



# Conceptualizing a transdisciplinary nexus for addressing complex problems

Paul Gibbs<sup>a,\*</sup>, Sue L.T. McGregor<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Middlesex and East European University, Georgia

<sup>b</sup> McGregor Consulting Group, Independent Scholar, Researcher, Policy Analyst and Educator, Georgia

## ARTICLE INFO

### Keywords:

Transdisciplinary nexus  
Hidden Third  
Mundus imaginalis  
Causal powers  
Potentiality  
Actualisation

## ABSTRACT

We envision opening a way of perceiving the transdisciplinary Hidden Third as a transcendental nexus of both passive and active *causal powers* reflecting and engaged with the external structures that create the complex social realities in which we live. It is in these realities and their possible worlds that the revealing of our relational capacities and activating (actualising) potentialities occurs. We propose that innovative and co-created solutions to complex problems can emerge when something at work within each person helps very differently minded people with a stake in an issue to realise that they have capabilities and *potential* that can be *actualised* situationally. To facilitate this idea, we adopt a notion of transindividuality, which is constitutive through relationality. This is a futural process of imaginal thinking and imaginary thinking. We suggest that when temporarily functioning in an intermediate inner universe (*mundus imaginalis*), and by operating between the empirical (concrete facts) and the abstract (e.g., meditative thinking), *active imaginal powers* foster emergent solutions unbounded by the positivistic framing problems and their future consequences. We conceptualized a *transdisciplinary nexus* that draws from the *mundus imaginalis* and the Hidden Third to provide deeper insights into the role that people's inner images of the world play when engaging in transdisciplinary problem solving.

## 1. Introduction

The lack of success in addressing climate change, unsustainability, and poverty presents an ever growing and pessimist scenario of a future world. Herein, we investigate possible connections, within a transdisciplinary (TD) paradigm, of several concepts that provide tools for considering how we might overcome scientism, positivism, and individualism by engaging in collective problem resolution to solve seemingly intractable complex, wicked problems. We are especially interested in deepening our understanding of how people actualise their potential to effect change while engaging with contrary-minded people on contentious dilemmas demanding action. How does this process grapple with the realness of the internal images people hold of the issue in combination with external knowledge? To that end, we focus first on Nicolescu's (2002, 2014) *Hidden Third* and Corbin's (1964, 1979) notion of the *imaginary* (*mundus imaginalis*). Both are considered forces that contribute to movement and emergence.

As our stepping off point, we propose that the ontology aspect of Nicolescu's (2002) transdisciplinary methodology (especially the Hidden Third) implies (but does not explicitly state) both immanent and transcendental forms of realities. The internal TD subject and external TD object incorporates 11 different levels of, what we call herein, immanent realities. If something is immanent, "its

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [p.gibbs@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:p.gibbs@mdx.ac.uk) (P. Gibbs).

foundational origin is not something separate from the ‘world’ but is contained and present within it” (Leitane, 2013, p. 2275). By applying Corbin’s (1964) *mundus imaginalis* (a world in its own right), we suggest that the Hidden Third comprises transcendental realities, wherein the fundamental origin does not contain the material world.

Our position does not make brute distinctions. Transcendence does not mean to entirely escape or sublimate the immanent nor do we want to use immanence to altogether seal and close off the horizon of transcendence; “there are no simply entirely transcendent or immanent” (Leitane, 2013, p. 2275). Instead, our intent is to form a transcendence immanent to an inner world we can experience or imagine via the *mundus imaginal* and then project into the universe. To aid in our discussion, we present a new construct called the *transdisciplinary nexus* of both passive and active *causal power* that can shape realities and possible worlds by revealing people’s capacities and activating (*actualising*) their *potentialities*.

A nexus is more than an intersection. It is an important connection between a series of elements comprising a system of thought. Its role is to bind things together in a chain of causation. We propose that combining Nicolescu’s (2002) Hidden Third and Corbin’s (1964) *mundus imaginalis* with the transdisciplinary nexus provides a unique lens for understanding what is involved when contrary-minded people work collectively to address intractable problems. More specifically, that understanding changes when we view people as a transindividual (instead of an individual) as they draw on and express their inner images of the world and actualise their potential to be a force of change (see Fig. 1). We can now think of individuals in terms of their constative relations and as temporary and singular events of a particular duration (Andermann, 2020). This approach provides a notion of the person, where the subjective unity of the human being is not assumed.

### 1.1. Transdisciplinary Nexus, the Hidden Third, and Mundus Imaginalis

Prior to discussing the neologism transdisciplinary nexus, we provide an overview of Nicolescu’s (2002) Hidden Third and Corbin’s (1964) *mundus imaginalis*. We conclude the paper with a discussion of how this conceptualization can help in approaching complex issues and how we might develop these ideas into actionable approaches.

### 1.2. Transdisciplinary Hidden Third

In his metaphysics of transdisciplinarity, Nicolescu’s (2002, 2010, 2014, 2015) focus on multiple levels of Reality (he uses up-*percase R* for Reality in his formulation, so we will follow this convention when referring to his work) provides a wholeness of a cosmological process in which *being* is constantly changing within the realities that it creates, where his Hidden Third is a crucial aspect of *being* and *becoming* (Gibbs & McGregor, 2020). Nicolescu’s ontology axiom comprises multiple levels of Reality, the included middle, the Hidden Third, and trans-Reality.

To begin, Nicolescu’s (2002) approach to transdisciplinarity has 11 levels of Reality organized by the internal TD-Subject (flow of value-laden awareness, consciousness, and perceptions) and the external TD-Object (flow of value neutral objective information, facts, proofs, and statistics). His notion of the *included middle* is contra to Aristotle (1984) dualistic state of reality. Nicolescu proposed that one can conceive of three states of being: A; not-A; and T, where T stands for a third state called the included middle ground. This T third element respects the *principle of non-contradiction*, which disallows any state where A can be both present and absent. It is in this hidden space (included middle) (i.e., invisible but very *real*) that differently minded people engage with each other to address complex,

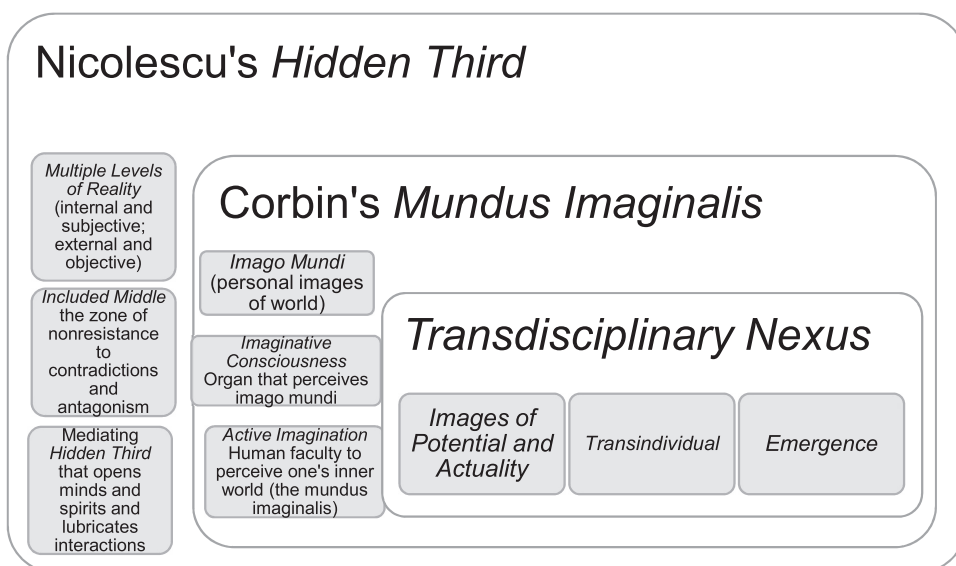


Fig. 1. Proposed Transdisciplinary Nexus.

wicked problems by moving within and among the different Realities (e.g., economics, science, politics, and community).

The Hidden Third is illuminating, spirit-and-mind-opening, and unifying generative and normative *force* that enables different, contradictory, and antagonistic levels of Reality to interact (Nicolescu, 2002, 2014, 2015) (e.g., scientists, engineers, politicians, and indigenous elders can creatively interact to address a contentious issue). “The Hidden Third is the transdisciplinary unifier of spiritual information and natural information, but it cannot be reduced to one of them” (Nicolescu, 2015, p. 98). This force emanating from the Hidden Third is released when people are collectively exposed to things like art, music, theatre, drama, faith, spirituality, and nature. Their potential to listen to and hear each other is actualised, which leads to aha moments that in turn lead to the integration of ideas into something new – enabled by the Hidden Third (Nicolescu, 2015).

Until things change, many possibilities exist in the included middle. Once they change however, something different exists because actualised A helped potentialised non-A to emerge (see also Brenner, 2011; McGregor, 2020). Put simply, people (A) temporarily stop resisting each others’ contradictory ideas (non-A) and start listening to each other until something new emerges. Non-A’s potential (power) is realised and released *because* A came into existence (was actualised) despite being in “a relationship of contradiction” (Nicolescu, 2014, p. 132). The unifying and generative force within the Hidden Third makes this possible.

Finally, Nicolescu (2002, 2014) proposed that this process generates a new *trans-Reality* that is co-created by people addressing a specific problem in a specific context. It is above and beyond (trans) any combination of the 11 Realities that informed its emergence and exists at the same time they do. It is unique to addressing a particular intractable problem. Another group of people might create a different trans-Reality.

### 1.3. *Mundus Imaginalis*

Nicolescu’s (2002) Hidden Third is a transformative process. It is not an abstraction of reality but a force shaping emergent, living reality, touching all dimensions of our being and formatting ways of becoming. It is where we can attribute primordial meaning to images, imagine our being. Indeed, in addition to a mediating force that helps bring people together and breaks down barriers between them, we are convinced that imagination (the *imaginal* not the imaginary) is a key element in transdisciplinary problem solving; it is another type of force – a force of change. Corbin (1964) accommodated that presumption with his construct: *mundus imaginalis* (*mundus* is Latin, “universe, world”).

Imagination connects us to our desires, brings together the past, present and future and provides us with the means to build a cohesive story of our lives, to discern the meaning of our lives. Imagination is therefore the agency that enables us to create our world and to keep creating new and endless possibilities. Imagination connects us with movement and change, compels us towards the new. (Center of Applied Jungian Studies, 2023, para. 1)

For Corbin (1964), imagination operates in *mundus imaginalis* – a separate world that people experience internally. This is an “intermediate universe between the empirical world grasped by the senses and the world of abstract ideas apprehended by the intellect” (Sandler, 2020, para. 3). This inner.

world is as ontologically real as the world of the senses and the world of the intellect, a world that requires a faculty of perception belonging to it, a faculty that is a cognitive function, a *noetic* value, as fully real as the faculties of sensory perception or intellectual intuition. This faculty is the *imaginative power*, the one we must avoid confusing with the imagination that modern man identifies with ‘fantasy’ and that, according to him, produces only the ‘imaginary.’ (Corbin, 1964, para. 17, emphasis added)

Corbin (1964) valued “the validity of dreams, symbolic rituals, the reality of places formed by intense meditation, the reality of inspired imaginative visions, cosmogonies and theogonies, and ... the truth of the spiritual sense perceived in the imaginative data” (p. 6). The *mundus imaginalis* is thus a place not of extension but one where “the cognitive function of the Imagination is ordered to it; it is a world whose ontological level is above the world of the senses and below the pure intelligible world; it is more immaterial than the former and less immaterial than the latter” (Corbin, 1964, p. 6).

In effect, like Nicolescu’s (2002) concern for reality, Corbin (1964) identified an order (level) of reality that he called *mundus imaginalis*. Within this liminal (threshold) reality, where things can cease to exist or come into existence, people explore *images* as they appear. Corbin theorised (philosophised?) that the organ that perceives this reality is our *imaginative consciousness*. Rather than pure intellect, this organ is an intermediary power that has a mediating role (akin to the Hidden Third). The *active Imagination* is the human faculty that enables this organ to function (Gan et al., 2022). Because “the world communicates to us through image, [we must] learn an active form of imaging” (Gan et al., 2022, para. 15), which is not the same as imagining or fantasy. Regarding the latter, the Western world, with its penchant for scientism and positivism, understands imaginary to mean “‘unreal’, something that is outside the framework of being and existing” (Gan et al., 2022, para. 10). Corbin’s (1964) *mundus imaginalis* is the opposite of that, just as Nicolescu’s (2002) Hidden Third is the opposite of classical physics’ one material level of reality.

### 1.4. *Transdisciplinary nexus*

This section profiles the three main elements of our new construct that we call a *transdisciplinary nexus*: images of potential and actuality, transindividuality, and emergence.

### 1.5. Images of potential and actuality

Aristotle (1984) talked of *being* in a form that resonates with Nicolescu's discourse of the included middle as "that, then, which is capable of being may either be or not be; the same thing, then, is capable of both being and of not being" (1050<sup>b</sup> 10). If this "not to be" is held within the potential even when it is actualised, then Nicolescu's (2002) inclusive logic has an ontological footing, at least in Aristotle's distinction of categorical being. In this, substance and inclusive logic (called by others the logic of non-contradiction) apply together with that of *being* as both energy (*energeia*) and potential (*dumans*). These constructs were first discussed extensively by Aristotle (1984) Book Θ of chapter 9 of the *Metaphysics*. It is these (i.e., energy and potential) that comprise Corbin's images that are the context of Nicolescu's Hidden Third, which we propose is a transcendental nexus of causal powers within which creativity and reality emerge as actuality (*entelechia*) and have the potentiality to create multiple new realities in possible worlds and futures.

For clarification, causal power is the power to cause change or an effect. Hence, within causal power is a force of change instead of stasis (Gibbs and McGregor, 2020). We are interested in the *energy* of casual powers (i.e., the activities and power that cause the actuality that is required in the zone of nonresistance, which is ripe with as-yet-unrealised potential). People's potential capability is made manifest (a) by questioning the reality of their everyday experience in the knowledge they have of themselves and (b) with a preparedness and the courage to create new knowledge and self-knowing from that inner engagement. Potential is often inhibited, however, by the socialisation people experience, which seeks them to *be* for others rather than face an authentic *becoming* in the world of others. People place their identities in this world through how they interpret and ascribe meaning to the images and symbols of the world in ways that support their mono-identities in a form of cohesiveness for others (Bottici, 2019).

As Bottici (2019) defined it, "it is both of an individual faculty and of a social context as well as the result of an interaction between the two that escapes any simple opposition" (p. 437). Indeed, Aristotle "argued that whenever we think, we do so along with an image [*orphantasma*. He] at times uses the term *phantasia* to denote what we would call 'true vision'" (Bottici, 2019, p. 433). This end or vision<sup>1</sup> must be imagined as Corbin stated. Each "carries in himself [sic] the image of his own world, his *Imago mundi*, and projects it into a more or less coherent universe, which becomes the stage on which his destiny is played out" (Corbin, 1964, p. 8). This ought not be the fantasy of an imagining but an image of the imaginal; an image interpreted through the real, the inner reality of the *mundus imaginalis*. Outside a few experimentally (and even fewer naturally occurring) closed contexts, a multiplicity of causes, mechanisms, and potentially theories is always involved in the explanation of any event or concrete phenomenon. This concrescence or assemblance is a creative choice from any potentials presenting themselves. These choices are understood in the situational circumstance of their occurrence.

Furthermore, we propose that such choices are predicated on a nature of unity derived from the diversity of both the immanent and the transcendental confirmed in the process of becoming. Their creative emergence, reflected as real events (i.e., in a new *trans-Reality* emergent from the Hidden Third), is the substance of complexity highlighting the diversity of importance in the process of becoming.

We propose that the emergence of something new during transdisciplinary problem solving requires the use of one's inner, active Imagination (not fantasy) and entails a process toward self-actualisation. This revealing and becoming of self is not a process of awakening but of *waiting*; it is that which comes as one presences oneself. Indeed, much like the mystic philosophies, this presencing is not in the reality of sensible and abstraction but as an intermediary reality between the sensible world and the intelligible world. This mystical bridgehead is what Corbin (1964) sought a description of and ultimately called the *mundus imaginalis*, which is entered through the "active Imagination" (p. 8).

To continue, the realisation between the imaginations that stem from (a) the imaginal realm and (b) personal fantasies is the *imaginatio vera*, which guides us to our self-activation during transdisciplinary problem solving. Each person would project their images of the world (*Imago mundi*) onto the group and expect aspects of their destiny – their becoming – to unfold (Corbin, 1964). This is also a central concept for Nicolescu's (2002) *homo sui transcendentalis* (i.e., a person who is born anew through engaging in the Hidden Third), wherein "transdisciplinarity ... opens an unlimited space of freedom, understanding, tolerance, and love" (p. 74) thus contributing to problem resolution.

### 1.6. Transindividual

This section frames the people engaged in transdisciplinary problem solving as more than an individual – they are a transindividual. To clarify, an individual is "fixed, essence-like, and interior. [A transindividual is the] product of a continual process of individuation in response to its [external] environment" (Taylor, 2021, para. 5). Individuation concerns the matter by which someone is identified as distinct from others. The individual essence, "which by definition is a *self-affirmation*, should also immediately mean a *resistance* to its potential destruction by other things, therefore *intrinsically* requiring a combination or coalition with some other 'similar' or 'convenient' things against other things which are 'adverse'" (Balibar, 1997, p.10). The "concrete concept of transindividuality therefore implies that relationships between individuals, or parts of the individuals' Minds and Bodies, are considered *in the transition* from Imagination to Reason, i.e., from a lesser to a greater power to act" (Balibar, 1997, p. 31).

Balibar (1997, 2018) and Simondon (2007) pointed out that the ever-changing intersectionality of selves and other, of thought and extension, means that no separation between a subject of knowledge and its object can subsist (likewise Nicolescu, 2002). Moreover, thought and extension are just two of infinite attributes of the unique substance leading to a multitude of separate entities with a

<sup>1</sup> Nicolescu (2014) argued that this imagination "dissolves into an endless chain of veiled, distorted, mutilated images" (p. 187), unless vision is involved. Visionary thinking allows a new *trans-Reality* to emerge with this aspect of TD thinking happening in a unique world *within* each person.

common genus. Taking such an ontological stance, individuals exist only because of the existence of other individuals with which they participate in an infinite network of connections (Balibar, 1997; see also Nicolescu, 2002, 2014). As they presence themselves, as they wait, they are always becoming. As such the causal powers of the individual are necessarily shaped by, and contributively to, the generative social powers of society.

Bottici further noted that “causality must not be understood in the sense of a linear succession of events, but rather as a multiplicity of connections linking individuals, which are made up of simpler and more complex individuals all causally related” (2019, p. 438). Consequently, every individual is constantly composed and decomposed by other individuals with whom they have contact through a process of individuation, which involves infra-individual, inter-individual, and supra-individual levels (Balibar, 1997). To render this complexity, individuality must be understood as a *transindividuality* – a “transindividual process of individuation” (Balibar, 1997, p.12).

### 1.7. Emergence

Transdisciplinary work cannot happen unless things that have the *potential* to emerge *actually* have a chance to emerge regardless of the ultimate form. This emergence is facilitated by the Hidden Third and imaged in the *mundus imaginalis*. If we accept that self-realisation and empowerment are actioned while wrestling control from external stimulated passions (i.e., external causal power), we must have an end – something must emerge.

Briefly, if, in addition to an emergent level, there is a qualitatively new or emergent outcome from the transdisciplinary nexus at work, then the knowledge required can no longer be generated by additive pooling of the knowledges of the various stakeholders concerned but requires instead a whole integration or a genuine transdisciplinary way of becoming that is experiential and emotional. One way of realising the potential that resides within us (as a capability to be and a process of realisation leading to determinate or indeterminate actuality) is to embrace the process of becoming through the relation of the potential in action within a transdisciplinary reality, giving full rein to creativity and innovation. In this system, the included middle (mediated by the Hidden Third) is the placeless place where the transcendental blends with the immanent and the philosophical blends with spiritual – the *mundus imaginalis*. It is, as Nicolescu (2002, 2015) suggested, an intermediate space between Realities.

This potential capability to emerge is an ontological driver of the actuality of becoming what we desire and image ourselves to becoming(s). The plural denotes a rhizoid of becoming – more than a linear process of becoming. Activities within the zone of nonresistance depend on actualising people’s potentials. This is manifested by questioning our everyday experience (our notion of reality) with (a) the knowledge that we have and (b) a preparedness to create new knowledge arising from that questioning. Ontologically, the most important result of our analysis herein is the need to understand a form of determination in reality, wherein several irreducibly distinct mechanisms at different and potentially emergent levels combine to produce a novel result (including work done in the zone of nonresistance to other’s ideas).

The decision to embark upon the process to release our potential and cast it in new interpretations of our becoming is to think creatively and innovatively about issues that we apprehend in the world. This creative, innovative new world of possibilities may be abductively explored not through formal logic but through the process of the included middle (i.e., inclusive and complexity logics) (McGregor, 2023). Here, becoming, as the emergence of the actualisation of potentiality, can form a continuity of, or a disruption to, the flow of the reality of one’s world. It is where the creation of trans-Realities can emerge, not grounded in the abstract metaphysic of empiricism but in an experience of engaging in a world reconfigured by the co-creative process of becoming. This is evident when people notice that “elements which shine with immediate distinctiveness, in some circumstances, retire into penumbral shadow in other circumstances, and into the black darkness on other occasions. And yet all occasions proclaim themselves within the flux of a solid world, demanding unity of interpretation” (Whitehead, 1967, p. 15).

For example, referencing Hadamard’s (1945) work, Nicolescu (2014) recounted that many scientific breakthroughs have a “sudden, immediate character (but always after a long period of preparation) of the actual manifestation of the revelation without the slightest participation of ordinary logical thinking” (p. 180). He creatively suggested that when science and non-science conjoin to create a breakthrough (via the Hidden Third), “the perception of reality necessarily required abandoning the accuracy of common logic” (Nicolescu, 2014, p. 181). Hence, when Nicolescu formulated a TD methodology, he proposed a new kind of logic – the axiom of *inclusive logic* (see also McGregor, 2020). And Nicolescu recognised the power of “imagistic visions. without any scientific justification” (2014, p. 183) to stimulate the creation of new TD knowledge. He said, “the founding imaginary [cannot manifest in anything new without the imaginal, which is] true, creative, visionary [and] vital [to breakthroughs]” (2014, p. 187).

## 2. Discussion

Just as Nicolescu (2014) was deeply concerned for the role of the spiritual in the Hidden Third, Corbin (1979) saw the need for “a spiritual mediator” (p. 14). Both men were striving “to obliterate the traditional [Western] opposition between soul and body [i.e., dualism]” (Shariat, 1991, p. 84). Fragmented knowledge that privileges science (object) and minimalises humans (subject) negates solving complex problems (Nicolescu, 2014). Corbin was convinced that the *interworld* created through contemplative experiences (via the *active Imagination*) “really exists” (Shariat, 1991, p. 83). This interworld is between the intelligible (object) and the perceptible (subject). Corbin was confident that a powerful pushback against dualistic thinking that precludes necessary breakthroughs involved “stress[ing] the specific noetic or cognitive function of this imaginative order” (Shariat, 1991, p. 84). It *really* does exist, and it can profoundly impact the process of addressing complex, wicked problems. Just because it cannot be seen, it doesn’t mean it is not real.

Paraphrasing Corbin (1964), the *active Imagination* symbolises with the world to which the two other functions correspond: sensory

knowledge, and intellectual knowledge. The active Imagination's function is to perceive or generate images leading to internal sense making while addressing complex problems with contrary-minded people. The *active Imagination* is revealed in the spaces of poetry, meditative thought, and aesthetics – akin to Nicolescu's (2002) lubricating Hidden Third (via art/aesthetics, culture, the Sacred connection with nature, or faith). We need to be clear here that imaginal – what pertains to images, the Imaginalis – is the image, and the image is an entity as well as a representation. This way, the image enjoys a primacy vis-à-vis language and argumentative thinking; it is the reality of the potential unspoken but is capable of understanding – it is primordial albeit it these imagines may be interpreted anthropomorphically. In Nicolescu's (2002) formulation, it is the reality of non-resistance to contradictory ideas, which is structured by narrative and image-based templates (ontogenetically developed). As such, these root templates of imagination are hard to see and examine. They are active in involuntary imaginings in dreams and mind wandering (wherein agency and executive control are low), but they are also deeply embedded in the cultural forms we produce and consume (e.g., folklore, religion, literature, film, etc.). (Asma, 2022, p. 244).

This potential is guided by our own imagined, primordial world. Corbin (1964) suggested that each “of us accrues in himself [sic] the *Image* of his own world, his *Imago Mundi*” (pp. 7–8). It is here, if we can find it, where freedom resides in our choice to act on our potential, and potentialities are aligned with the properties of the thing that determines its powers to act. Thus, not all the properties of a thing are equally important, but they all contribute to the potentialities to be realised. The *mundus imaginalis*, as envisioned by Corbin (1964), is where the *active Imagination* anticipates and molds sense perception both in transmuting (a) data into symbols and (b) internal spiritual states into visions (i.e., respectively Nicolescu's, 2002, TD-subject and TD-object). The *mundus imaginalis* is in true partnership with the included middle mediated by the Hidden third as a third space of knowing and becoming. Allowing understanding to emerge, unshackled from forms of logical, rational investigation, opens new realities and new truths. To this extant existence as becoming, experiences of the Hidden Third would be the norm as the seat of authentic emergence.

The *mundus imaginalis* (that intermediary, inner universe) helps people concern a non-Euclidian time and a space to do so; a time and a space not of extension but of the soul located in Nicolescu's (2002) Hidden Third. Nicolescu (2014) rejected *imaginary* and embraced Corbin's (1964) *imaginal* with the realisation that asking people to accept the workings of the Hidden Third and the existence of multiple levels of Reality meant asking them to accept the outcome of transdisciplinary work in the absence of any scientific justification but in the face of the imaginal, of images and archetype, which merge temporality into the moment of meaning, which forces an emergent trajectory to the future.

As well, the notion of the *transindividual* could be expressed as a spiritual reality, the emergence of the forces of the world, the Hidden Third, and the personal. It is in the transitioning realities of the Hidden Third, but the reality of the mystical and the profound. In this sense, *mundus imaginal* is a personal reality that enables the transindividual to emerge (potential actualised) and contribute to addressing complexity, not in a defensible singularity of individualism but in a complex, flexible, relational, and emergent response to the situationally perceived generative causality of a social setting (e.g., a problem-solving collective).

The nascent idea tendered in this paper accredits internal *mundus imaginalis* with the creation of an external trans-Reality emergent from people thinking together but as individuals. It legitimises what happens in each person's liminal (threshold) inner space as they engage in the zone of non-resistance to each other's ideas. We propose that work undertaken in the included middle draws on the images and the mysticism meaning of the *mundus imaginal* (that inner world or universe of each person). While the Hidden Third is a force that lubricates interaction among people, the *mundus imaginal* is the interworld of each person taking part in the interaction, so they can be a force of change. Their potential to contribute to the co-creation of knowledge in the zone of nonresistance is actualised via the energy of causal power; grounded in their *mutual images*, they can be a force shaping the ultimate effect – an amenable solution to a complex, wicked problem.

The concern for becoming (i.e., emergent actualisation) requires stepping out of secular temporality and spatiality. It involves instead stepping “into a mythic time, mythic space, mythic reality, where the historicist of time over space is reversed” (Cheetham, 2021, p. 39) toward a mystic and imaginal consciousness. This permits a challenging of the linearity of the logical into an open, new creative way of being in and forming images of the world. Imagine whose realisation may change the world through offering ways of seeing the generative forces that structure present concerns. This admits a third form of knowledge beyond the senescent perception of things and abstract logos. This gives ground for Nicolescu (2007) to fault the import of scientism, which holds that the “only reality worth of its name must, of course, be objective reality ruled by object laws. All knowledge other than scientific knowledge is thus cast into the inferno of subjective” (p. 37). He was unwaveringly convinced that an integration of both the subjective and objective is required to create TD knowledge (Nicolescu, 2002, 2014).

This line of thinking affirms our understanding herein of the *active Imagination* as a faculty of knowledge where spiritual realities are beyond the reach of mere rationality or normal sense experience. To enter *mundus imaginalis* requires one to seek to know oneself but with a knowledge that one does not already recognise. This world is the precursor of embarking on self-flourishing and is available to us *if* we disrupt our concerns with the everyday through mediation and poetry and in self-reflection in moments of vision (Gibbs, 2011). Our search for knowledge of how we can fulfil ourselves is not a cyclical one but one of emergence of a different being *if* we act on the emergence potential to create an emergent actualisation that is furfural and unpredictable. It augments our understanding of the Hidden Third in terms of inner image prior to language and the traditional, exclusive logical exploration of truth and being. In short, we propose that innovative and co-created solutions to complex problems can emerge when something is at work that helps very differently minded people realise that they have capabilities and *potential* that can be *actualised* through the collective and relational powers shared in the realisation of the transdisciplinary nexus.

In summary, the transdisciplinary nexus respects the process by which participants can leave the dependency of their subjective unity to embrace the relational, collective powers of the group and let a creative solution emerge. In doing so, they retain traces of their individuality but formulate another part of their transindividuality by opening new ways for them to interact with others. A way to do

that is exercise the imaginal as a joint transcendental reality, which is revealed through poetic, mystical, and mediative modes of thought and not the calculative and closed forms typified in scientism. Transdisciplinary problem solving demands both approaches. We propose that the transdisciplinary nexus shared herein provides an intellectual and philosophical framework to think further about this idea.

### 3. Conclusion

The rub of our argument then has been set out. People have been enframed by both the subject-object dichotomy and the hegemony of exclusive logic, scientism, and positivism. These have prevented people, in modern time, from both (a) feeling the existential apprehension of truths that are beyond the intellect and in the mystic (transcendental) and (b) seeking an authentic spirituality in understanding our Being and becoming as they engage complex problems. Weaving Nicolescu and Corbin's work together, in combination with the neologism we called the transdisciplinary nexus, adds transparency to the evolving understanding of reality during transdisciplinary problem solving. Our contribution at least mitigated some of the opaqueness associated with philosophical and methodological transdisciplinary discourse and may even contribute, although we make no claim to this, to a wider study of the philosophy of mind during transdisciplinary problem solving.

### Declaration of Competing Interest

We have no conflict of interest due to any reasons related tot heis paper.

### References

- Andermann, K. (2020). Transindividuality: The affective continuity of the social in Spinoza. In H. Rosa, C. Henning, & A. Bueno (Eds.), *Critical Theory and New Materialisms* (pp. 84–94). Routledge.
- Aristotle. (1984). *Metaphysics* (W. D. Ross, Trans.). In J. Barnes (Ed.), *volume 2. The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Princeton University Press.
- Asma, S. T. (2022). Imagination: A new foundation for the science of mind. *Biological Theory*, *17*, 243–249. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13752-022-00410-4>
- Balibar, E. (1997). *Spinoza: From Individuality to Transindividuality*. Eburon.,
- Balibar, E. (2018). Philosophies of the transindividual: Spinoza, Marx, Freud. *Australasian Philosophical Review*, *2*(1), 5–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24740500.2018.1514958>
- Bottici, C. (2019). Imagination, imaginary, imaginal: Towards a new social ontology? *Social Epistemology*, *33*(5), 433–441, 1080/02691728.2019.1652861.
- Brenner, J. E. (2011). *Metanexus Institute. Essay: The transdisciplinary logic of transdisciplinarity.*. (<http://www.metanexus.net/essay/transdisciplinary-logic-transdisciplinarity>).
- Center of Applied Jungian Studies, 2023, The mundus imaginalis: Accessing and activating the imaginal. <https://appliedjung.com/mundus-imaginalis/>.
- Cheetham, T. (2021). *The World Turned Inside Out*. Spring Publications.,
- Corbin, H. (1964). *Mundus imaginalis or the imaginary and the imaginal. de l'Association des amis de Henry et Stella Corbin*. <https://www.amiscorbin.com/bibliographie/mundus-imaginalis-or-the-imaginary-and-the-imaginal/>.
- Corbin, H. (1979). *Pour une charte de l'Imaginal [Charter of the imaginal]*. Buchet-Chastel.,
- Gan, T., Du Cann, C., Blackie, S., & Shaw, M. (2022, July 24). The mundus imaginalis is real - But how do we access it with the modern mind? Advaya. <https://advaya.co/read/2022/07/24/the-mundus-imaginalis-is-real>.
- Gibbs, P. (2011). The concept of profound boredom: learning from moments of vision. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, *30*, 601–613. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-011-9256-5>
- Gibbs, P., & McGregor, S. L. T. (2020). Being in the Hidden Third: Insights into transdisciplinary ontology. *Transdisciplinary Journal of Engineering and Science*, *11*, 142–157. <https://doi.org/10.22545/2020/00139>
- Hadamard, J. (1945). *An Essay on the Psychology of Invention in the Mathematical Field*. Princeton University Press.,
- Leitane, I. (2013). Transcendence and immanence. In A. L. C. Runehov, & L. Oviedo (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Sciences and Religion* (pp. 2275–2285). Springer.
- McGregor, S. L. T. (2020). Transdisciplinary logics of complexity. *Integral Leadership Review*, *20*(1). (<http://integrallleadershipreview.com/17501-7-31-transdisciplinary-logics-of-complexity/>).
- McGregor, S. L. T. (2023). Transdisciplinarity and public policy: Nicoliescuian, Zurich, and Brazilian approaches. *Transdisciplinary Journal of Engineering and Science*, *14*, 47–63. <https://doi.org/10.22545/2023/00219>
- Nicolescu, B. (2002). *Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity*. SUNY Press.,
- Nicolescu, B. (2007). Transdisciplinarity as a methodological framework for going beyond the science-religion debate. *Transdisciplinary in Science and Religion*, *2*, 35–60. ([http://www.it4s.ro/transdisciplinarity/Revista\\_TSR2\\_2007P.pdf#page=36](http://www.it4s.ro/transdisciplinarity/Revista_TSR2_2007P.pdf#page=36)).
- Nicolescu, B. (2010). Methodology of transdisciplinarity: Levels of reality, logic of the included middle and complexity. *Transdisciplinary Journal of Engineering & Science*, *1*(1), 19–38. <https://doi.org/10.22545/2010/0009>
- Nicolescu, B. (2014). *From Modernity to Cosmodernity*. SUNY Press.,
- Nicolescu, B. (2015). The Hidden Third as the unifier of natural and spiritual information. *Cybernetics and Human Knowing*, *22*(4), 91–991.
- Sandler, L. (2020). Istanbul in the Mundus Imaginalis (January) *Bosphorus Review of Books* (January) (<https://bosporusreview.com/istanbul-in-the-mundus-imaginalis/>).
- Shariat, A. (1991). Henry Corbin and the imaginal: A look at the concept and function of the creative imagination in Iranian philosophy. *Diogenes*, *39*(156), 83–114. <https://doi.org/10.1177/039219219103915605>
- Simondon, G. (2007). *L'individuation psychique et collective [Psychic and collective individuation]*. Editions Aubier.
- Taylor, D. (2021, January). Book review (Review of the book Spinoza, The transindividual, by E. Balibar). Marx and Philosophy Review of Books. [https://marxandphilosophy.org.uk/reviews/18671\\_spinoza-the-transindividual-by-etienne-balibar-reviewed-by-dan-taylor/](https://marxandphilosophy.org.uk/reviews/18671_spinoza-the-transindividual-by-etienne-balibar-reviewed-by-dan-taylor/).
- Whitehead, A. N. (1967). *The Aims of Education*. The Free Press.,