

8

In the beginning, our meetings for lunch usually took place on Saturdays, at the German restaurant, where the center of the city was empty. After lunch, we usually walked in silence, side by side, for some minutes.

The book published with the letters between Koellreutter and Satochi Tanaka, a professor of German at the Meisei University, in Tokyo, is entitled *Aesthetics - The Pursuit of a World Without 'vis-à-vis'*. It was also released in Japanese, in Tokyo, and clearly indicates his ideas on aesthetics.

Both editions were launched almost simultaneously in Brazil and Japan in late 1983.

Very discreetly, at home, I came to review the Portuguese version of several passages of the book. «Do not tell to anyone I'm showing you this text before the publication», alerted him. Koellreutter had a huge concern with the translation. We sat in the small reading room, the *Kremlin*, he showed me a sheet of paper with one sentence. He asked me to read. Then he explained what he meant in German. All languages have their tricks, and we spent a long time exchanging ideas as to find the best words.

In one of the letters to Tanaka, dated of April seven 1975, Koellreutter said: «We do not know whose of the values of the human heritage, inside a universal culture, will be permanently integrated. This will depend on the ideals and goals that each person will have in the future. It is certain,

however, that a future universal culture will merge cultural values of East and West in a dynamic game: introversion will be compensated by extroversion and vice versa, subjectivity by objectivity and automation by the fructification of creative forces. In this way, we will come closer to a structure of thought whose essence may be the *Integrating Paradox*».

Revealing a deep skepticism about the ideas of the German master, Tanaka Satochi respond saying that «your idea of a global and universal culture sounds, in fact, very seductive. As Japanese, it seems me illusory, the illusory thinking of a European who sees the future of the Western culture and civilization with skepticism and demands a solution from the East. You are of the opinion that we do not know what values of the human heritage will be integrated into a universal culture, and that will depend on the ideals and objectives human will propose for the future. As for me, I think it will again be the Western world, and not the individual, to determine the ideals and future goals. I am

also convinced that the Japanese, once again, will be in the disposition to follow the Western proposals. But this culture, ultimately, will be Western again, and not universal...».

But Koellreutter never thought about something like “to find solutions in the East” – as he later remarked in a conversation with me.

He was guided by the principles of thermodynamics. On the other hand, Satochi Tanaka established a real barrier against the possibility of the emergence of a world without *vis-a-vis*, as proposed by the German composer.

While Tanaka acted as a Japanese, Koellreutter thought like a Brazilian.

Only who lived in Brazil can understand what is to be a *Brazilian*. “To be a Brazilian” means to have no nationality and to belong to all others. Everything is incorporated. All

cultures, all experiments. A Brazilian is, by definition, a citizen of the world. Each person who arrives in Brazil, immediately outside the airport, it potentially is a citizen. I say in *potential* way because, of course, there will be resistance of all kinds. But this is the principle.

When Koellreutter wrote his letters to Tanaka, he did not think as a German, a French or even as an American. He was Brazilian and free – and therefore he was also Japanese, probably as Japanese as Tanaka, who was not able to see, over all the letters, how it could be possibly.

When the book came out, I received one of the first copies, with a dedication: «To my friend Emanuel, with a big hug from Koellreutter». The publication was very poor, with poor paper and cover, and I did not fail to comment with him about that.

- My friend. There is no money! Nobody is really interested on such things. We are a very small

part of the world. Moreover, a part that is smaller and smaller.

When I came to ask him again about the intransigent position of Tanaka, defending the impossibility of an integrated world, he replied briefly:

- See how the world is. Very interesting. All this is very interesting.

Saloméa Goldelman, who was also responsible for the preface, brilliantly made the translation and the edition of the book. The texts and proofs came and went, all the time. Every line, every expression, everything was thought, challenged, to not allow misunderstandings. Especially for her, exhausting months were filled with small and subtle changes. Koellreutter was almost seventy years old and the book turned out to be a kind of discreet testament about his ideas.

At that time, in one of our lunches, I asked how the experience of having lived at Pablo Picasso's home in Montmartre, Paris, had marked him.

- I was a young flutist, and traveled widely in Europe. We had no money and no place to stay. The life of a young musician is never easy. At that time, in Europe, it was common to stay at the home of artists, which yielded a room or sometimes just a sofa so we could sleep. The reality of the world before the Second World War was very different from what we have today. Everything changed with that war. I was very young. Picasso was a great man, a master. He did not need to speak to be a source of knowledge for us. He was a very special person. His eyes were very bright. One morning when I woke up, I saw he was painting a canvas. It was placed next to the window and was covered with small colored rectangles. Every day in

the morning he looked out the window, which opened to the unforgettable scenario of Paris, and painted just one rectangle. I realized that he did it every day. He painted always just a small rectangle. Each one with a different color. I asked him what he was doing. That was very strange to me. I did not understand what those little colored rectangles were. He told that he was painting the time. He explained that he painted just one small rectangle everyday day. Each rectangle was a tile view from that window in Montmartre. 'Every day the light is different, the colors are different, each day is different and we see everything differently'. Picasso worked to capture the essence of time. His work is a representation of the concept of relativity by Hermann Minkowski and also, of course, by Albert Einstein. This is the principle of the *Synthetic Cubism*. Sometimes,

even today there are people who think that “cubism” means “cubes”, something made with “cubes”. Indeed, cubism is to work with the fourth dimension, with time».

Time was the most precious thing for him. In his conception of living everything could be dramatically changed by time.

He did not drive cars. When I heard about that, it was strange for me. Why he had never learned how to drive?

- People have standard ideas, stereotyped, for all things. While for you a car can be a saving of time, for me – with this life of constant travels from one place to another – it would be time consuming. And I do not have time for these things!



Hans Joachim Koellreutter - photo by Emanuel Dimas de Melo Pimenta in São Paulo, in 1999

In another of our lunches, he told me an interesting story about the nature of time.

- I was returning from abroad, I think it was a trip to India many years ago, I think it was in 1954. I lived in Salvador and directed the Music School

of the Federal University of Bahia. But, you know, academic environment is terrible. There is always someone cheating, there are always pitfalls, coups, politics in the worst sense of the term. When I arrived in Salvador, as soon as I landed, someone commented to me, in the airport, asking if I had seen the terrible news in the local newspaper. I was arriving in that moment. I could not know anything. I looked to find the newspaper. There was the news: Koellreutter summarily dismissed by the rector. It was very serious. I had participated in founding the School of Music... You cannot imagine. It was a big scandal. I thought a bit and decided not to go home. Very discreetly, no one could see me, and I went hidden in a hotel of the city. I was locked in my room for three days. I did not leave that room. I ate there. I was totally closed. I have not spoken

to anyone. Nobody knew where I was. It was clear to me. Someone had placed a false article in the newspaper. With that news, the person hoped that I would create another scandal, giving no chance for the rector but obliging him to really dismiss me. If I'd appeared at that moment, the scandal would be amplified. Gossips ran fast. So, I decided to disappear for three days. They even put the police to find me. In those three days of silence, the whole reality has changed radically. When I left the hotel, I talked directly with the rector, and it quickly became clear and rebalanced again. It was just a 'misunderstanding'. In fact, I knew it was not a simple 'misunderstanding'. I had to 'work' the fabric of Nature with that silence. There was no emotion. Only silence. And the silence together with time has changed the reality. Time changes the reality».

That was Zen face a strong feature of their behavior. Koellreutter was able to sit still for that time to change reality. But that does not mean he was not a nervous person.

Over the years, I was noticing that, in fact, he had some moments of great tension, in most cases imperceptible to those who did not live closer to him.

One of the rare signs was the fact to insistently gnaw half of the nail of the ring finger of his left hand. Once, I asked if he thought himself as a nervous person.

- Well, what a question! I am a person like any other. Everybody has nervous moments, even a Buddhist monk! It's the human nature, just that.

I noticed how he lived alone. Margarita was internationally acclaimed and often traveled in tours around

the world. Always when we met each other for lunch, especially on weekends, he was alone. I even asked him why he was always so lonely.

- My friend, my home is in Rio de Janeiro!

His dedication to the students was such that we often forgot that he did not live in São Paulo, but yes in Rio and that he were in constant transit between São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Curitiba and sometimes also Salvador and Belém.

I met two of his sons, very briefly – one who lived in Salvador working with tourism, and the others, who lived in Rio de Janeiro and was a journalist. But meetings were very quick.

Along years, Koellreutter was not only my master but also my best friend.

In 1983, I was his assistant for courses on aesthetics and collective composition at the Solar do Barão Cultural Center, which had just been opened after a great restoration work of the building.

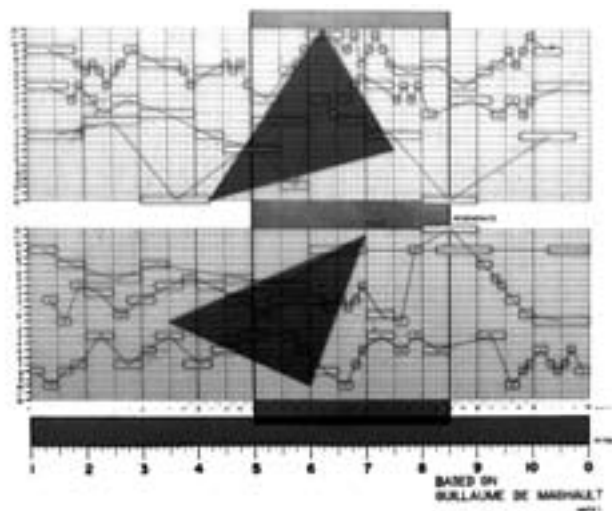
In that epoch I no longer worked on marketing. I studied architecture and urban planning, I was free lance photographer, I wrote for newspapers like *O Estado de São Paulo*, for the music magazine *Som Três* with the famous critic Maurício Kubrusly, for the architecture magazine *Projeto*, I gave lessons and was assistant at the university on Semiotics. Excepting photography, all rest was directly related to music or to architecture.

As always, the experience in Curitiba was unforgettable. There were very talented students of all kinds, arriving from the most different places.

The entire course on collective composition was based

on the method, on how to establish principles of order, differentiation, dynamically working in teams. To have the consciousness of the unity, of totality, to design relations of quality, and to deal with monotony were the essential elements of the lessons.

Emanuel Pimenta,
Concert for Frogs and Crickets,
1984



Koellreutter believed that Brazil could be a unique country all over the world to develop collective composition

strategies, in several areas.

In musical terms, *collective composition* means the same piece being elaborated by several composers simultaneously – what requires great discipline, method, team spirit and openness.

It was not very easy to find people who accept and clearly understood the principles of collective composition.

Many simply refused outright those principles, arguing that if the composition were collective there would not be a composer to be positively or negatively criticized and, therefore, a musical work would not exist.

- Do you think that is hard for people here to understand what collective composition is and its importance? In Europe it is much more difficult. – Koellreutter commented excited – The collective composition may not only

be an interesting principle as a method of composition in itself, but also and perhaps the most important, it is a good way for people to learn from each other. When people will aware of it, the world will become richer in experiences. Sharing is the essence of collective composition.

In general, Koellreutter’s ideas seemed to be almost always anchored in great universal principles.

He used with great mastery short and remarkable sentences, as did Marshall McLuhan. And they were always of great impact.

Statements like “only difference produces consciousness”, “the dead man is always guilty, never the murderer” and “the Occident is an accident” among many others established principles around which real thesis were

built and supported the development of thought on music.

- Napoleon Bonaparte correctly said: “Only what is monotonous can provoke emotion”. Without monotony, there is no emotion. Bonaparte was not a simple military, neither a simple politician, as many times people think today. He was a great man, a true statesman. In a sense, his face as philosopher, as lover of the arts, was totally eclipsed by History. He was a man of great culture and sensitivity. And he was absolutely right: only monotony can truly provokes emotion.

Napoleon Bonaparte’s statement – largely discussed during the nineteenth century, but fallen into obscurity over the next century – gave rise reflections and debates with the hearing of various fragments of musical pieces and the appreciation of paintings by some well-known painters – old and contemporary.

Each time he was referring to the famous statement of Napoleon Bonaparte – whether in that course of collective composition, in the classes on aesthetics, in lessons about the music of the twentieth century or during the composition classes – it immediately triggered a big discussion about the nature of monotony and also about emotion.

In different courses, Koellreutter many times recalled the principles of Claude Shannon's *Theory of Information*, and furnished to the students theoretical resources on how to establish principles of communicability.

- Communication is always essential. If there is no communication, there is no understanding, comprehension, and therefore there is no work.

Claude Shannon was an American electrical engineer, who lived between 1916 and 2001 – a contemporary of Koellreutter, considered the father of the *Theory of*

Information.

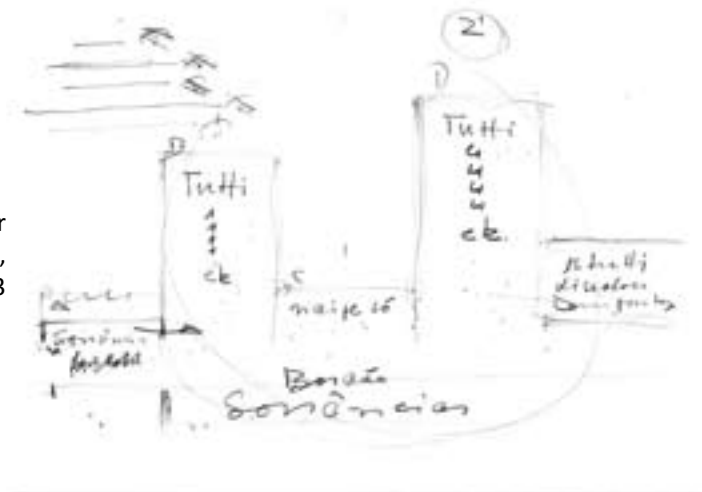
Shannon said that «information is the resolution of uncertainty».

During those days in Curitiba, I made two exhibitions. I was curator of an exhibition of graphic scores with works by several composers including John Cage, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Ferruccio Bussotti and Koellreutter among many others, and an exhibition with a series of my graphical scores.

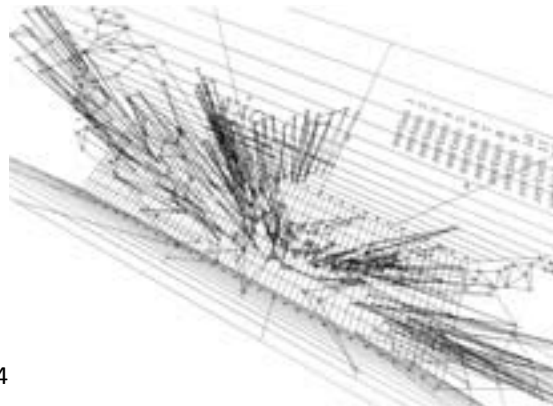
The use of graphic scores began in 1950s and 1960s especially with Earle Bown and John Cage. It is a process of musical notation that opens new possibilities for the organization of sounds. Sometimes graphical notations are devalued by some musicians, more traditionalists, who consider they less rigorous than the traditional notation, what is a great illusion.

Graphic music scores have been regularly used by major composers such as Toru Takemitsu, Stockhausen, John Cage, Ligeti, Koellreutter, Bussotti or even Herbert Brün, whose work - unfortunately - I only knew years later. That is, contrarily to what some people think, graphic scores are part of the history of music.

Koellreutter, sketch for planimetric score, 1983



In 1968 John Cage published a beautiful book called *Notations*, containing graphic scores by many composers and artists from around the world.



Emanuel Pimenta, VAC, 1994

Since the early 1980s my work has been not only to amplify the universe to four dimensions, producing music in virtual worlds - which in the beginning was quite unexpected. I remember, once, a journalist who wrote that I was “crazy for the virtual world”, without knowing exactly what he was saying.

But such a work could not be reduced to the development of virtual worlds and scores. It is also the development of *logical traps* - that were already present at that time.

In any case, in that year of 1983 I was already aware of the importance of establishing an overview of graphic scores from many different composers. It was probably the first exhibition of the kind in Brazil.

But, an unexpected incident occurred at that public exhibition with works created by several composers from all over the world.

The person who made the small plates on cardboard with captions for the scores set wrong, unintentionally, the spelling of Koellreutter's name, writing it with only one "t" – as so often happened.

Similar misunderstandings were common not only in relation to the spelling of his name. In many places people were not able even to speak properly *Koellreutter*. In northeastern Brazil, for example, he was affectionately known as *Korroté*.

In those days, I divided myself between being an assistant in the courses of aesthetics, collective composition and music of the twentieth century, and also being curator of both exhibitions.

They were two of my first exhibitions – I had made a few ones until then – and all my energy was absorbed. Beyond all this, I was practically the driver to Koellreutter. When I came to my room at night, I was more than exhausted and had to get up very early.

My inexperience made that I had not noticed that error in his name. When he entered in the exhibition – before the

opening – and saw that his name was misspelled, he became furious.

I think I have never seen him so upset, so nervous. He called me in a room and asked with great irony and aggression if I had realized the disaster I had committed.

When he spoke in that way, I was perplexed and totally lost. I did not know what he was talking about! The exhibition was very well made, I had succeeded with the framing, the lighting, the contacts with the press – and there was no money. Everything was very well organized.

On parallel with the collective composition course and the exhibitions of graphic scores, there were other courses and concerts related to the Renaissance music and to *viola de gamba*. Some musicians from other courses witnessed that terrible reaction and were clearly impressed with his aggressiveness.

- My friend, it is over! Our relationship is over! Ended. You made a big mistake!

I was stunned. I insisted several times inquiring about what he was talking about. He refused, clearly offended.

- Well, if you're competent, you should know what I'm talking about. – he said with irony.

I was sincerely lost. I had no idea about what he was saying. I imagined being something really serious. I kept insisting, worried about what I could have done.

Long minutes later, finally, he asked if I knew how to write his name. Asked me to do it. I thought it was a joke. I could not imagine that his request would be related to exhibition. Without knowing what it was about, I took a sheet of paper and wrote his name. He saw that it was correct and said:

- Do you think it is admissible to have my name

spelled incorrectly? Well, see how the caption is aside one of my scores. It is missing a “t”!

I was shocked. That thunderous reaction by something so simple! I explained that a person had made the small cardboards but I assumed, as it could not be different, the entire responsibility. I tried to show him how much I had devoted myself for those exhibitions were a success. We did not have any help. There was no money. We did not have support even for the framing! Everything had been achieved with great effort and collaboration.

- But you know what your responsibility is? If you do this in Europe or in the United States, your career will be definitely over. You cannot afford not to think, not to check, not to observe, not to be very careful. This was a serious oversight! Good.. my friend. I'll give you one more chance. I hope you are not one of those people who are floating in life. – he

turned and walked away.

That was really a shock. At that moment, I was deeply annoyed with him. In the heat of the moment, his reaction seemed a storm on a teacup. The small cardboard was immediately substituted and the exhibition was opened with great success.

Despite his overwhelming aggression, he was absolutely right. Many times we make a huge effort to carry out a project – an effort that often never comes to be understood by the people – and in a single instant, a small detail can knock you out.

After the “storm”, one of the evenings we all went to dinner with Jaime Leirner, then mayor of Curitiba, a close friend of Koellreutter. There were only four or five people at that dinner. I was thoroughly charmed by his personality. One of my dreams, as an urban planner, was to design new

towns and I feverishly researched Paolo Soleri's mega-structures, studying with Eduardo Kneese de Mello and Eduardo Corona. Jaime Leirner was a simple person, open, very friendly, always with an excellent mood.

On the last day of the events Koellreutter gave a brief lecture. The room was filled with people. Everyone wanted to hear the great master.

Koellreutter's lecture was very brief, but it captivated everyone. It was brilliant, as always. He spoke about the importance of subversion.

In the end, a man who appeared to be about sixty years old, at the back of the room, rose to make a question. In fact, that was not a question but a long and tiresome monologue. With great pomp and pretension, that person started making absurd assertions as if they were the most sensational discoveries of all times, which could be summarized in a central

idea: for him all art and all music were nothing but imitation of nature, and therefore, degenerated demonstrations. «The spider web and a beehive are perfect artworks, much more perfect than any human endeavor. So, human beings should simply abandon the arts. Art, whatever, is a big silly thing, and an alienation compared to Nature». – he defended.

There was no answer, because it was not a question. Koellreutter remained silent, with a smile, neutral, and the host of the table, very diplomatically asked if there was someone in the room who wanted to comment on those assertions.

What that person had said – and especially the way he had done, in a tone of mockery and irony – placed Koellreutter in a relatively embarrassing position. The way he had done, he gave a clear understanding of the vehement denial of the value of everything the German master made along his life, treating his ideas like *degenerate art*, because it was not

something *of the people* - reminding the Nazi attacks on the art of its time, but now with another ideological cover. It had been a gesture very rude and crude.

Koellreutter could not initiate a defense of his ideas, because he would be talking about himself and this would surely trigger a discussion without end. A discussion that certainly had been the intention of that person.

But no one reacted! People were simply paralyzed. The man smiled like a king full of pride on himself.

The room was taken by a profoundly awkward silence. The students looked at one another. Nobody had the courage to defend Koellreutter. It was shameful!

Why people don't have the courage to defend what they believe? But, did they really believe? How could they fail to defend a master who, minutes before, they

had enthusiastically applauded for diametrically opposed reasons?

Someone had to do something, to take action.

I got up and made brief references to Thomas Aquinas and to Aristotle, to the questions about imitation of nature as content and as process, in its *modus operandi*. I concluded, simply, that if the *corpus* of the imitation was not independent, in what we call language or culture, what we were doing there? In other words, nothing could be the thing itself and everything was, after all, metalanguage! I reinforced the absurdity of his argument – because in its content it contradicted, by its own existence as language, the use of his own words.

The man, much older than I, made a witty and ironic compliment to what I had said, adding a sloppy statement on the energy of youth, “the irreverence of youth”, “I am

happy to see the impetus for young people”, or something alike. And the lecture was immediately ended.

When we left the room, Koellreutter said, not without some irony:

- My friend, you’re burned. You just won a powerful enemy.

Later I would know that the man was a very important personage in the cultural scene of Curitiba. Whoever he was, I felt myself obliged to intervene. His words had set up a scenario so ridiculous and absurd as of low level. The statements of that man, who was then an important figure in the academic world, were simply ridiculous.

- But, in fact, he was not making those statements. You did not notice. He was just teasing. It had no value. Not even for him. It was only a silly thing. For him everything was going in the according to second and third

intentions. Thus, the silence would have been adequate.

There was one thing that was definitely clear to me: I had never had and never would have second or third intentions. Each one of my actions, over my lifetime, was just itself, in an open and clear way, to everyone.

But, even so, Koellreutter was right. The silence would have been the best attitude. None of that mattered and I had used the time of all with an unimportant consideration in response to a silly provocation.

I was very young and that moment made me think how it would be difficult to live full time in an academic environment. Why people acted that way?

- For you, everything is knowledge, music and architecture. For people like him, everything is politics, and only after it the love for

knowledge comes. Knowledge is there, but often as content. It's not like a true artist who is, in himself, a work of art, but someone who imitates. Although it was a cheap provocation with no value, at heart he was being sincere. He was coherent with what he is. He doesn't know other way of being. And you should better preserve yourself.

Everything for Koellreutter was cause for reflection and discovery.