



Obituary/Necrológio

Henrique Leonel Lenzi

(★ 1943 †2011)

Henrique started as a professor at the *Curso Básico do Instituto Oswaldo Cruz* in 1984 as soon as he came back from the United States (Harvard, with John David). From the very first day I met him as a MSc student his enthusiastic personality was evident to me and all classmates; but he was not excited only with the advancement of science but especially with the possibility of comprehension of the natural phenomena. Attending lectures and presentations he was always listening very carefully, taking notes, commenting, posing interesting questions; criticism was a manifestation of respect and he was both rigorous and kind. He had the wisdom of professorship, with a permanent contribution from the competent and significant experience of Jane. His kindness was inspiring, the eyes gently looking at the other person, whatever the subject of the conversation and a usual positive stimulus for everyone. Gradually I noticed he became more and more open to emotions; taking pictures with a small digital camera and talking about good memories. Many times tears came easily, what is a very nice development of humans: be able to expand and demonstrate the vibration he always had along his life, living every single moment as a unique moment of the so short existence.



I will not talk about titles, numbers, papers, because I want to stress the essentials, the best qualities of Henrique as a scientist and as a human being. So I pay tribute to the complex thinking of Henrique. He was a pioneer in complexity approaches. Today interdisciplinarity is the new and necessary wave in Science. I remember a sunny morning at *Cinelandia*, City of *Rio de Janeiro*, one small book exposition and my encounter with the first volume of Edgar Morin's *The Method – the nature of the nature*.

Till today the same happens whenever I find interesting books and intriguing questions: I remember Henrique and how he so much liked the issues like *order coming out of chaos, complexity and spiral architecture of evolving systems*. Many people has been contaminated with these blessed challenges, including his son Henry. Henrique joined efforts with mathematicians, physicists, philosophers to investigate the granulomas, cellular architecture, intricate tissue matrix structures. He bravely faced the difficulties of language. At the International Symposium on Schistosomiasis in Salvador, after his dense, holistic and advanced lecture about granuloma, I heard one young student commenting: *I did not understand much, but it was cool...* It is amazing the ability of Henrique to induce in the public an inner movement, a powerful, moving and intense questioning.

It was not easy to many people understand the long hours Henrique and Jane were in the lab, from early morning to late hours at night. It was an intense and sincere dedication to curiosity, realization of the desire for uncovering the unknown, a restless search for comprehension. There were sacrifices but light came out. Henrique enlightened us all. He gave us the treasure no one takes away and a light that does not fade away.

Carlos Graeff Teixeira

From time to time, when the degree of credibility in the human beings reaches critical levels, humankind receives proofs that it is still possible to keep the confidence. At this time, the proof came with the name of Henrique Leonel Lenzi.

Henrique Lenzi was many: the visionary scientist, the inspired master, the daring thinker, the charismatic leader, and, above all, the uppermost human being who captivated and transformed everyone who met him. We were captivated by his erudition and bright intelligence; by his spontaneous joyfulness and his wide open laughter; by the absolute equity he treated all, from the very simple to the powerful people; by his simplicity and modesty, features of the truly wise persons; by the genuine interest he had for everything and everyone; by the generosity he donated his time, knowledge, ideas and experience; by the warmth of his affection that impregnated all his acts; by his ability to see always the better side of the persons; by his stubbornness to keep believing, even when hope seemed far away; by his courage to defend whatever he considered as true and correct, though knowing the cost of it; by his inability to feel himself greater than anybody else; by his incredible strength to overcome difficulties; by the authenticity he lived his principles and ideals; by his ability to keep his honor and integrity in whatever circumstances; by his unabated faith in the potential of human growth.

By his ability to transform people, Henrique Lenzi could be considered a revolutionary. His main weapon in the silent revolution he engaged himself throughout his life was the example of his conduct. This was the way he managed to rescue the most sublime values kept hidden within ourselves. We will never understand the mysteries of his precocious departure, at a time his mission of transforming the world had not come to an end. To comfort us, our conviction that he kept immortalized in each one who had the privilege to know him and to receive from him the influx of affection and wisdom that always emanated from him. By his example of life, Henrique Lenzi has managed to rescue our hope in the human being, and in the future of humanity.

Henrique Leonel Lenzi was born in Nova Prata, a small town of Italian colonization in the Serra Gaúcha, and was a grandson of Italian immigrants from both sides. From the years of his childhood and youth he spent in Catholic seminaries remained his command of Latin and Greek, and the conviction of his inability to become a priest. He has opted for another kind of priesthood: to reduce the ignorance and to seed kindness for wherever life took him. To support himself in Porto Alegre during his course of medicine at the Faculdade Federal de Ciências Médicas he worked at nighttime jobs as roadway inspector and post office clerk. While student, he fell in love with and married Jane Arnt, who became his lifelong companion, colleague and collaborator. After graduating in medicine in 1969, the couple moved to Salvador where Henrique Lenzi received medical residency training in pathology with Prof. Zilton Andrade at the Universidade Federal da Bahia (1970-1971). He pursued his professional and scientific formation with a master degree in human pathology at the Universidade Federal da Bahia (1978-1980), a WHO Immunology Training Course (1979), a fellowship in Immunoparasitology at the Harvard Medical School (1981-1983), a doctorate in pathology at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (1989-1991), and a post-doctorate in parasitology at the Institute Pasteur de Lyon, France (1992).

Henrique Lenzi had a very rich professional trajectory: assistant professor of pathology at the Universidade de Brasília (1972); organizer and chief of the Laboratory of Pathology of the Hospital das Forças Armadas in Brasília (1973-1978); organizer and head of the Department of Pathology of the Instituto Oswaldo Cruz (1984-2005), by invitation of the former director Prof. José Rodrigues Coura; titular researcher of the Instituto Oswaldo Cruz (1984-2005); director of the Superintendência de Informação Técnico-Científica da Fiocruz (1986-1989), by indication of the former president of the institution, Dr. Sérgio Arouca; and vice-president of research of the Fundação Oswaldo Cruz (1990-1991), by indication of the former president Dr. Hermann Schatzmayr.

A scientist always ahead of his time, Henrique Lenzi has developed several novel theories, particularly those related to the host-parasite relationships, including the concept of cohabitology and that of fractality and the immunopathogenesis of the *Schistosoma granuloma*. To give support to his ideas, the powerful tools of confocal microscopy, proteomics and mathematical modeling were used, the latter with the collaboration of Prof.^a Rita Zorzenon, from the Department of Physics, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco. He took advantage of his natural leadership skills to transform the Department of Pathology of the Instituto Oswaldo Cruz from a dying unity into a scientific center of excellence, attracting to it hundreds of Brazilian and foreign scientists. Special care was given to the formation of scientific skills of talented youngsters, some of them transformed into renowned scientists. Under his guidance and inspiration, the members of the Department of Pathology acted as a great and united family, where the problems and difficulties of each one were shared by the whole group. The atmosphere of opportunities, friendship and egalitarianism - a reflex of Lenzi's own personality - that prevailed in the Department was such that the daily scientific sections were attended by all members of the 'family', from the post-doc researchers to the lady cleaner.

Henrique Lenzi authored and coauthored dozens of scientific papers, and helped the preparation of several books, was an invited speaker in many international scientific meetings, and, above all, with the help of Jane Arnt Lenzi, was the responsible for the formation of generations of new researchers, who were shaped according to the principles of their mentors that linked scientific robustness to ethics. He was, as referred to by one of his former graduate student, Leonardo Carvalho, "... an enlightened being who acted as a mentor for science and for life". He has impressed whoever had the privilege to meet him by his profound passion for knowledge, that he always tried to capture by writing down every information he considered as important, by photographing every scene he wanted to keep in mind, and by reading the thousands of books of his huge library, spread throughout Nova Prata, Rio de Janeiro and Brasília.

After years of courageous fight against the lymphoma, Henrique Lenzi was defeated by the disease, leaving behind his wife Jane, his son Henry, and a multitude of friends, former students, and admirers immersed in profound sadness.

Carlos Eduardo Tosta