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He enjoyed the silence like no other. After telling story after story, he liked to spend a long time in silence, smoking his pipe, as if he could relive, dreaming, every instants of life. In those moments, when he was *in another world*, sometimes he went back to reality with a very serious look and said only:

- Well, my friend. This is the life...

Alone or not, I was almost all the time studying in his apartment at Laranjeiras.

But one day we went out for a very special lunch. It was a meeting with a large and lively group of students of music, his students.

We went to a restaurant by the sea, I think it was in Copacabana, at Atlantica Avenue.

When we reached the front of the sea, he stopped meditating for a moment and said:

- Yes... my friend... life is like the waves of the sea... everything appears and disappears quickly.

My father always said the same thing. Since I was a child, my father always repeated: «Life is like the sea waves... they repeat, all the times, but they are always different. We are just that, like the foam of the sea, everything is

ephemeral».

Many years later, the conductor José Antônio Pereira would remind me about this poetic vision of Koellreutter: «He said that we were like the waves at sea. We could see when they were formed and quickly disappeared».

As always, the rule at the lunch was: each one paid his own bill. All very casual and colorful. We were about thirty people and the students were around twenty years old, slightly younger than me.

Koellreutter was the only older, then nearly seventy years old.

He sat at the end of the long table. I was at his left side. It was twelve thirty when we ordered the meals. Half hour after later the meals had not arrived. The minutes passed slowly and, despite repeated requests, at one thirty nothing

had yet been served beyond a few drinks.

The service, which was terribly bad, was compensated by our alive conversation, which made us to lose track of time.

But, when it was a quarter to three, nothing had been served yet and the service was virtually nonexistent.

Quietly, the Koellreutter asked what I thought we should do. I was very sincere and said that I thought the best would be to go, all at once. He agreed. We agreed to wait another ten minutes, precisely. We adjusted all our watches. Most students thought it was a joke.

Except for Koellreutter, a few more and me, no one seriously thought of leaving without paying.

Exactly ten minutes later, without having been served,

or even attended, everyone suddenly got up and walked quickly to the street.

Koellreutter and I went forward in very fast steps. As soon as we turned the first corner, the manager of the restaurant came running, desperate.

The man wanted we back. He was threatening. Quietly, Koellreutter suggested to call the police. When he heard the word *police*, the manager was immediately calm and suggested a solution. We agreed to pay only for the consumed drinks and we left.

The students were delighted with the energy, spirit and forthright of Koellreutter's decision. At that moment, we all had the same age.

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I returned to the apartment at Laranjeiras and continued studying.

After dinner, we always watched the news on television – I think they were almost the only moments I saw him watching television. To each news about war, violence, theft or crime – and it was practically only this what the news showed – he gave a little jump, a small smile of incomprehension, as if he was talking to himself, said: «stupid!».

For him, in a certain sense, it was incomprehensible that a so beautiful world, with a so exuberant nature, so generous, with music, art and science could be so dramatically designed by human conflicts. It really was a stupidity.

We almost did not talk in those moments. After the television news, he loved to watch a very cheap televisions series.

- This is the fair portrait of the country. It is like a letter, it cannot deceive. If you really want to know what Brazil is, pay attention to this cheap television

series.

After that, the television was off and we read each one his book. He was always very kind and attentively asked if I would like to watch something special, even knowing that I preferred to read. He insisted always saying that I could do whatever I wanted in his home – that it was my home.

About ten o'clock at night he retired to sleep. I kept reading – because it would not be polite to go to the guest room at the same time. There was only one bathroom in the apartment, and I did not want to risk the trouble of using it at the time the Koellreutter wished to.

So, I expect to be sure that he had finally retired to his room. Only when he closed the door, I headed to the guest room.

And I tried to do everything very silently.

Koellreutter woke up at seven o'clock in the morning. Around six thirty I was awake. I remained in bed, quiet, waiting for him to get up, go to the bathroom and retire to the living room.

When he walked to the living room, only then I got up quickly and quietly, arranged everything in the room, followed on tiptoe to the bathroom, took a shower and then arranged everything, very carefully.

When we met in the living room, it was virtually impossible for anyone to realize that I had slept there or even used the bathroom. I left everything exactly as I had found.

It was a formal ritual, every day.

On the last day, when we were leaving to Petropolis, at breakfast, he turned to me and said:

- Emanuel, you are the most Japanese western I have ever met in my entire life!

The trip to Petrópolis was calm.

When we arrived, I was completely amazed with the place. It was a very beautiful house, in a sense similar to a Japanese one, placed in the midst of a stunning rain forest with towering ancient trees, incredibly beautiful trunks and a little lake.

It was such a beauty that I did not know what to say when we arrived. The entrance was a small and almost hidden road on land.

At times that place looked like a magical scenario, those which enchanted Albert Eckhout, Johann Moritz Rugendas or Jean Baptiste Debret.

Johann Moritz Rugendas
19th century



The height and majesty of the trees resembled old engravings on the Brazilian forests.

The owner of the property was a Frenchman. An arrogant, aggressive and closed person. He rented the place for millionaires or, especially at a better price for Koellreutter – because, in some sense, his presence made the history of the place and helped to enhance the property. For him everything seemed to be openly based on some personal interest.

The rent that wonderful place was equally shared by all students, so that it was not even too expensive.

But the Frenchman had a terribly difficult temperament. He treated everyone, and we were not exception, as ignorant, uncivilized.

He seemed to be less hysterical only when, for his surprise, I began speaking in French with him. It was as if speaking French was a passport to civilization!

We, the students, slept in a small house, hundreds of feet below, near the entrance gate. It was a very simple construction, with several rooms. It should be an old cottage for the staff.

Koellreutter had a very nice cottage near the lake. It was a small house that looked like something taken from a tale by the brothers Grimm.

Every day we should be punctually at seven o'clock in the morning for the breakfast, which was served in a small room next to the kitchen, in the big house.

The days were spent in private and intensive lessons with Koellreutter, especially analyzing in detail the *Symphony No. 8 in B minor, D 759*, by Franz Schubert and the *Piano Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Opus 15*, by Beethoven – two key works to better understand the works of those fabulous composers.

We also profoundly analyzed works by Palestrina and some pieces by Guillaume de Machault.

Everything was worked up to the last detail, bar after bar, sets of bars, sections of movement, movements, internal relations and relations between pieces, as well as countless other factors.

It was a deep dive in that magical universe.

When everything ended, at six or seven in the afternoon, often there still was much work to do, we went to our rooms, waiting for dinner, with the sun dying for a new day.

The pace was passionately frantic.

In the woods surrounding the beautiful house, old

centenary trees had tens of feet in height, fabulous trunks, animals, birds, vines and music could be heard through a great sound system camouflaged in the middle of the vegetation.

The Frenchman never more appeared. After the first day, we never saw him again. He was a man who had lost the love for life. He had become bitter, angry, without hope, without dreams, without passion.

In one of those days, in a moment of pause, a sonata for violin and piano in A major by César Franck could be heard in the middle of the woods. I wandered lonely by small paths between the giant trees and the small and sinuous lake – which reminded the lake at Claude Monet’s garden in Gyverny, in France, as if it was almost a replica of it – and unexpectedly I met Koellreutter.

He also walked alone, without any purpose, meditating, with his hands behind him.

The music of César Franck and the small lake with swans, was seemingly so far from the tropical reality of Brazil that, in a joking way, without thinking, I said him that all that seemed me a bit kitsch.

Koellreutter turned and looked into my eyes, with deep seriousness:

- Music has no horizons, no frontiers, neither in gender nor in race or creed. Music is free. César Franck was a great composer. Listen carefully to this music, not as something strange, like something stuck to a scenario, but as a process, listen to the *music*. Now let's not talk anymore. Continue to walk, just that. César Franck belonged to the romantic world of the nineteenth century.

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Each one in his path, we continued lost in the twilight, with César Franck's music mixed with the sounds of birds

and insects.

That was one of the greatest lessons of music I had. It was then that really understood the music of César Franck.

Many times we had no electricity. The giant tropical storms meant that the electricity supply could be suddenly cut.

So, generally, we dined with candlelight and kerosene lamps.

There was a small Baroque church in that forest, part of the Frenchman's property. In it, there was a formidable harmonium. But the church was always closed, very well locked. There were strict orders that no one should enter there, never ever! It was one of the many and strict prohibitions.

One night, a violent storm was approaching. I was walking near the church with a friend, my colleague. She was a sweet and very sensitive person.

It was very hot.

I had an idea! We would enter the church and in the midst of the terrible storm, I would do an improvisation on the harmonium.

It was said, among the oldest employees of the property, that ghosts wandered near the chapel.

It would be perfect! Ghosts and a harmonium being performed in the prohibited church, in the middle of the storm!

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But! How could we enter there? The front door was heavily bolted with a big padlock. The back door also. We

could not force to entry. I noticed that at the top, in the sidewall, there was a rectangular window. A body could certainly pass there, especially a body of someone younger, like mine or hers.

We dragged a small table, which was providentially abandoned at corner, in the middle of vegetation, along the trees. I went up and discovered that the window could be opened with the aid of a wire. The storm approached. We already felt thick raindrops on our bodies.

Practically there was no light. It was difficult to distinguish anything in that dense darkness. But like an act of magic, there was a bit of wire near the front door.

I managed to open the window, which was high and difficult to pass through. In silence and carefully, we both entered in the small church.

In a kind of small winter garden near the kitchen, where the breakfast was served, the lady who worked at the house asked if we had heard something strange during the night. We all said no. She trembled. We asked why she was asking about it. She said, with some distrust and fear, that it was heard had music inside the church during the storm. At first, they thought that it had been one of us. But the church was tightly closed. When the storm passed, the employees went to the church to check and surprised found that no one had entered there, because everything was exactly as before and the church continued very well locked.

I think that that night entered in the history of the place as another event with ghosts.

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Koellreutter heard everything without changing his movements, as if nothing had happened. He simply continued his breakfast, calmly – and finished before everyone. It

seemed me, in his total lack of expression that he knew what had happened.

- My friends, it is time to work! – and the breakfast suddenly ended.

All my colleagues – formidable and talented musicians – were very involved with the traditional notation and conventional techniques. I was not. To me, the most interesting were the cognitive processes, the intertwined concepts of space time, the formation of complex mathematical archetypes in full metamorphosis.

One afternoon, when we analyzed a medieval piece, I decided to change the strategy of analysis – leaving the traditional models and establishing a kind of graphic binary map with black and white fields.

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The result was a diagram that looked like a whirlwind in a chess table. But we could clearly see the patterns of sounds

determined by the composers, unveiling an interesting part of their strategies of composition.

The other students laughed of what I had done. It certainly would cause a strong and very negative reaction of Koellreutter, they thought.

But when Koellreutter saw what I had done, he was delighted. For the incomprehension of the other students, he asked me to explain in detail how that method worked. I told him that there were elements of rhythm and modal combinations that were not clear, unless we create other resources to show them, something like intermedia transcreations, that is, passing from one medium to another, in this case for the visual.

I was asked to develop that technique of analysis, which allowed a more complete understanding of the composition, revealing the composer's strategic choices.

The next day we had the morning free – finally! – and we all went to visit Petropolis with Koellreutter, which is a lovely city.

Petropolis was the home of the Brazilian Emperors during the summer time. I still did not know the imperial city that was right under our feet.

We followed two cars – one of them, which was of one of the students, and mine.

We parked and walked by the streets. We went to a small supermarket to buy supplies necessary for the next few days and decided to eat at a nice Italian restaurant, very simple, well ahead of the river channel that runs through the city.

As soon as we finished our lunch, surrounded by bags

from the supermarket, we heard deafening thunder struck and the beginning of a new storm.

It was very violent. Our cars were relatively distant. We decided, as a matter of courtesy, to go – only the two owners of the cars – and take Koellreutter and the other students, as they would not get wet with the heavy rain.

So we did. We ran and reached the cars completely soaked. The rain was warm and generous. We were able to put the cars, one at a time, very close at the door of the restaurant, so the people could get in without getting wet.

The storm seemed to have no end.

With the car complete, all rescued without getting wet, outside still under intense rain, we went back to the magical property of Frenchman, on the mountain.

But as soon as we arrived there, we discovered that two bags of the supermarket were missed – the bags belonging to me and to the student who drove the second car.

I asked why they had not taken our bags! Koellreutter answered without hiding some irony:

- Well, because you do not pay attention. The bags were your responsibility, of you two, bringing or not the cars. Many times it will happen in life. There is something unexpected and one forgets what is really important, which in this case is the food. Your bags are kept safe in the restaurant. But will must go back to pick up them.

While controlled, I was furious! If what Koellreutter had said was true, it was also true that we were part of a team, and each one had the obligation to think for the other ones, to cooperate in establishing a synergistic chain, which had not happened in that case.

We both returned alone, fully wet, to get the bags.

In any case, that incident has not only marked forever in our souls the importance of having careful attention to the smallest things – that would be of fundamental importance throughout our lives – but also to reveal how everything was education to Koellreutter, at all moments.

We had forgotten the bags of the supermarket, but he had not forgot to teach us, even under a terrible storm and even having to be rude.

The classes in that magical place happened around the beautiful grand piano in the marvelous house under those giant trees.

Every day, in the late afternoon, a violent storm conquered all attentions.

In the small and very simple house where we, the students, were, the owner demanded that we should sleep on mattresses covered with plastic bags!

Everything was extremely simple in the house for the students. When we entered there in the first time, an employee of the property came forward and went ahead to tell how many lamps were there. On the last day, everything would be subjected to a new verification. If one lamp was missed, one fork or any other thing, however small or less important it could be, the value of the object would be charged and to it also added a heavy fine.

It was an absolute nonsense. Contrary to the draconian rules, we took out the plastic bags at night – it was impossible to sleep on them – and put them back in the morning, and the employees thought we had slept on the plastic. Every morning, an employee came to check if the mattresses were

covered with plastic. If they were not, they said we would be charged a penalty in money.

Everything in that place seemed to be about fines and threats.

No one else supported the owner of that place – that, even absent, always was represented by some of his employees who seemed to surely be worse than him.

The breakfast was served at seven o'clock rigidly. Who was delayed more than ten minutes lost the right to it. It was the fine... They were express orders of the Frenchman, who acted as if he were the dictator king of the place. And all this happened despite we – the students – were who were paying for everything.

I talked to Koellreutter about that very embarrassing situation.

- Yes... my friend. People change. Everything changes. If you had known this person a few years ago you would not believe. It seems that suddenly he lost all money, or almost all money, and became like that. Isolated from the world. With these conditions it will not be possible to be here again. It is a pity, because the place is unforgettable.

On the first morning in that heavenly place, punctually at seven o'clock, we were all gathered in the small winter garden for the breakfast and waited for Koellreutter, who never appeared. It was very strange, because he was always very punctual.

Of course, we refuse, all us, to take the breakfast before he arrived. And the delay was becoming increasingly worrying.

We asked to one of the musicians with us, and who I

had already knew since a long time, to go to the little cottage where he was sleeping and knew if he was in trouble, if he needed something from us.

We arrive to think, full of fear, that he might be dead in the cottage!

A few minutes later she came back very nervous and worried. «He looks very bad. He said he had bad moments during the night. That he did not sleep. He not even opened the door for me! He asked us to take the breakfast without him. The only person he wants to see is Emanuel. He asked for Emmanuel to be there immediately».

It was a worrying sign that he could be seriously ill. But why only I could go there? No one understood. The other students made some jokes... what could it be? If it was a serious situation, what we should do? To call a hospital?

When I arrived at the cottage and knocked the door, he opened it immediately and pulled me in, very nervous. He closed the door quickly, managing to make sure that I was alone.

- Emanuel, you do not know what happened. A disaster! I forgot my razor in my apartment in Rio de Janeiro!
- But what is the problem? Why you do not come to take the breakfast with us? You could shave later... or let your beard grow these days...
- My friend! A man like me cannot come up not shaved! Never! It's my image! Impossible! How can we solve this? It is a very serious problem for me.
- If you want, I can, very discreetly, or rather, secretly, go to the town and buy a razor for you. It will be easy if the commerce is open. Now it is too early...
- Are you sure that you are able to go without anyone seeing, that no one knows what's is going on?
- Yes... I think so... I can leave in silence, hidden...

- Pay attention, you must do this without anyone noticing what is happening. Go back to the breakfast. Say that I have not slept well at night, that I'll rest for a while, but that is not anything serious. Tell them that the classes of this morning are all suspended, and that we will compensate at evening. Then, just after the breakfast, when each one will be at his or her place, you should go in secret to the city and buy a new razor for me. But no one can know!

Koellreutter was extremely disturbed with that situation. It was then that I had a clear notion of how his self-image was very important for him.

He took care of his appearance in detail.

Certainly, this element of his personality contributed for his deep emotional relationship with Japan.

In Japan, the personal image – in positive or negative terms – is something of great social importance.

Two key concepts in Japanese culture are a clear illustration of this phenomenon: *wabi sabi*.

In one of the first times I was in Japan, I was invited to have a tea at the home of a leading scientist of the Institute of Technology in Tsukuba.

Immediately as I entered in his home, I noticed that there were no pictures on the walls, the wall painting was old and everything was extremely simple, so simple that could be considered a poor house.

I noticed that he always wore apparently old and frayed shirts. His glasses were old, as his car also was – but he was a leading scientist!

He lived the principle of *wabi* – which is the simplicity, the material detachment, the removal of exuberance in all its senses. It is a principle followed by a lot of people in Japan. When someone expresses *wabi* he or she is also expressing spiritual integrity, credibility, respect for the community and freedom among many other values.

Originally, the word *wabi* indicated the idea of withdrawal from society, a kind of monadic attitude, of solitary life. Later, after the fourteenth century, it became in another type of retirement – distance from material values and, thus, an approximation of the human values, of the relations with the community.

The word *sabi* means serenity attained with the experience of life, spiritual peace reached with age.

Wabi and *sabi* are concepts that often go together and

are manifested in the person's appearance, in his behavior.

Both are aesthetic ideals and illustrate how the self-image is fundamental in Japanese culture.

Wabi and *sabi* launch their conceptual origins in Zen, which is the free essence of Buddhism.

In the *wabi sabi* universe, all existence is structured by three key conditions: *anicca*, which means the impermanence of everything; *dukkha*, which indicates the idea of continual change and the consequent emergence of conflicts, the essence of consciousness; and *anatta*, which indicates the idea of non-existence, namely the idea according to which everything is only an illusion.

Koellreutter had a deep spiritual connection with Japan. These values were deep printed in his soul.

When I returned to the breakfast, I told my colleagues that he was not feeling well, he wanted to rest, but they did not need to worry, because it was not anything serious.

However, they did not want to believe. If so, why he had said nothing to our colleague who had been there minutes before? I did not know what to say. I was phlegmatic, concise, and tacit. I said nothing more. He had not slept well at night, just that.

That history has created an embarrassing climate for me, because people did not believe in what I said, but I could not tell what really happened, no matter how simple it was.

Once everyone finished the breakfast, very discreetly, I walked to my car and pushed it with the engine off until a descent to the street, so no one could hear any noise and realize my escape.

I arrived at the center of Petropolis and waited until a small shop opened. I bought a shaving cream, a brush and a mechanical device with blades – he never used electrical appliances – and went back quickly.

The topography of the place allowed me to enter in the property also with the engine off. So I did. Without anyone noticing, I ran to the cottage.

Visibly relieved, Koellreutter opened the door. He was studying at a small table near the window, protected by the curtain.

- Thanks! Thank you very much! Now, go back and say that I'm better. Ask everybody to be ready, near the piano, in ten minutes.

And the classes started normally, without anyone had realized what had really happened. Koellreutter said, without details, laconically, that he had not slept well, but that he was already good again.