# Interdisciplinarity on land and sea, philosophic fantasy

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It is difficult to talk about science without the help of metaphors, science is silent, while the disciplines are loquacious. Interdiscipline is a contingent mixture of silences and words, and understanding its regimes cannot be done by direct means. There is always at stake our knowledge, our non-knowledge, as well as our individual and collective relationships to them.

The indirect means I choose today are the contrast between the metaphors of science as ocean or science as continent.

The emergence of a science is often described by philosophers as the formation of a new continent,

*But*

"The whole body of the sciences can be considered as the ocean" (Leibniz, *From the horizon of human doctrine* - a text reported by Couturat, 1903, p. 530).

By practicing interdisciplinarity, we are indeed on several continents, but are we also on the ocean?

## Dry and wet

There is a "dry" interdisciplinarity, the strategist converges fragments of science on a virtual continent, perhaps a new discipline. The guiding question will be that of a supposedly common language.

There is a "wet" interdisciplinarity, richer, probably close to the earth, but wetted by the waters of a wider science, whose melody forms a set of small perceptions that isolated disciplines do not perceive. Its problem will be that of the identity of interdisciplinary regimes.

The goal for the strategist will then be to create a space where partially solid, partially liquid objects with their continuities and cuts, peaks and troughs will find their way of interpreting these small perceptions created by the waves of sciences, but without ever being able to fully synthesize it - which makes interdiscipline a foundation for disciplines.

## The strategist and the philosopher

On Earth, the strategist must be a land surveyor attentive to the whole territory, doing the impossible to think together and side by side the local and the global. On the ocean, the strategist must also be a sailor, building his boat while sailing. Being both a surveyor and a sailor is also to be a philosopher, one says of the latter that he falls on the Earth when he looks at the stars but is guided by them when he moves on the ocean of metaphysics. And yet, in metaphysics, there is no line of sight to guide oneself. The philosopher falls or loses himself.

What strategy is needed to avoid these risks? Do not fall? Do not get lost? Imagine an interdisciplinary "without" philosophy. I propose to build an interdiscipline of the future. It is not yet known, of course. On the other hand, we can know the ruptures that it can cause in our good old interdisciplinarity, because the future is not only a time, but a mode of apprehension. The future will allow us to put away and give meaning to all these metaphors.

## The importance of metaphors as rain between land and ocean

Indeed, it is not a question of removing them. All these metaphors are given to us by philosophers, who have laid this landscape in our culture and agriculture of thought. And yet there is always an oversight, the contingency of the separation of the waters and the earth. A 17th century philosopher expresses it in the form of rain: How is it that the rain falls on the oceans, where it is not so necessary?

Our morality, since we have related a fable, is that the strategist of interdiscipline must never forget that he is both on earth and on the waters, and that he can act only if he knows it is impossible. He needs a faith of interdiscipline which obliges him to take account of the contingency, the orientation of the rain between the land and the sea, which the ancients called the *clinamen*.

This clinamen is not a decline, but the declination and conjugation of new sciences, on an interdisciplinary knowledge ground.

*Thanks to Leibniz, Malebranche, Kant, Neurath, the ancient philosophers and the contemporary philosophers who gave a new value to metaphor and verticality.*