa

University of Veracruz, October 31st 2011

Honorable members of the Presidium,

Colleagues, our fellow University of Veracruz,

Dear Friends

I am speaking on behalf of all my companions of the “Eco-center dialogue” to introduce our friend and master, Mr. Basarab Nicolescu. I must say that it is a great honor to have been distinguished by this task, which represents a great challenge for me. To portray a character so rich and complex is not easy.

Basarab Nicolescu is a man of science, being an indefatigable, deep and rigorous. A poet scientist, a dreamer, a humanist. A sewer of hope.

He was born in 1942 in Ploiesti, a town near the Romanian capital in Eastern Europe.

Romania is a place of borders and connections, meeting of cultures, where persist to this day much ancestral traditions.

This is where Basarab Nicolescu has lived his youth and began the journey that would lead him to develop his proposal for unification of knowledge to awaken a new awareness of humanity.

* Translated by SueMcGregor.

He studied at the Faculty of Physics at the University of Bucharest, where he presented his memoir in 1965 about the field theory and the interaction of elementary particles.

Its intention to create a dialogue between science and the humanities was present in his youth. In 1968, he realized a study of the literary work of Ion Barbu, Romanian mathematician and poet, during which he explores the link between science and poetry, and discovers the lyrical potential of mathematical concepts. Already, this work clearly foreshadows his proposal of transdisciplinarity.

26 years old, he gets a French government scholarship to study at the University of Paris VI, where he will continue his research on subatomic particles and quantum physics and obtains the doctoral degree in physics in 1972.

Since that time, he worked as a theoretical physicist at the Institute of Nuclear Physics of the National Centre for Scientific Research in Paris and has been a researcher at the Laboratory of High Energy and Nuclear Physics of the University of Paris VI.

In 1976, he worked as a visiting scientist at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory in California, where he developed the concept of levels of reality. He worked with the founder of the theory of bootstrap, Geoffrey Chew.

The problem of unification of the theory of relativity and quantum physics lead him to the concept in the center of transdisciplinarity: the notion of reality and levels of reality. "The word - actually says Basarab in one of his last books - is one of the prostitutes in all languages of the world. We all believe what is reality but if we ask, we will discover that there are as many meanings of the word that people on earth. Therefore it is hardly surprising that conflicts in his name constantly agitate individuals and peoples: reality against reality. It's a miracle, he says, that under these conditions the human race still exists. " (2009: 9) In 1985 he published the book *We, the particle and the world*, including the central concept is precisely that of " levels of reality, " one of the three pillars of transdisciplinary perspective. That is why this text is considered the birth of transdisciplinarity.

We, the Particle and the World received the Silver Medal Award of the French Academy in 1986. In this research, Basarab Nicolescu analyze the quantum revolution and its impact on the most important spheres of knowledge: science, arts and religions and it is likely to cross disciplinary boundaries to penetrate in the hidden wealth that lies between, through and

beyond the specializations. He presents us transdisciplinarity as a way to reach valid and rigorous understanding of our world today and realize the unity of human knowledge, challenge formulated by Niels Bohr in 1961.

In 1987, Basarab Nicolescu founded the International Center for Transdisciplinary Research and Studies, which currently brings together 165 researchers from 26 countries. In 1991 he founded with René Berger the group on transdisciplinarity of Unesco, made up of 16 personalities from the scientific intellectual. This group is responsible for a series of meetings and international equity among which distinguishes the First World Congress Of Transdisciplinarity (Convento de Arrábida, Portugal, 1994), where he elaborated the *Charter of Transdisciplinarity* in collaboration with Edgar Morin and Lima de Freitas.

In his book *Science, Meaning and Evolution - Essay on the Jacob Boehme*, published in 1988 and received the Benjamin Franklin award for the best history book in the United States, we Basarab Nicolescu calls for dialogue between science and the modern philosophical tradition, as a strategy to induce changes in the human mind, so necessary today.

This text analyzes how modern science has been born in the West and outline the beginnings of a new Philosophy of Nature.

In 1994 he published his *Poetic Theorems*, axiomatic accounts of his own experience. Taken together, these lyric theorems are "The point of convergence between quantum physics, Philosophy of Nature and the inner experience", according to Basarab himself.

"The Living Word: lightning instantly through all levels of reality."

The text as a whole, consisting of hundreds of theorems of this type, addresses each of the break points of his braking points of his notion of reality: levels of reality, the emergence of a rationality that incorporates living rationality and irrationality, the marriage between science and religion, and it reflects the astonishing similarity between quantum language and poetic language.

In each of his theorems poetic metaphor condenses the complexity of the signified implicit in the experience of perception of the subject, which reveals, in a literary language, the experience through the senses. In this way, multiple levels of reality and the sacred dimension of the Hidden Third is revealed, and with them, the living knowledge of that which writes

them. We can just feel in this text the resurrection of the Subject, necessary and urgent for the emergence of an effective and relevant knowledge for our times.

In 1996 appeared the *Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity*, which synthesizes, summarizes and orders the basic principles and concepts, central and the overall intent of his proposal. In this book, Basarab offers an alternative to the scatological postmodern proclamation of the death of history, death of the human being and death of God.

Basarab invites us to find hope by facing with full conviction and full commitment, the challenges we face in the front of the current crisis. About the tendency to paralysis and frustration, Basarab bet instead on the discovery of the wonders of the complexity of our reality. Thus, in the *Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity*, the only one of his texts have recently been translated into Spanish, he shows us the paradox underlying the current global crisis: on one side the obvious tendency to material, biological and spiritual self-destruction of the human being, on the other hand, the possibility of going beyond the self-destructive tendency, and learn tolerance and wisdom within human societies.

Only by awakening and evolving our conscience that we can overcome, as human beings, to an including world: this is the main message of transdisciplinarity.

In his recent book *What is Reality?*, published in 2009, Basarab invites us to go beyond conventional science and ideology of modernity, by conducting a thorough review of the notion of reality and philosophy of the included middle of Stéphane Lupasco. It enjoins us to overcome the belief that we live in a mechanical, deterministic and rationalist, and he makes a critique of technoscience.

By stating at the same time the validity of something of its opposite, Basarab Nicolescu confronts us with the ability to imagine and create a world *in between*, and in this way provides us with the scientific and philosophical tools necessary to face the great challenges of our century.

Thus we see how, through his considerable work and his tireless action in promoting the dialogue between science, art and spiritual traditions, Basarab engages us into a deep process of knowledge of ourselves, as a necessary condition to transform our world and progress in the evolutionary chain as human beings.

Need we say more of this great human being, that we have today with great excitement in our house? It is a privilege that you are here. Thank you very much.

Cristina Núñez