

UNIVERSITIES AS METAPHORS IV

Back to conversations. We have previously seen how conversations can be the source of tremendous collaborations and how they can also help in building a spirit of knowledge crossover.

The fact that the word conversation is rooted in the literal meaning of ‘turning together’, may lead us to think that this has some implications. I could not find better than this quote, taken from ‘The Ontology of Conversing’ by Humberto Maturanaⁱ:

In short: the human appears in the evolutionary history to which we belong when language appears, but it constitutes itself in fact and as such in the conservation of a particular manner of living centered around the sharing of food, the cooperation of males and females in the upbringing of children, the individualized recurrent sensual encounters, conversing, and around the pleasure of living in conversing. Because of that every human activity departs from an emotion, and nothing human occurs outside the interbraiding of languaging and emotioning and, therefore, the human is lived always in conversing. Finally, the emotioning in which the conservation of the human is constituted when language appears is centered around the pleasure of coexistence in the acceptance of the other close to oneself, that is, in love, which is the emotion that constitutes the space of actions in which we accept the other in our coexistence. That fact that love is the emotion that establishes in the origin of the human the enjoyment of conversing which characterizes us makes our welfare as well as our suffering depend upon our conversing.

One might say that conversations constitute the essence of our existence as humans. They show to what extent that all we perhaps do, we do *together*. *Togetherness*, as we have seen before with the word university, is the cornerstone of our profession as academicians and as educationalists. We live by conversing and one can also say that we live *in* conversing as well. Everything we perform, is performed through conversations; this shows how humans are interdependent; that living as one community is the best choice for humanity.

ⁱ MATURANA, Humberto R. Ontología del Conversar. Persona y Sociedad, III (2): 9-28. Santiago de Chile, 1989.