The Social Bond and the Person. Toward a Clinical Sociology

Jean-Michel Le Bot

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Toward a Clinical Sociology[1]

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Foreword

Contemporary sociologies often defines themselves as "actor-centered" sociologies. In them, society appears less as a reality *sui generis* that constrains the individuals, as it was according to Durkheim's paradigm, than as something constructed day-by-day by the various social actors. Is it even possible to continue speaking of society? Would it not be better to concentrate on the manifold shifting, fluctuating and necessarily contingent links, networks and relations that are woven by these actors? Should we not focus our efforts simply on "tracing the associations" (Latour, 2005) and revealing the boundaries drawn by the actors themselves in order to embrace other actors? But who are these actors? The study of works of sociology shows that they are most often human beings who are designated either as individuals or as subjects. In what way are these human beings actors? That is a question that is hardly ever asked. The fact that human beings must be endowed with a capacity for social action, a capacity for historicity or, in other words, a capacity to be, in part through their relations with others, the actors or authors of their own histories, is one of the major postulates of contemporary sociology. However, it is possible to go beyond this postulate and attempt to account for what it is that makes human beings capable of historicity. Because this is not self-evident. A certain number of pathologies, both in the psychiatric and the neurological fields, seem to affect this ability of humans to be the authors of their own history as actors and potential interlocutors in a relationship with others. This, at least, is the hypothesis proposed by Jean Gagnepain in the second volume of a work that appeared in the early 1990s (Gagnepain, 1991) [1]. This hypothesis which has, since that period, gathered support from clinical experience, has resulted in the concept of "person". As

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[1]Born in 1923, Jean Gagnepain died on January 3rd, 2006. A trained linguist – his thesis was directed by Joseph Vendryes –, most of his professional career was spent at Rennes 2 University where, based on studies of aphasia conducted in partnership with the neurologist Olivier Sabouraud, he developed a clinical model of the dimensions that specify human beings which is known as the theory of mediation. It was in 1988 that I decided to discover this theory, benefitting from the teaching I received from Jean Gagnepain himself and from his first generation of students.

Gagnepain explains, if a human being is a social actor who is capable of historicity then it is first and foremost because he or she is a person. By this, he means that humans possess a specific mental capacity to create social bonds, the functioning of which is partially revealed through the clinical study of perversions and psychoses as well as of certain cerebral lesions.

The aim of the present book is to summarize and assess our current knowledge of the person understood in this sense. Though written by a single author, it is underpinned by the work performed by an entire team, most of whose members were tutored directly by Jean Gagnepain himself. Since this work comes from a number of different sources and is not always easily available, we decided to produce a summary of it and compare this with other recent work in the field of sociology. In doing so, we have not hesitated to dwell at some length on a number of clinical cases. We considered this to be necessary, given that while the sociology of the person claims to be a clinical sociology, no publication had previously set out in detail the clinical studies undertaken by researchers inspired by the theory of mediation in their attempt to address perversions and psychoses and compare these studies with others conducted by psychiatrists or psychoanalysts. The aim, however, is not to develop a treatise (that would be premature), but to advance, to the greatest possible extent, the hypotheses that we owe to Jean Gagnepain. In cases where we were unable to find any clinical work conducted by researchers acting within the framework of the theory of the person, we have not hesitated to present cases described by psychoanalysts whenever these made it possible to strengthen or question the hypotheses suggested by the model.

The idea that sociologists need to learn from the ill in order to understand what it is that underpins social bonds might seem surprising and it is one that is still far from becoming established as widespread practice in the field of sociology. It is, however, many years since Lacan said of paranoia that "the interpretation delusion is a delusion of the landing, the street, the forum" (Lacan, 1932, p. 212). In effect, paranoia, like schizophrenia or perversions, is a disorder that profoundly affects relations with others. Each of these pathologies raises questions about what it is that underpins social bonds. All sociologists are aware of the attention paid by Goffman to the arrangements relating to the territory of the self in the staging of everyday life (Goffman, 1971). It is less well remembered that this same Goffman once stated that

> "Many classic symptoms of psychosis are precise and pointed violation of these territorial arrangements. There are encroachments, as when a mental patient visiting a supermarket gratuitously riffles through a shopper's cart, or walks behind the counter to examine what is contained there, or openly advances

her place in the checkout line, or leans into an ongoing conversation not her own, or addresses a midpassage statement to someone who has not been brought into a state of talk. There are self-contaminations involving exposure or befoulment, as when a patient is denudative, or too easily invites conversational contact from others, or speaks aloud shameful admissions, or smears himself with half-eaten food, or openly toys with his mucus, or takes dirty objects into his mouth" (*ibid.*, p. 359) [2].

Goffman was not very far from outlining a clinical sociology of the same type as that given to us by Jean Gagnepain.

"Mental symptoms directly express the whole array of divisive social alignments: alienation, rebellion, insolence, untrustworthiness, hostility, apathy, importunement, intrusiveness, and so forth. These divisive alignments do not – in the first instance – constitute malfunctioning of the individual, but rather disturbance and trouble in a relationship or an organization" (*ibid.*, p. 387).

Is this not another way of saying what we have already said above, namely that the study of mental symptoms is one of the very best way to understand what it is that underpins social bonds, "relations" or "organizations"? To understand, furthermore, what makes human beings into social actors? It is simply a shame that Goffman was content to speak only in terms of a generic patient and did not pay more attention to the way in which *different*, although not all, mental symptoms specifically call into question *different* aspects of the social bonds. It is this that differentiates him from Gagnepain.

The current work is organized as follows. The first chapter provides a critique of various conceptions of exchange and social bonds that have played a prominent role in the history not only of sociology but also, and more generally, in that of the human sciences. It ends with the conclusion that it is necessary to focus first and foremost on social forms. The second chapter looks at the way in which the person, by establishing boundaries that both differentiate and segment, implicitly formalizes social relations. This second chapter also provides an opportunity to present and define the most important concepts relating to the sociology of the person: the concepts of

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[2]Whenever a pre-existing English version of the works quoted here was available (the original version as in the case of Erving Goffman's works or a translation as in the case of Pierre Bourdieu's works), this English version has been used. See the bibliography at the end of the book for the corresponding references.

individual, subject and person, as well as concepts such as status, position, function and role. It provides an extensive description of clinical psychiatric cases taken, as far as possible, from the clinical work of researchers inspired by Jean Gagnepain, but also on occasions from psychoanalysis. Finally, the third chapter summarizes the body of works produced by mediationist researchers in the field of neurological disorders affecting relations with others. In particular, it shows how these disorders make it possible to provide a solid foundation for the distinction between subject and person.

As we have said above, this volume attempts to take account of the work performed by an entire team. It would not have been possible were it not for the efforts of several generations of researchers who have explored the avenues opened up by Jean Gagnepain, some of whom will find here an echo of their own work, nuanced of course by my own preferences and choice of sociological literature. At this point, I must thank most particularly Armel Huet, founder and, for many years, Director of LARES, who drew my attention to the value for sociology students such as myself of attending the optional linguistics courses open to us. Next, my thanks must go to Jean-Yves Urien. It is to the great scientific and pedagogic quality of his teaching that I truly owe my understanding of the contribution of clinical anthropology to the human sciences. I must also thank the entire team at LIRL [3] and most especially Jacques Laisis, Jean-Claude Quentel and Jean Gagnepain himself who welcomed me more than once with his habitual friendliness. I also reserve a special mention for Hubert Guyard, who left us too early, and Olivier Sabouraud with whom we enjoyed many forward-looking conversations during our laboratory seminars. If this book has any qualities then they are due primarily to all those named above. As for its inevitable deficiencies, I fear I alone must bear the entire responsibility.

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[3]Laboratoire interdisciplinaire de recherches sur le langage (Interdisciplinary Laboratory for Language Research, Rennes 2 University, France), now merged into the Interdisciplinary Center for Analysis of Human and Social Processes (Centre Interdisciplinaire d'Analyse des Processus Humains et Sociaux or CIAPHS).

Chapter 1

The different forms of exchange

1.1   The social bond: an old concern

The question of the social bond lies at the heart of the sociological endeavor
(Nisbet, 1970). For Auguste Comte, the purpose of sociology, or the science
of humanity, was to help the divided societies of his time to develop into
the reconciled societies of the future (Aron, 1967, p. 117). For his part,
Durkheim was obsessed with the crisis of modern society which, in his view,
was characterized "by social disintegration, the weakness of the ties binding
the individual to the group" (Aron, 1967, p. 33). He, too, believed that it
was the task of sociology to save society from this disintegration by restoring
what he termed solidarity.

While this anxiety about the social bond therefore played an important
role for the founders of French sociology, the question of the social bond
actually predates the 19th century. Dominique Méda has shown that we can
find its origins, at least in the modern period, in the break-up of the feudal
order (Méda, 1995).

The Middle Ages conceived of the social order as an order ordained by
God in line with the teachings of Saint Paul ("*Non est enim potestas nisi a
Deo*" – Rom., 13,1). During the 17th century, this conception came under
severe attack. Hobbes, in particular, dealt it a decisive blow by dissociating
the social order from the natural order and imagining a fictional, primordial
natural state with which human beings had broken by deciding to engage in
society. This conception was gradually to become the dominant one. How-
ever, if the social order is arbitrary and at constant risk of being broken down
into its constituent elements, namely the individuals who form it, and thus
of returning to a state of war which, according to Hobbes, characterizes the
natural, unregulated coexistence of individuals, then the problem lies in how

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"to find the rule for the coexistence of those who now recognize themselves as and claim the right to be individuals and to avoid constantly casting doubt on this rule" (Méda, 1995, p. 83).

As Méda also showed, the 17th century was the period when social thinkers set themselves the task of discovering this rule. Two solutions, one "economic" and the other "political", were proposed to bring unity to the unordered multiplicity of individuals in their natural state and each of these solutions involved the idea of a contract.

1.1.1   The political solution

The "political" solution conceived of a new type of contract that would bring about the formation of a political authority (the State) and through which the unity of the politic body would be established. In *The Social Contract or Principles of Political Right*, Rousseau thus imagined a primitive natural state in which human beings would have been inherently free. He supposed "men to have reached the point at which the obstacles in the way of their preservation in the state of nature show their power of resistance to be greater than the resources at the disposal of each individual for his maintenance in that state. That primitive condition can then subsist no longer; and the human race would perish unless it changed its manner of existence" (Rousseau, 1762, book 1, chap. 6 [1]).To preserve themselves, human beings would have had no other solution "than the formation, by aggregation, of a sum of forces great enough to overcome the resistance. These they have to bring into play by means of a single motive power, and cause to act in concert" (*ibid.*). However, here Rousseau noted a contradiction: "This sum of forces can arise only where several persons come together: but, as the force and liberty of each man are the chief instruments of his self-preservation, how can he pledge them without harming his own interests, and neglecting the care he owes to himself?" (*ibid.*).

The problem that the Social Contract had to overcome was therefore as follows: "to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before" (*ibid.*). To respond to this problem, Rousseau formulated the clauses of the social pact as follows: "Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and, in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole" (*ibid.*). This is the pact by means of which "a people is a people"

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[1]Translated in 1782 by G. D. H. Cole, public domain.

and in which one should see "the true foundation of society" (*ibid.*, chap. 5).

1.1.2 The economic solution

For its part, the "economic" solution considers that the social bond is made up of an infinite number of mostly implicit contracts concluded within the framework of commercial exchange This conception is very clearly set out by Adam Smith, according to whom it is commercial exchange that lies at the root of and preserves society. Furthermore, Smith held that it is at all times the multiplicity of commercial exchanges that constitutes the social bond. And these exchanges themselves derive from needs that human beings are unable to satisfy on their own. In this way, each individual's pursuit of his own interests almost automatically brings about the establishment of the social bond. In effect, the desire for prosperity is such that, on the one hand, it makes efficiency – and consequently the division of labor – obligatory and therefore increases interindividual dependence. On the other, the contribution of each individual to production is remunerated as a function of the value of the work done. It is this remuneration alone that enables them to consume and satisfy their needs. In this way, it also contributes to the establishment of the bond. According to this conception, therefore, "trade is the melting pot of the social bond: while we believe that we trade to gain wealth, we simultaneously acquire the social bond and a leveling of conditions. The economy brings together the arbitrary and the natural: we trade in the illusion of achieving a promised prosperity and, once again, construct the social bond without intending to" (Méda, 1995, p. 89). In other words, the search for prosperity through the indefinite increase in production is what prevents social disintegration. The social bond is assured by a never-ending flow of commercial exchanges that are all but identical to the flows that can be observed in physics (*ibid.*, p. 201).

1.2 A critical appraisal of these conceptions

By searching for the principle underlying the "social bond" in contracts and exchange, the thinkers of the 18th century had identified something of fundamental importance. Despite this, they were unable to avoid a somewhat naïve and reductionist conception of contract and exchange which still influences thinking today. To move beyond this conception, we should like to make three comments: exchange is not reducible to a physical flow; contracts presuppose an ability to contract; exchange is not limited to the trade in "economic" goods.

1.2.1 Exchange is not reducible to a physical flow

Since its emergence in the 18th century, economics has been viewed as a "theory of contracts" according to which the social bond derives from the permanence of exchange. The problem here relates entirely to the fact that exchange is often thought of based on the model of the flows that are studied in physics (electrical current, hydraulic flows, etc.). As far as the economy is concerned, as Méda wrote, "the social bond is, in an almost physical sense, this unending flow of exchanges" (Méda, *op. cit.*, p. 201). This appears, for example, in the "economic circular flow" which can be found in practically any macroeconomic textbook.
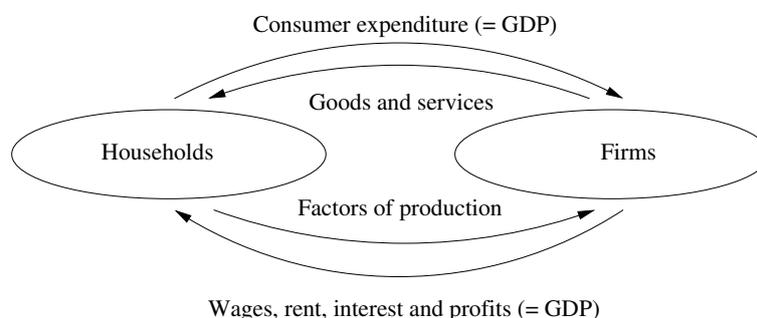
Figure 1.1: The economic circular flow (two sectors model)

The inner flow is called the "real flow" (flow of factor services from households to firms and flow of goods and services from firms to households), while the outer flow is the "money flow" (monetary payment from firms to households for their factor services and monetary payments from households to firms against their goods and services). However, the very expression "circular flow" suggests that we are dealing with a single flow apprehended at different points during its circulation. The use of the term "flow" itself is not without its implications. It testifies very well to the salience of physical models in economic thought[2]. Furthermore, this salience of physical models is not restricted to the economy. It can also be found in the field of verbal

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[2]Clearly seen in the work of the marginalist economists of the late 19th century such as Walras (Le Bot, 2002, 2003), this salience of physical models can also be found in what has been termed "hydraulic Keynesianism" and is still present today as is shown by the repeated attempts to give a new "scientific" basis to economics in the light of advances in physics, despite the many criticisms made by economists of varying hues, as well as by sociologists and economic anthropologists (Steiner, 1999; Callon and Muniesa, 2003; Callon, 2006). Thus Jean-Philippe Bouchaud, a French physicist, professor of physics at the École polytechnique, as well as founder and chairman of the hedge-fund Capital Fund Management (CFM), fuelled a new debate with an article published in *Nature* in December 2008 in which he emphasized the need for economics to draw much more deeply

exchanges in all of the "communication schemas" in which an "emitter" E is linked to a "receiver" R by some "channel", "thread" or "conductive space". One old example of this takes the form of the "speech circuit" described in Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*, the seminal work of modern linguistics.
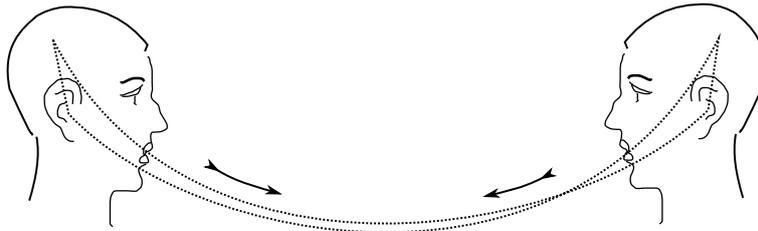
Figure 1.2: The speech circuit (F. de Saussure)

This elementary schema was followed by the many different models of communication that emerged in the wake of the Second World War. However, many of these models, from the extremely simple proposal put forward by Shannon and Weaver (1948) to the more complex idea developed by Abraham Moles (1988) are no more than models of circuits that account better for the physical transmission of a signal between an emitter and a receiver than for the social bonds between human beings which, as we shall see, involve the boundaries of a constantly reaffirmed otherness.

It is true that human beings have a tendency to communication and exchange and that these communications and these exchanges may seem to unfold in accordance with the simplified schemas that we have referred to above. However, appearances can deceive, as much in the human sciences as in the natural sciences. To say that human societies are based on exchange is, as Alain Testart comments, "to say something very ordinary and trite that applies to all sorts of worlds, whether the world of physics, that of biology or the social world, without being the defining characteristic of any of them" (Testart, 2007, p. 17). To go beyond this trite affirmation and identify what is specific to human exchanges, we shall take as our starting point an observation drawn from everyday life: communication difficulties.

Everyone can complain, at some time, of not understanding someone else or of not being understood by them. Everyone has attended family reunions or work meetings that seem to be dominated by a general lack of under-standing and which often seem to decline into a round of turn-taking in which everyone provides a different reformulation of what the person next

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on the example of the physical sciences. See http://arxiv.org/PS_cache/arxiv/pdf/0810/0810.5306v1.pdf, and http://physicsworld.com/cws/article/print/38469.

to them has said but without it being possible to come to any agreement. In the teaching field, it is well known that all students share the deplorable tendency of misinterpreting what the teacher thinks he or she has explained "clearly"! The same is true of readers who always misinterpret, misunderstand or completely fail to comprehend a text which, to its author, is the soul of clarity itself! Conversely, however, for the student or reader, the teacher or author are never "clear" enough!

The fact is that we never share exactly the same words or the same knowledge and that readers necessarily reformulate in their own way (and using their own words) what authors formulate in theirs. That is why Jacques Lacan was able to claim that he never knew what he was saying or, in other words, that we never know exactly what other people understand by what we say [3]. I say what I say. But on the basis of what I say, you understand what you can or what you want to understand. However, there is more. It would be illusory to believe that the words we share necessarily convey the same meaning. You will never think exactly the same thing as me in exactly the same words as me because you use these words in different configurations of oppositions and relations, you associate them with different presuppositions and you derive other inferences from them. Although language is generally held to be a "means of communication", it has to be admitted that it is a very bad means. It permanently causes misunderstanding, disagreement and incomprehension.

If there are misunderstandings and differences in interpretation, this is because there is a pre-existing otherness that distinguishes one person from another. A communicative exchange between persons necessarily presupposes this otherness. Communication is the attempt to reduce a difference that precedes it. The divergence is therefore situated in the communication itself, because this divergence – this otherness – is an intrinsic characteristic of human beings. At the human level, therefore, exchange is the attempt to reduce a pre-existing difference, but without it ever being possible to eliminate this difference in the same way, for example, that a foreign body can be eliminated. This difference or otherness is always there. Or perhaps it would be better to say that it is they that create the need to communicate, exchange, converse. In short, communication takes place within a context of difference which it attempts to reduce without ever being fully able to do so. The result is always relative and unstable. Communication, by attempting to attenuate a pre-existing difference, actually reaffirms this difference.

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[3]The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, book XVIII, *On a discourse that might not be a semblance* (1971), translated by Cormac Gallagher from unedited French manuscripts. http://www.lacaninireland.com/ (visited 14, April, 2013) – A French version, also from unedited manuscripts, is available here: http://staferla.free.fr/

The otherness of the interlocutors persists during and after the act of communication even though they are transformed by it. What is termed "the convergence of viewpoints" is never anything other than the transformation of two persons by one another. However, these two persons continue to be no less different from one another throughout the dialog.

Naturally, this general formulation also applies to the present work. If I make the effort to write it, it is because I hope that, when you have finished reading it, you will no longer think about the "social bond" as you did before. I also hope that what I, and the authors I quote, have to say about the matter will contribute to this change in your thinking. However, it is certain even now that, by the end of this book, you will still think differently from me and the authors I may have inspired you to read and whose reasoning and vocabulary you believe you have "assimilated". For my part, in my desire to change your knowledge, I am obliged to be as "clear" as possible. To do this, I must formulate my arguments in a way that will be understood and express myself at a "level" that I imagine to be that of my readers. In other words, you are already present in my way of writing which you are helping to change. There will be, I hope, a sufficient "convergence of viewpoints" so that you will not be left bewildered but not to such an extent that you will have the impression that I am pushing against an open door.

This is the apparent paradox of human communication: a dialog leaves you somewhat changed (provided that you have consented to listen to another person) even though you still remain yourself. The point of view deriving from our personal history and personality is not reducible to each of the points of view of those with whom we have entered into communication. But, nevertheless, our subsequent knowledge bears the trace of the various discussions that have, in some way or other, directly or indirectly, influenced our developing personality. In brief, the paradox is that others make us what we are, but always different from themselves.

What we have said above is true in the case of dialog, that is to say an exchange of words. However, it is equally true of other fields of "communication" or "commerce" (in the sense of "intercourse in the affairs of life" as the Oxford English Dictionary puts it). The "form" taken by communication is always the same: a "dialectic" relation between otherness and identity, appropriation and exchange, ownership and sharing, opinion and consensus, or, in short, divergence and convergence.

Let us take the example of what was once termed "amorous commerce". This involves the problem of the simultaneity of desire, for example in the form of orgasm. I want it, she doesn't. She wants it, I don't. I'm experiencing pleasure, she's not. She's having fun, I'm not… Woody Allen illustrates this very well in the film *Annie Hall*, when, at the moment of making love, Annie

(Diane Keaton) splits into two, with her body remaining present for Alvy Singer (Woody Allen) while her "spirit" gets up, sits on a chair and asks for paper to draw on. To some extent, so-called "women's magazines" are fuelled by the answers that they attempt to provide to this type of misunderstanding which, furthermore, are the stock-in-trade of "sexologists" and other "sex therapists". This is surely a sign that the problem of "communication" is present in this domain as well.

And the same is true of exchanges of products or interactions circumscribed by a technical environment. One might think that a crossroads is a crossroads, the same for everyone, defined by a certain technical and spatial configuration. How, then, is it possible to account for the many accidents of varying levels of severity that occur there so frequently unless we accept that these crossroads are never exactly the same for each of the drivers who negotiate them at any given time[4]? And are the carrots that an organic farmer sells directly at the local market really the same for him and for the local dignitary or naval officer's wife who buys them from him? For him, an old sixties hippy, these carrots and their method of cultivation are an integral part of a form of protest against a productivist view of agriculture and an entire established order. For her, far from representing such a protest, these carrots are just one element in a specific dietary regime and, perhaps also, a form of snobbery (to do one's shopping at the market is, of course, more "authentic" than to trail round the shelves at the hypermarket!).

In short, there is no type of human exchange, whatever its content, without a risk of misunderstanding due to the otherness of other people. In the next chapter, this unavoidable otherness will oblige us to question the relevance of the concept of the individual that is so dear to sociology and to common sense alike. But before that, however, we must re-examine the concept of contract.

1.2.2 Everything in a contract is not contractual

For there to be a contract, whether this is the constitutional contract that founds a nation or any of a multitude of commercial contracts, there must first of all be an ability to contract. Assuming that the contract is the origin of the social tie – an expression used by Rousseau as early as the first chapter of the second volume of the *Social Contract* – is therefore to use the result to explain the process that made it possible to achieve it! However, Rousseau was clearly not completely fooled because he added that "the clauses of this

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[4]With regard to the necessity of ordering, on the pavements and on the roads, the "passings-by of unacquainted pilots", see what Erving Goffman has to say about "vehicular units" (Goffman, 1971, p. 5 *ff.*).

contract […] although they have perhaps never been formally set forth […] are everywhere the same and everywhere tacitly admitted and recognized" (Rousseau, 1762, book I, chap. 6). Rousseau's problem, however, was less to provide a scientific account of the social bound than to answer the "social question" of his time, which he summarized in his famous formulation: "Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains" (*ibid.*, chap. 1). It is also true that the question of contract persisted unresolved after Rousseau. The founder of French sociology, Émile Durkheim, claimed that the contract could not lie at the root of societies because contracts presuppose the existence of society:

> "For everything in the contract is not contractual. The only engagements which deserve this name are those which have been desired by the individuals and which have no other origin except in this manifestation of free will. Inversely, every obligation which has not been mutually consented to has nothing contractual about it. But wherever a contract exists, it is submitted to regulation which is the work of society and not that of individuals, and which becomes ever more voluminous and more complicated" (Durkheim, 1947, p. 211).

Durkheim does not, of course, deny the existence of numerous contracts in modern society. However, for him,

> "this contractual element is a derivative of the structure of the society and, one might even say, a derivative of the state of the collective consciousness in modern society. In order for an ever wider sphere to exist in which individuals may freely reach agreements among themselves, society must first have a legal structure which authorizes independent decisions on the part of individuals. In other words, interindividual contracts occur within a social context which is not determined by the individuals themselves. It is the division of labor by differentiation which is the original condition for the existence of a sphere of contract. […] When economists or sociologists explain modern society on the basis of the contract, they are reversing both the historical and the logical order" (Aron, 1967, p. 19-20).

Society with its rules therefore comes before contracts. The problem is that we still have to explain why there is such a thing as "society". No-one has ever actually encountered "society", which is a largely mythical being: all

we ever meet is people. That is why certain sociologists, who are opposed to Durkheim on this point, have suggested that we simply abandon the concept of "society". Like Margaret Thatcher, albeit for different reasons, they could say that "there is no such thing as society". In France, this is the case of Alain Touraine (Touraine, 1992), for example, as well as of Bruno Latour who prefers to see sociology as a science of *associations* (Latour, 2005). We willingly agree to their proposals in the present work whose very aim it is to show how each person draws the boundaries of these associations.

1.2.3 Exchange is not limited to its "economic" content

However, we must first return to the "economic" conception of exchange and bonds. In effect, in this conception, exchange tends to be reduced to simple commercial exchanges or trade, that is to say the sale of products and services for a price expressed in monetary terms. There is, however, no more reason to limit exchange to this concept of trade than there is to take account only of exchanges that have some type of specific "content".

With reference to this issue, a major step was taken by Georg Simmel who attempted to distinguish the "form" of social relationships from all of their specific "contents".

> "Hence, not only may the form in which the most divergent contents are realized be identical; but, inversely, the content, too, may persist, while its medium – the interactions of the individuals – adopts a variety of forms. We see, then, that the analysis in terms of form and content transforms the facts, which – in their immediacy, present these two categories as the indissoluble unity of social life – in such a way as to justify the sociological problem" (Simmel, 1950, p. 22-23).

This leads us to the conclusion that the economic domain (which relates to the satisfaction of material needs) is merely one of the "contents of life" which, like all other contents, owes "its form" to the "transformations in the purely sociological structure", that is to say to transformations in the order of social relationships (Simmel, 1950, p. 16-17). Such an approach very clearly casts doubt on the economism of Marx and of economists in general, that is to say on the idea that social relationships are ultimately an expression of some form of "economic infrastructure". This distinction between the "form" and "content" of social relationships was to re-emerge to some extent in the work of Marcel Mauss who believed he could identify "the *form and reason for exchange* in archaic societies" in the threefold obligation to give, to receive and to repay (Mauss, 1990, our emphases).

It is, nevertheless, not enough to view exchange as the general form within which this mixture of different contents circulates. To a large extent, this error is due to a lazy interpretation of Mauss as well as of Lévi-Strauss. As a result, the way these two authors define "exchange" deserves to be discussed.

Exchange in Mauss and Lévi-Strauss

The starting point is the famous *Essay on the Gift*, to which we referred above. In it, Mauss asks two questions: "What rule of legality and self-interest, in societies of a backward or archaic type, compels the gift that has been received to be obligatorily reciprocated ? What power resides in the object given that causes its recipient to pay it back?" (Mauss, 1923-1924/1990, p. 4 – translated by W. D. Halls)[5] He believes to have found in exchange, "one of the human foundations on which our societies are built" (*ibid.*, p. 5)[6]. We know that in this article, Mauss attaches great importance to the study of the potlatch festivals of the indigenous peoples of Northwest America in which he sees "total services of an agonistic type" (*ibid.*, p. 8). Mauss contends that, alongside its agonistic character, these total services comprise three "moments" or three "obligations": the obligation to make gifts, the obligation to receive gifts and the obligation to reciprocate by repaying gifts. Mauss goes on to say that this system, "constitutes the most ancient system of economy and law that we can find or of which we can conceive. It forms the base from which the morality of the exchange-through-gift has flowed" (*ibid.*, p. 90)[7]. And "this whole economy of the exchange-through-gift", which "lay outside the bounds of the so-called natural economy, that of utilitarianism" (*ibid.*, p. 92)[8], "not only throws light upon our morality and help us to direct our ideals. In their light, we can analyze better the most general economic facts, and even this analysis helps us dimly to perceive better organizational procedures applicable in our societies" (*ibid.*, p. 91)[9]. Mauss clearly did not

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[5]The first English translation was as follows: "In primitive or archaic types of society what is the principle whereby the gift received has to be repaid? What force is there in the thing given which compels the recipient to make a return?" (1954).

[6]Mauss wrote: "un des rocs humains" ("one of the human bedrocks"). The first translation was: "one of the bases of social life" (1954)

[7]Mauss wrote: "Il forme le fond sur lequel s'est détachée la morale du don-échange" (1950, p. 264). The first English translation was something of a simplification, saying "constitutes the oldest economic system we know. It is the base from which gift-exchange arose" (1954, p. 68).

[8]Mauss spoke here of the "échange-don". The first English translation was "fails to conform to the principles of so-called natural economy or utilitarianism" (1954, p. 69).

[9]The first English translation was: can help us "to point out our ideal" and may "help us to analyse economic facts of a more general nature, and our analysis might suggest the way to better administrative procedures for our societies" (1954, p. 69).

differentiate between exchange and gift and spoke equally of "exchange-gift" and "gift-exchange" [10]. This lack of distinction can even be found in the title of the work: "Essay on the *Gift*: Form and Reason for *Exchange* in Archaic Societies" (our emphases).

According to Mauss, exchange constitutes "a total social fact". To draw on the terminology used by Georg Simmel, we can say that exchange constitutes the "form" in which a range of different "contents" take place. This is because in this text, Mauss attempts to identify a general form of exchange (giving, receiving and repaying [11]) behind the infinite variety of exchanged "contents" - tools, manufactured products, food and drink, magic spells, songs, dances and myths - examples of which he looks for in a wide variety of so-called "archaic" societies: the Samoan and Maori peoples of Polynesia, the New Caledonians and Trobriand Islanders in Melanesia, the Indians of Northwest America, antique Rome, ancient India, the old Germanic peoples etc. The expression "total social fact" used by Mauss, in particular in connection with exchange, implies the recognition, behind the extreme diversity of specific manifestations, of a social form that makes it possible to give these exchanges a "global meaning" (Lévi-Strauss, 1950, p. xxvi).

However, once again it is important not to give way to the temptation to overgeneralization to the point of confounding exchange and gift and seeing, everywhere and at all times, only a single "form and reason for exchange". As Alain Testart (2007) has shown, to exchange is not the same as to give. One of the criticisms that can be leveled at Mauss is that he did not want to see this difference because, like Durkheim, his uncle, his main concern was to found a new morality which would be distinct from "utilitarianist" morality. We shall return to this question.

Lévi-Strauss, however, who did not share Mauss's moral preoccupations, was to go still further in reducing all social forms to exchange. In *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, he summarized "the famous *Essay on the Gift*" as follows;

> "In this study, which today is regarded as a classic, Mauss sought to show that exchange in primitive societies consists not so much in economic transactions as in reciprocal gifts, that these reciprocal gifts have a far more important function in these societies than in our own, and that this primitive form of exchange is

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[10]This lack of distinction is lost in the two English translations, with the first referring to "gift-exchange" and the second to "exchange-through-gift".

[11]Mauss says "donner, recevoir et rendre". The second English translator, W. D. Halls, chose to translate "rendre" by "reciprocate", while the first translator preferred to use "repay".

not merely nor essentially of an economic nature but is what he aptly calls 'a total social fact', that is, an event which has a significance that is at once social and religious, magic and economic, utilitarian and sentimental, jural and moral" (Lévi-Strauss, 1969, p. 52).

Like Mauss, Lévi-Strauss also emphasized the fact that this "attitude of primitive thought toward the exchange of goods is not only expressed in clearly defined and localized institutions" but also "permeates every transaction, ritual or profane, in which objects or produce are given or received" (*ibid.*, p. 53). He noted a clear difference between commercial transactions and the reciprocal gifts of primitive societies (*ibid.*, p. 65). However, first and foremost, he stressed the reciprocity of the exchanges observed during potlatch festivals as well as in receptions held in Western societies (*ibid.*, p. 67). And, in his opinion, it is this rule of reciprocity that also explains the prohibition of incest:

> "Like exogamy, the prohibition of incest is a rule of reciprocity, for I will give up my daughter or my sister only on condition that my neighbor does the same. The violent reaction of the community towards incest is a reaction of a community outraged. Unlike exogamy, exchange may be neither explicit nor immediate; but the fact that I can obtain a wife is, in the final analysis, the consequence of the fact that a brother or a father has given her up" (*ibid.*, p. 62).

Three years later, in *L'introduction à l'œuvre de Marcel Mauss*, Lévi-Strauss went even further in reducing gift to exchange. Mauss, he said, "rightly seemed to be dominated by logical certainty, namely that exchange is the common denominator of many social activities that are different from one another. However, he is not able to see this exchange in the facts. Empirical observation does not show him exchange but only – as he says himself – "three obligations: giving, receiving, reciprocating" (Lévi-Strauss, 1950, p. xxxvii-xxxvii). However, the important thing, adds Lévi-Strauss, is to "understand that exchange itself is the primitive phenomenon and not the discrete operations into which it is broken down by social life" (*ibid.*, p. xxxviii).

General circulation

However, at this level of abstraction, exchange designates nothing more than a general circulation and we are not far removed from the flows described by

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economists. Here, we shall adopt the reasoning of Irène Théry who identified two different books in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Théry, 2007). The first of these books mobilizes the *structural method* which has proven to be extremely adept in calling into question the substantialist conceptions of institutions and culture (*ibid.*, p. 154 and 163). The second book, however, is dominated by a *structuralist postulate* that is totally at odds with the descriptions provided by the first. According to Théry, this second book constructs a "modern origin myth" which sees the exchange of women as the "key in the transition from the state of nature to the state of culture" (*ibid.*, p. 155). And it is, unfortunately, this extremely questionable second book that the majority of sociologists have seized on.

In it, Lévi-Strauss holds that all men have a "deep polygamous tendency" which "always makes the number of available women seem insufficient", and all the more so given that "these women would not all be equally desirable" and that "the most desirable women form a minority. Hence, the demand for women is in actual fact, or to all intents and purpose, always in a state of disequilibrium and tension" (Lévi-Strauss, 1969, p. 38). Even though Lévi-Strauss does not expressly say so, everything seems to suggest that, to some extent, this "deep polygamous tendency" observable in men reflects a shortfall in the "supply" (of women) compared to the "demand". The solution to this problem consists in the right of control that the group assumes over the freedom of access to women, resulting in the famous formulation, according to which "the prohibition of incest is less a rule prohibiting marriage with the mother, sister or daughter, than a rule obliging the mother, sister or daughter to be given to others. It is the supreme rule of the gift" (*ibid.*, p. 481).

This new origin myth insists that there is only one sole "law of exchange", defined as a "principle of the reciprocity of mine and thine" (Théry, 2007, p. 157). In it, social life is reduced to a general circulation of women, words and things which, as we have said above, is not so very different from the flows that economists write about. Furthermore, the terms used by Lévi-Strauss to explain why it is beneficial both for the group and for the individual that "neither fraternity nor paternity can be put forward as claims to a wife" (Lévi-Strauss, 1969, p. 42) are similar to those used to justify free trade (free and fair competition is more beneficial than protectionism).

A typology of transfers

To go beyond this conception of exchange which interweaves reciprocity and general circulation, it is necessary to distinguish between at least three definitions of exchange (Testart, 2007).

1. The first definition is contractual: here, exchange is an exchange of

goods and "to exchange" means "to cede in return for a counterpart";

2. The second definition places the emphasis on reciprocity and, more specifically, on the intentional addressing of a recipient. In this definition, to exchange is to "address something to a specific recipient and receive in return"; at this level, it is possible to talk about an exchange of smiles, an exchange of courtesies or even an exchange of blows;

3. The third and final definition relates to circulation, irrespective of the domain in question (which may be the social domain involving, for example, road traffic, the biological domain involving an exchange of substances between a cell and its nutrient environment, or the physical domain in which, for example, heat is exchanged between two bodies).

In the third definition, exchange designates a simple two-way flow without any intentionality. By contrast, the first two definitions presuppose intentionality. According to Testart, the second definition is inseparable from the concept of addressing a recipient. The smile, the courtesy or the blow is *addressed* to someone. It is *issued by someone* and brings about a *response*. At the risk of getting ahead of ourselves, we could say that exchange, here, presupposes the presence of persons who are defined as possible interlocutors. As for the first, and most restrictive, definition, it implies not only the addressing of a recipient but also a condition: there must be a counterpart. This is the *condition* for the exchange. The goods are ceded by one of the parties to the exchange on condition and only on condition that the other party gives up something in return.

Testart goes on to say that the third meaning is purely kinetic. There is a "simple, two-way movement", a "simple reciprocity of actions that take place in space" (Testart, 2007, p. 16). Although the second meaning also involves reciprocity, it additionally includes the idea of response which "corresponds [in English] to *to reciprocate*: it is an intentional, wished for, meaningful reciprocity" (*ibid.*). Finally, the first meaning "designates a human institution that is complex and completely specific" (*ibid.*). Exchange, the act of ceding, presupposes a prior agreement concerning the wishes of the parties in the same way as jurists describe contracts. And it is precisely this demand for a counterpart that distinguishes between an exchange and a gift. An exchange, in the first of the meanings listed above, is therefore a human relationship which is different from a gift.

Testart goes on to say that Lévi-Strauss writes at such a level of abstraction that both exchange (in the first sense given above) and gift, which is defined relative to the concept of exchange, have disappeared. All that is left are cycles of reciprocity or, in Testart's words "a kinetic formalism" which

refers to the third, and most general, meaning of the word exchange and which cannot "claim to account for social life" (*ibid.*, p. 223). This is a vigorous criticism but it is not very different from that leveled by Irène Théry with regard to the hypothetical component of *The Elementary structures of Kinship*. It addresses the structuralist stance which, in Lévi-Strauss, underpins the illusion "of a forthcoming grand unification of the natural sciences and the social sciences under the aegis of cybernetics understood as the science of communication" (Théry, 2007, p. 199).

That having been said, however, the criticisms raised by Alain Testart do not target Lévi-Strauss alone but, first and foremost, Mauss. This latter, as Testart shows, did not see, or did not want to see, that a gift is very different from an exchange. In the *Essay on the Gift*, and as we have seen, Mauss talks about a "gift-exchange" and about an "exchange-gift". Unlike Irène Théry, we do not therefore believe that it is possible to revert to Mauss's ideas here or that the study of the "potlatch societies would make it possible to access a more universal, deeper truth and even the 'law' underlying all social life" (*ibid.*, p. 190), or in short the famous "human bedrock" that Mauss believed he was in contact with ("Nous touchons le roc", Mauss, 1923-1924/1950a, p. 264[12]). A plentiful ethnographic literature, which has been summarized by Alain Testart, requires us to abandon this supposed bedrock. The unavoidable conclusion is that an exchange is not a gift, and that Mauss, who never possessed a very clear conception of the idea of gift, tended to overestimate its importance in primitive societies.

In order to escape from the confusion that characterizes the *Essay on the Gift*, Testart suggests constructing a typology of transfers. He describes transfer as "the fact that goods, irrespective of their nature, that are originally available to a social actor A, transit through society to become available to another actor B – and do so irrespective of the way in which they transit provided that this is considered legitimate by the society in question" (*ibid.*, p. 24). On this basis, he goes on to distinguish between three types of transfer: gifts, exchanges and what he provisionally terms "transfers of the third type".

The defining characteristic of a *gift* is the absence of any demand for a counterpart. Although a counterpart is possible, the gift is not conditional upon it; it is not obligatory and can never be demanded. In other words a gift is unconditional. There is no obligation to reciprocate (unless from a "moral" point of view and even then not always). Even if the recipient may "feel" obligated toward the giver, he is in no way obliged to provide a

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[12]The first English translation here was "here we touch bedrock". W. D. Halls translates: "we touch upon fundamentals" (Mauss, 1990, p. 89)

counterpart; he has not committed himself to anything. This is the case in a potlatch, even if there is some self-interest at work here because a man's prestige depends on the number of potlatch he has been able to give during his life.

In the case of *exchange*, in contrast, goods are ceded subject to the condition that there is some counterpart. This counterpart can be demanded and is legally obligatory. The parties to the exchange enter into a reciprocal obligation, contract a debt with regard to one another, make a commitment to one another. It could even be said that the counterpart is the cause of each of the transfers (in kinetic terms, an exchange combines two transfers). And the debt exists even if the counterpart is given immediately. As in the case of gifts, there are many different types of exchange: there are commercial exchanges and others that are not so (not everything that is not commercial is necessarily a gift). The difference does not reside in the deferred nature of the counterpart or in the use of money but in the existence of an offer and a demand: in a marketplace, of whatever type, merchandise is *offered* for sale, separated from its owner. The same is not true of non-commercial exchanges, a good example of which is the kula, a vast system for the transfer of goods in the islands at the extreme Western edge of New Guinea, which owes its ethnographic renown to the description of it published by Malinowski in 1922.

Finally, *transfers of the third type* (t3t) include fines, the payment of interest or damages, reparations, taxes, labor provided in lieu of taxation (tallage, corvée, etc.). They are the result of an obligation that the recipient is perfectly entitled to demand but for which there is no counterpart. The t3t include transfers resulting from a status of dependence (such as the corvée and tallage in medieval Western Europe). In effect, unlike a charge, the corvée or taxes are not due as the counterpart for a service; they are due *absolutely* and unconditionally [13]. It might be objected that as counterpart for the tax paid, the State protects its citizens, the lord his vassals or the sovereign his subjects. However, this protection is not the *cause* of the obligation (in the sense that only the provision of the counterpart creates an obligation). Another characteristic of these t3t is that the obligation persists for as long as the relationship of dependence lasts (whereas in the case of an

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[13]A charge is an obligatory exchange (use of the communal mill, television license fee, fee for the collection of household waste), but it is nevertheless an exchange: it is due as counterpart for a service. In those French communes that are currently experimenting with an incentive charge for the collection of household waste, the charge is paid as counterpart for the provision of the service. In contrast, the tax on household waste is due unconditionally and paid by the taxpayer along with his or her local taxes irrespective of the volume of waste collected.

exchange, the obligation is commensurate with the debt and disappears once the debt has been paid off).

Schemes of relation

Based on the work of Testart, Philippe Descola proposed a typology of schemes of relation (Descola, 2005). For Descola, these schemes or modes of relation can be reduced to six fundamental types that are subdivided into two groups: potentially reversible relations between equivalent terms (exchange, gift and predation), on the one hand, and irreversible relations between terms that cannot be substituted for one another because they have a hierarchical relationship (production, protection, transmission), on the other.

With regard to the question of exchanges and gifts, Descola reuses the definitions proposed by Testart. Whereas "a gift is primarily a one-off gesture which consists in giving up something to someone without expecting any compensation for it other than the possible gratitude of the recipient" (Descola, 2005, p. 429), an exchange places the creditor in a position to *demand* a counterpart for the service rendered or the thing that has been transferred. In other words, only an exchange brings with it the obligation to reciprocate and transforms the partners into debtor and creditor. Finally, in addition to exchanges and gifts, Descola identifies a third type of social relation which he terms *predation.* This takes the form of a taking which entails no more obligation on the part of the person who engages in it than a gift does on the part of the person who receives it. We can speak in terms of theft, capture or unjust appropriation if our aim is "to focus on the generally illicit and reproved nature of the operation" (*ibid.*, p. 435). Despite this, when rooted in a core self-preservation mechanism (predator/prey relationship), predation is and has been sufficiently widespread everywhere and in all ages for us to be able to speak of a form of social relationship as such.

So much for the reversible relations between equivalent terms. When describing the irreversible relations between terms that cannot be substituted for one another, the first scheme cited by Descola is *production.* The relation here is clearly irreversible "the genetic antecedence of the producer with regard to his product means that the latter cannot, in turn, produce its producer (even if it can help maintain him), thus making it, at least in its initial condition, dependent on the entity to which it owes its existence" (*ibid.*, p. 439). Descola then refers to Marx before asking whether the production relation which, in our society, is easily conceived of as the principal way available to humans to transform nature and, by doing so, transform themselves, is equally preeminent in societies other than Western societies. Even if people manufacture everywhere, is manufacturing always necessarily

understood in terms of the production model?

The prototype of the *protection* relation as defined by Philippe Descola is the parent-child relationship. Without ever being reciprocal, this relationship can nevertheless be inverted with time as children, for example, when they have become adults, take care of their now elderly parents. In all cases, the relationship is unequal since the assurance and security through which it is manifested are offered by the person who is able to provide them.

This protection relation can take the form of a chain when the protector is himself protected by someone more powerful than he is. While the prototypical relation may be the parent-child relation, protection can also be found in the relationship between the citizen and the State or in the case of animal or plant species protected by their defenders Finally, *transmission* is the relation "which gives the dead a hold over the living through the mechanism of descent" (*ibid.*, p. 450). This relation encapsulates the question of inheritance: property, rights, political independence, physical or mental characteristics. Even though, in some form or another, inheritance exists everywhere, despite the fact that the things that are inherited may vary greatly, it is only "in certain circumstances that this transfer process assumes the form of a genuine debt on the part of the living to the dead, with the former considering themselves to be indebted to the former with regard to almost everything that relates to their existence" (*ibid.*). According to Descola, the best example of the predominance of this relation can be found in the ancestor worship observed in Western Africa.

This typology is simultaneously more complete and simpler than that elaborated by Testart. In his *Critique of the Gift*, Testart is ultimately only interested in the question of exchanges and gifts and does not consider predation and non-reversible relations (production, protection, transmission). Descola considers potential bonds and relationships that Testart does not examine. By contrast, Testart is more precise in his examination of the various types of transfer: not only do transfers of the third type have no place in Descola's work, but this latter author also does not linger for long on the various forms of exchange (including commercial exchanges) However, the most important point that should be noted is that the distinction between two major groups of relational schemas is consistent with the distinction, to which we will subsequently return, between parity relations and paternity relations, one of the possible manifestations of which is illustrated by the classical distinction between alliance and lineage. It is in this way that Jean-Pierre Vernant explains that marriage in ancient Greece "is a formalized transaction between family groups", "a form of commerce between families" of which women were an element, but that "it also allows men of a particular lineage to form a family and so ensure the continued survival of their house"

(Vernant, 1983, p. 139). Here, it is easy to recognize exchange as a special form of transfer as described by Descola and Testart. A woman's role in marriage "is to seal the alliance between opposing groups. Like a ransom, she may be the means of bringing a vendetta to an end" (*ibid.*). And in marriage, we find the demand for a counterpart which characterizes an exchange and distinguishes it both from a gift and a transfer of the third type. At the same time, the aim of marriage is to ensure the reproduction of the line. In ancient Greece, Vernant explains, it was viewed as a production relation:

> "the Greeks viewed marriage as a form of plowing the soil (*arotos*), the woman symbolizing the furrow (*aroura*), and the man the ploughman (*arotêr*). This imagery [...] is something much more than a mere literary device. It is in line with the declaration of the plighting of troths in the stereotypical style made familial by the comedies. The father, or in his absence the *kurios* who is authorized to arrange the daughter's marriage, pronounces as the pledge of betrothal (*eggunê*): 'I bestow this girl in order that plowing should bring forth legitimate children' – *tautên gnêsiôn paidôn ep' arotô soi didômi*" (*ibid.*, p. 140)

Having taken as our starting point the critique of the concept of exchange in Mauss and Lévi-Strauss, the example we have just presented shows that the relations that develop within the framework of kinship relations are not simply kinetic in nature. The Greek concept of marriage, as described by Vernant, clearly falls within the idea of exchange as a type of transfer, at least in so far as the alliance it forges is concerned. However, it also shows that a theory of social forms cannot be restricted to transfers alone. It must also take account of all the relations that Descola refers to as irreversible relations between non-equivalent terms: production, protection and transmission relations which all, ultimately, represent an aspect of lineage (Descola explicitly refers to this when speaking, for example, of genetic antecedence in production which thus refers to the genitality of the *gonos* as well as of the *tokos*).

And this observation leads to another: if it is necessary to distinguish between different relations – we can no longer simply talk of exchange and still less of gift-exchange or exchange-gift – then we must also raise the question of the institution of the agents involved in these relations, all of which imply the addressing of a recipient and a response, and therefore a potential interlocutor. When discussing this question, Testart sometimes speaks of individuals, and sometimes of groups, persons or agents. These terms are neither trivial nor, in our opinion, equivalent. The aim of the next chapter will therefore be to specify them in greater detail before examining the way

in which a person, by implicitly drawing boundaries, formalizes social relations and gives birth to the diverse and multiple social forms that have been emphasized by Testart.

Chapter 2

Establishing boundaries

To attempt to understand how social forms are instituted by persons is to adopt a sociological perspective which holds that society does not exist except insofar as it is constructed by social actors. That is why our sociological approach might be considered to be a constructivist one.

To a certain extent, we agree with Bruno Latour when he asserts that society does not exist but that the social is "a movement during a process of assembling" (Latour, 2005, p. 1). The social, Latour goes on to say, is "a trail of associations between heterogeneous elements", and sociology is "the tracing of associations" (*ibid.*, p. 5). In short, "the first feature of the social world is this constant tracing of boundaries by people over some other people" (*ibid.*, p. 28).

It is this final formulation that will serve as our guiding thread throughout this chapter because what is particular to our approach, the theory of the person, is that it focuses first and foremost on the boundaries of social life which social actors draw, knowingly or unknowingly, consciously or unconsciously, in order to include other actors within them. We could almost define sociology as the study of these boundaries that social actors establish for themselves even if they do not know they are doing so. This is what is lacking in Latour: it is not sufficient to say that the actors draw boundaries. It is also necessary to account for their ability to draw these boundaries. If innovations have to be attributed to a founding father, then the sociology of the person should be traced back to Georg Simmel. This is because Simmel's formal sociology can be seen as a sociology of the ability to bind and unbind:

> "Only man, as opposed to nature, has the faculty of binding and unbinding, and in this specific manner: that one is always the presupposition of the other" (G. Simmel, *Bridge and Door*, p. 1).

It is this ability to "bind" and "unbind" that will form the object of the present chapter whose main thesis can be formulated as follows. Human beings possess a mental ability, the person, which implicitly draws the boundaries of social life. These implicit (but also sometimes explicit) boundaries identify the actors and bind them together, at least partially, at the same time as they distinguish between them and separate them from other actors. Perversions and psychoses, as disorders of the relationship to others, are disorders of this mental ability. And the study of these psychiatric disorders (as well as the study of some neurological disorders which we shall address in the next chapter) represents the best way of gaining an understanding of what the person is. This is the lesson we have learned from Gagnepain: sociologists who wish to study the boundaries of social life must learn from the world of perversions and psychoses.

We shall start with a critical examination of the concept of socialization which, in the "sociology of the social", the sociology adopted by Durkheim's heirs, makes it possible to account for the behavior of actors in terms of their conditioning by society. This will then enable us to make a distinction between the concepts of individual, subject and person.

2.1   Socialization

The question of socialization forms part of a sociological tradition which, from Durkheim onwards, has sought to shed light on the way individuals are determined by their social environment. Durkheim himself went a very long way down this road in tending to identify socialization with humanization: "deprive man of all that society has given him and he is reduced to his sensations. He becomes a being more or less indistinct from an animal" (Durkheim, 1953, p. 55). Among the most highly developed theories of socialization, we can identify Pierre Bourdieu's theory of *habitus*. A fourth declension Latin word, *habitus* designated not only a person's way of being, disposition and social situation or rank, but also an attitude, an exterior, or an appearance. In Antiquity, this term was used to translate into Latin the Greek word *hexis* which designated the act of possessing or possession (as opposed to *ktêsis*, or acquisition) and played an important role in the philosophy of Aristotle. In the Middle Ages, *habitus* was an important concept in the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. In the field of social and cultural anthropology, it can be found in the work of Mauss who speaks of *habitus* in connection with "the techniques of the body" acquired through "habit" (Mauss, 1950b, p. 669). With his theory of *habitus*, Bourdieu, for his part, makes the claim that he is attempting to go beyond the "scientifically quite

absurd" opposition between objectivism and subjectivism as well as to escape the positivist alternative which consists in an opposition between the individual and society [1]. He defines *habitus* in a long series of formulations including the following, which contain the key features of this definition:

> "The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 53).

> "The analysis of objective structures – those of different fields – is inseparable from the analysis of the genesis, within biological individuals, of the mental structures which are to some extent the product of the incorporation of social structures; inseparable, too, from the analysis of the genesis of these social structures themselves: the social space, and the groups that occupy it, are the product of historical struggles (in which agents participate in accordance with their position in the social space and with the mental structures through which they apprehend this space)" (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 14).

> "The *habitus* – embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. As such, it is what gives practices their relative autonomy with respect to external determinations of the immediate present" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 56).

Structured structure and structuring structure, embodied history internalized as nature, these are the vital characteristics of *habitus* as Bourdieu

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[1]"The most typical example is the scientifically quite absurd opposition between individual and society, which the notion of *habitus*, as social life incorporated, and thus individuated, is meant to transcend" (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 31). See also: "This infinite yet strictly limited generative capacity is difficult to understand only so long as one remains locked in the usual antinomies – which the concept of *habitus* aims to transcend – of determinism and freedom, conditioning and creativity, consciousness and the unconscious, or the individual and society" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 55).

conceives of it. Confining Bourdieu's definition of the *habitus* to these few characteristics might appear to be an oversimplification. However, by retaining, in the definition of habitus, both the concept of structure and that of embodiment, it seems to be faithful to what Bourdieu himself defined as the key elements in his work: "a philosophy of science that one could call *relational* in that it accords primacy to relations" (or to structures), as well as "a philosophy of action designated at times as *dispositional* which notes the potentialities inscribed in the body of agents and in the structure of the situations where they act or, more precisely, in the relations between them" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. vii).

However, this definition of *habitus* raises three questions:

1. If socialization is a process of *internalization*, then what is the "interior" in which this takes place? If the *habitus*, as a product of socialization, is *embodied* history then what "body" does it refer to? If internalization and embodiment are to occur then there must be something that creates an interior and a body. In order to embody, in the same way as "to introject and project, that is to say expel outside of oneself, some form of delimitation must have taken place on the basis of which the separation between the internal and the external, the inside and the outside, becomes possible" (Quentel, 1993, p. 237). Therefore, even after the hypothesis of the *habitus* has been accepted, the scope of the problem is in no way reduced: how does the embodiment in question take place?

2. How should we account for the structure itself? According to Bourdieu, *habitus* is a "structured structure" because it results from the embodiment of a social structure which is itself the product of *habitus* which functions, in turn, as a "structuring structure". A structuring structure because it is a structured structure and a structured structure because it is a structuring structure, the only way that the concept of *habitus* seems to be able to account for structuring appears to be through tautology. In Bourdieu, structuring is always "already there", the result of some mysterious "big bang". How can we find another way of accounting for it?

3. Does everything happen during childhood? The transformation that occurs during puberty, which is of considerable importance for an individual's access to sociality, did not particularly interest Bourdieu for whom the *habitus* resulted from the embodiment of social structure from childhood onwards [2] without being marked by any particular

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[2] "Everything takes place as if the *habitus* forged coherence and necessity out of accident

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stage occurring around puberty. The theory of mediation, by contrast, owes all the importance that can be attributed to it to the question of this pubertal retardation.

It is these three questions that we shall now attempt to answer. First of all, however, we must emphasize the need not to confuse individual, subject and person.

2.2 From individual to person

2.2.1 Individual, subject, person

While psychoanalysts have acquired the habit of talking about subjects, sociologists currently refer to "the individual" as if the concept were self-evident. Thus, for example, the *Dictionnaire critique de sociologie*, written by two sociologists responsible for promoting methodological individualism in France, does not contain any entry for "individual". There is admittedly an entry for "individualism" which, however, refers from the outset to the "individual" without making any effort to define this term. All that is said is that in modern industrial societies, "the individual is considered to be a fundamental unit of reference, both for himself and for society" (Boudon and Bourricaud, 2004). Here, we intend to follow the lead given by Jean Gagnepain in refusing this type of evidence of the individual and distinguish between three levels in what constitutes the human condition:

1. the biological individual (the biological body, its anatomy and physiology, as "substructure" or "substratum"),

2. the socializable and socialized subject who internalizes or "embodies" what it encounters in the social environment,

3. the autonomous person, capable of constructing his own history in which he is both author and actor.

and contingency; as if it managed to unify the effects of the social necessity undergone from childhood, through the material conditions of existence, the primary relational experiences and the practice of structured actions, objects, spaces and times, and the effects of biological necessity, whether the influence of hormone balances or the weight of the visible characteristics of physique" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 79). See also: "the anticipations of the *habitus*, practical hypotheses based on past experience, give disproportionate weight to early experiences" (*ibid.*, p. 54).

The individual

We can re-use, word-for-word, the definition of the individual given by neuropsychologist Pierre Karli as a "living entity, clearly delimited in space from its environment and insulated by a cutaneous envelope from this environment", including when he says that "this entity is not entirely self-enclosed: in fact the complete opposite is true since its autonomous functioning requires the unceasing exchange of material, energy and information with the environment" (Karli, 1995, p. 21). Indeed, this biological definition of the individual largely corresponds to that given by Gagnepain who sees it as a living being whose constituent elements cannot be separated beyond a certain level without killing it. The individual is therefore considered in opposition to the mineral and this definition applies to the entire set of living things, both vegetable and animal, from single-cell organisms through to humans.

Within this set, so-called "eukaryotic" plants and animals are characterized by a sexual mode of reproduction: two individuals of different sexes, or sometimes only two cells of different types, must meet in order to give birth to a new individual. Sexual reproduction gives rise to a sort of biological series of individuals in which each individual represents a specimen of the set that constitutes the species. If we consider only a single segment in this series linking any two male and female individuals to their male or female progeny then it is possible to distinguish between *sexuality,* on the one hand, and *genitality,* on the other [3].

Sexuality designates the difference and complementarity between two individuals, a male and a female, whose being is fully characterized, beyond their simple capability of contributing to procreation, by the sex to which they belong (plumage and song in birds, voice and so-called "secondary" sexual characteristics in humans, etc.).

Genitality, on the other hand, designates a "bringing into the world" (parturition), together with all the care for the offspring required during the period of extra-uterine maturation, which differs in length depending on species, and which separates birth from maturity. It can therefore be seen that sexuality, which makes two individuals functionally complementary, also subjugates them (albeit in different ways depending on the species) to a child which, at the biological level, represents their future as a species.

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[3]Freud, like Gagnepain, distinguished between a sexual function and a genital function. However, he tended to think in terms of stages with the child's pregenital life coming to be organized at puberty under the primacy of genital zones (Freud, 1920a). According to Gagnepain, by contrast, sexuality and genitality – sexuation and generation – are complementary but parallel natural functions. For a further discussion of this point, see Quentel (2001).

The subject

As living beings, humans are, of course, individuals who propagate through sexual reproduction. However, they are more than just that. They are unified subjects who are capable of embodying, in a sort of "memory", the input they receive from their environment. As we saw above, Bourdieu defined precisely this *habitus*, which is a product of socialization, as an *embodied* history internalized within the individual's own nature. However, we still need to explain what it is that makes this embodiment possible. It should be noted that Bourdieu himself suggested one possible mode of explanation when he wrote:

> "to speak of dispositions is simply to take note of a natural predisposition of human bodies, the only one [...] that a rigorous anthropology is entitled to assume, a conditionability in the sense of a natural capacity to acquire non-natural, arbitrary capacities. To deny the existence of acquired dispositions, in the case of living beings, is to deny the existence of learning in the sense of a selective, durable transformation of the body *through the reinforcement or weakening of synaptic connections*" (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 136 – our emphases).

Indeed, it is now clear that even if the development of the brain is controlled by genes, not everything about its development is genetic. After birth, the network of synaptic connections continues to develop under the influence of external factors (Jeannerod, 2002). The theory of synaptic efficacy, which goes back to the 1940s, tells us that the efficiency of synapses in frequently used circuits increases while that of infrequently used synapses diminishes. This theory of synaptic efficacy accounts for learning and memory.

However, it is not enough to speak in terms of the conditionability or epigenesis of synapses in response to environmental influences. Once again, it is necessary to explain what it is that gives the body its unity. This is what Jean Gagnepain attempted to do by hypothesizing the existence of an embodiment, or somasic, function "which, by giving him natural boundaries, confers upon the biological individual the autonomy of a subject" (Gagnepain, 1991, p. 24).

This concept of embodiment is not unrelated to what Lacan identified as of 1936 as a "mirror stage" starting from which a process of identification becomes established (in the "imaginary mode" of relating to the world)[4].

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[4]"What we have here is a first capture by the image in which the first moment of the dialectic of identifications is sketched out" (Lacan, "Aggressiveness in Psychoanalysis", 1948, in *Ecrits*, 2006, p. 91).

However, both Lacan and his followers are open to criticism for the overly exclusive emphasis they place on the *image* of the body which, like the "signifier", relates always to representation (perception and meaning). In effect, a clinical approach makes it necessary to distinguish between infantile psychoses and the congenital or acquired agnosias and aphasias in which, and only in which, perception and meaning as such are impaired. What is more, this criticism has much in common with Bourdieu's criticism of social psychology which he reproaches for situating the "dialectic of incorporation" at the level of representations (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 72).

However, whereas Bourdieu did not clearly explain what it is that underpins this "dialectic of incorporation", the idea of a somasic (or embodiment) function makes it possible to specify what it is that conditions the emergence of the *habitus* which is defined precisely, and correctly, as embodied history. Because it lends the subject a certain permanence beyond the situations in which the individual is placed, access to the soma thus permits a certain decentering in time as well as in space.

> "The world is comprehensible, immediately endowed with meaning, because the body, which, thanks to its senses and its brain, has the capacity to be present to what is outside itself, in the world, and to be impressed and durably modified by it, has been protractedly (from the beginning) exposed to its regularities" (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 135).

Does not the entire problem of asomasia lie in the disappearance of the "world" in the absence of a "body", in the inability therefore "to be present outside of oneself" because of the failure to create a boundary for the "body", which alone defines a "self" correlative with the "outside" world at the same time as it permits the "embodiment of the structures of the "world" which, in turn, defines the *habitus* as a "system of dispositions"? This is indeed what we shall attempt to demonstrate in chapter three on the basis of a comparison, taken from Attie Duval, of two patients with cerebral lesions: RG and FM.

Person

The autonomy of the actor   Human beings are not just socialized subjects whose personality is formed under the influence of the social environment. They are also the actors and authors of their own stories. The majority of contemporary sociologists correctly emphasize this concept of actor. In this case, to speak of human beings as social actors is to emphasize their

autonomy. Human beings, let us say it again, are *autonomous.* This idea of autonomy lies, for example, at the heart of the sociology propounded by Michel Crozier and Erhard Friedberg who start from three postulates:

1. Human beings never agree to being treated as means in the service of the ends which organizers define for their organizations. In other words, they never agree to being instrumentalized. Each of them has their own objectives and their own aims.

2. All the actors in an organization retain the possibility to act autonomously and make greater or lesser use of this possibility. These separate autonomies come together in the struggle for power, with the central power attempting to control the autonomy of the actors who, in turn, attempt to escape this power.

3. Although the strategies used in these power struggles are always rational, their rationality is limited. Rationality, here, means that the actors attempt to satisfy their interests as best they can.

However, these postulates are more than just postulates, that is to say propositions that have to be accepted as true without demonstration. They derive their meaning from Crozier's philosophical perspective which is further bolstered by his political commitment. These postulates could possibly be presented as empirical observations (Friedberg, 1997, p. 25) although this would not fundamentally change anything: nothing is demonstrated. If we believe that these postulates were legitimate at the time they were formulated, it is no less legitimate today to wish to go further and demonstrate their validity, transform them into hypotheses and theoretical proposals, even if this means that we have to reformulate and specify in greater detail a certain number of concepts.

The autonomy of the actor, as understood by Crozier and Friedberg, is directly linked to the fact that social reality is structured, to use Bourdieu's term, that is to say that it is perceived as a world of "differences", of "gaps", of "distinctive features" whose properties are "relational propert[ies] existing only in and through [their] relation with other properties" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 6). However, here again we most go beyond the aporia of Bourdieu which leads us from structured structures to structuring structures based on the assumption that structure is always "already there". To go beyond this aporia and account for the structured, differential character of social reality, it is necessary to hypothesize that there is such a thing as an ability to structure. This is exactly what the theory of mediation does with its concept of the person.

For, once again, if the *habitus* is a "structuring structure" because it is a "structured structure" as the product of the embodiment of "social structures" then how can we explain, except in terms of an infinite regression, the "arbitrary" nature of these "structures"? Bourdieu correctly stresses the "disproportionate weight of early experiences" in the formation of the *habitus*. However, the fact that the child is, from the outset, situated within social history and social customs (which he internalizes to form his *habitus*) does not allow us, other than through this infinite regression, to account for the structural nature of social reality which is defined on the basis of relations and not of "essences" or "substances".

But something happens around puberty that makes it easier to identify the source of the *structural* or *relational* character of the social world. It is not for nothing that Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, who drew considerable inspiration from George Herbert Mead, considered it to be of value to distinguish between a primary socialization (in childhood) and a secondary socialization:

> "Primary socialization is the first socialization an individual undergoes in childhood, through which he becomes a member of society. Secondary socialization is any subsequent process that inducts an already socialized individual into new sectors of the objective world of his society" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 130).

Berger and Luckmann plad great emphasis on the imposed nature of primary socialization: "Every individual is born into an objective social structure within which he encounters the significant others who are in charge of his socialization. These significant others are imposed upon him" (*ibid.*, p. 131). They "filter" the social world for the child. The child is therefore impregnated not only by the role and attitudes of others but also by their world. Of course, Berger and Luckmann also spoke of a progressive abstraction which makes it possible to go from "Mummy is angry with me *now*" to "Mummy is angry with me *whenever* I spill the soup" (*ibid.*, p. 132). It is this abstraction of roles and attitudes that Berger and Luckmann, following on from Mead, referred to as the "generalized other". However, they also insisted on the fact that "in primary socialization there is no problem of identification. There is no choice of significant others. Society presents the candidate for socialization with a predefined set of significant others, whom he must accept as such with no possibility of opting for another arrangement" (*ibid.*, p. 134). This suggests that what characterizes secondary socialization is not just a "progressive abstraction", but also the fact that there can be "problems of identification" and a "choice of significant others". Let us quote Berger and Luckmann again:

"The child does not internalize the world of his significant others as one of many possible worlds. He internalizes it as *the* world, the only existent and only conceivable world, the world *tout court* (in French). It is for this reason that the world internalized in primary socialization is so much more firmly entrenched in consciousness than worlds internalized in secondary socializations. However much the original sense of inevitability may be weakened in subsequent disenchantments, the recollection of a never-to-be-repeated certainty – the certainty of the first dawn of reality – still adheres to the first world of childhood. Primary socialization thus accomplishes what (in hindsight, of course) may be seen as the most important confidence trick that society plays on the individual –   to make appear as necessity what is in fact a bundle of contingencies, and thus to make meaningful the accident of his birth" (*ibid.*, p. 134-135).

This allowed them to conclude that "the world of childhood is massively and indubitably real" (*ibid.*, p. 136). This is precisely what distinguishes the world of the child from the world of the adolescent. Viewed from this perspective, secondary socialization cannot be simply defined, as Berger and Luckmann did, in terms of a confrontation of institutionalized "subworlds" (*ibid.*, p. 138) associated with the division of labor. It is a confrontation with the arbitrariness of the law and social customs. We must now turn to the psychoanalysts who have examined the question of the retardation of puberty and its consequences.

The retardation of puberty   From 1895 onwards, Freud was to stress the importance of the "retardation" of puberty in order to explain that, in hysteria,

"we have an instance of a memory exciting an affect which it had not excited as an experience, because in the meantime the changes produced by puberty had made possible a new understanding of what was remembered. Now this case is typical of repression in hysteria. We invariably find that a memory is repressed which has only become a trauma *after the event.* The reason for this state of things is the retardation of puberty as compared with the remainder of the individual's development" (Freud, 1895, p. 413).

Later, Freud was to note that the period of puberty is that as of which "the human individual must devote himself to the great task of freeing himself

from his parents, and only after he has freed himself can he cease to be a child, and become a member of the social community" (Freud, 1920b).

However, in 1937, his daughter, Anna Freud observed with regret that "psychoanalysis has hitherto shown remarkably little inclination to concentrate on the psychological problems of puberty" (Freud, 1937, p. 139). She contrasted this "negligence" to the fact that

> "for a long time now the psychic phenomena which signalize the advent of sexual maturity have been the subject of psychological study. In nonanalytic writings we find many striking descriptions of the changes which take place in character during these years, of the disturbances in the psychic equilibrium, and, above all, of the incomprehensible and irreconcilable contradictions then apparent in the psychic life. Adolescents are excessively egoistic, regarding themselves as the center of the universe and the sole object of interest, and yet at no time in later life are they capable of so much self-sacrifice and devotion. They form the most passionate love relations, only to break them off as abruptly as they began them. On the one hand, they throw themselves enthusiastically into the life of the community and, on the other, they have an overpowering longing for solitude. They oscillate between blind submission to some self-chosen leader and defiant rebellion against any and every authority" (*ibid.*, p. 137-138).

Before devoting two chapters of her book to the study of the phenomena involved in puberty, Anna Freud went some way to justifying the "negligence" of psychoanalysts in this regard by stating that psychoanalysis "does not share the view that the sexual life of human beings begins at puberty. [...] Owing to the fact that physical sexual maturity is attained at puberty, genitality occupies the foreground at this period and the genital trends predominate over the pregenital component instincts" (*ibid.*, p. 139-140).

In the model proposed by Anna Freud, all the psychic instances (id, ego and superego) are already present before puberty. The task faced in puberty, then – during which Anna Freud distinguished between two periods – lies not in establishing a new instance, but solely in the reshaping, the maintenance or the restoration of the relations that have become established between the ego, the id and the superego during the latency period. In effect, in this model, these relations are disturbed during puberty by the great increase in the quantity of libido that accompanies the changes that occur in the body. The period of puberty is identified solely in terms of a growth in libido (quantitative change) which initially (prepubertal period) "cathects

indiscriminately any id impulses which are at hand" (*ibid.*, p. 146) before becoming organized under the primacy of genital impulses (qualitative change) as the genital organs mature (pubertal phase proper). Interested in puberty as a period of growth of libido which constitutes an excellent opportunity to study the ego and its defense mechanisms that are "triggered by the fear of excessively powerful impulses", Anna Freud did not define this period other than in purely biological terms (growth of libido associated with anatomical and physiological maturation). In this, she followed her father for whom puberty was above all characterized by "its floods of excitation" channeled through the dispositions acquired during childhood[5].

It was on the basis of a comment made by Freud that Lucien Israël was, in his turn, to point out what the pubertal phase could represent for psychoanalysis: not, in this case, in that it permits the study of the ego but instead due to its vital role "in the formation of the symbolic domain" (Israël, 1994). Israël points out that in his study of the psychogenesis of a case of feminine homosexuality, Freud considered it necessary to accord considerable importance to the fact that the young woman in question "*befand sich in der Phase der Pubertätsauffrischung des infantilen Ödipuskomplexes* – was in the phase of the pubertal regeneration of the infantile Oedipus complex – when disenchantment struck her". Considering the translation of *Auffrischung* by "regeneration" (*régénération* in French) to be insufficiently precise, Israël preferred to speak of "awakening" (*réveil*) or, even better in his eyes, "reworking" or "remodeling" (*remaniement*), before finally coming to ask himself what this "pubertal remodeling" might be. I believe that it is necessary to quote him at length here since his argumentation shows that he clearly understood the importance of the changes that occur during puberty:

> "We too often neglect, he continues, the vital role of the pubertal phase in the formation of the symbolic domain. Because if analysis had to make do with memories executed – executed, here, in the sense of executioner – by infantile amnesia, analysts would do little more than vie with one another to project their fantasies into the void left by this amnesia. In fact, however, it is not the barrier of infantile amnesia that determines the material available for analysis, it is puberty. It is at puberty that the entire prepubertal past changes sign or, to put it another way, that

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[5]See, for instance, *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood* (1910): "When the excitations of puberty came in their flood upon the boy they did not, however, make him ill by forcing him to develop substitutive structures of a costly and harmful kind. Owing to his very early inclination towards sexual curiosity the greater portion of the needs of his sexual instinct could be sublimated into a general urge to know, and thus evaded repression" (Freud, 1964/1910, p. 94 – translated by Alan Tyson).

everything that is going to constitute the real world is formed. This real world, which it is clearly difficult to represent to oneself as a small child, becomes susceptible to conceptualization as of puberty because the subject's very language up to puberty, this language taught by adults, is a postpubertal language. It is at puberty that the child discovers the true measure and uses of this language in which he has hitherto been immersed. At the same time, everything that used to work with the same terminology, the same words, metamorphoses into a mythical past, a mythical world. All the Oedipus myths are, in fact, myths that can not only be found through a difficult, laborious process of reconstruction in early childhood but also throughout the entire prepubertal phase, during this notorious latency period. Language changes, even if the terms used stay the same. They no longer have the same significance, they no longer designate or mean the same thing. As of the moment when these terms are marked by the seal of puberty, the subject takes leave of the world of childhood objects and takes leave also, or attempts to do so, of a language that was no longer a childhood language but simply the language of prepuberty or non-puberty. These changes in spoken language or written language at the time of puberty are something that can be observed at the clinical level. How many girls or boys suddenly decide, when puberty arrives, to change their handwriting, to choose, from the set of first names with which they were cloaked at birth, one that is different from that used hitherto? All this characterizes the change in the order of language at both the formal and idiosyncratic levels. The old world, that of pre-puberty, becomes a store of objects *a* which is manifested not in the search for or collection of these objects, something which it is difficult to do, but in the search for old things – whether these take the form of antiques or fossils, it matters little whether the past in question goes back two centuries or two million years – in order to grasp what has disappeared, what has become real, or in other words, what has been lost" (Israël, 1994, p. 99-100).

What is meant by "the seal of puberty"? What is Israël designating in these terms? Is it merely a question, as in Anna Freud, of an increase in libido and its organization under the primacy of the genital function (or, to put it more clearly, in the service of reproduction) which take place within the framework of the anatomical and physiological changes that affect the body or is something else going on here? Everything in the formulation used by

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Israël suggests that we should unhesitatingly choose this second alternative and consider that the interest of the pubertal phase for psychoanalysis results from the vital role it plays in the formation of the symbolic domain, that the "seal of puberty" should be defined as constitutive of the real, that is to say of something lost, that the period of puberty should be defined more fully as the period in which the question of the real and of *Spaltung* (defined, as usual with Lacanians, as an effect of language) is rightfully situated, that puberty should be defined as the time when the child makes his own a language in which he was previously immersed, appropriates for himself a name in which he was previously cloaked…

Something very important that theory of mediation attributes to what happens at puberty – which, far from being limited to morphological and physiological changes, is also and, most certainly from a sociological perspective, the period of access to the person – can very clearly be seen in Israël's writings: a radical break as of which childhood appears as a "protohistory" (Gagnepain, 1991, p. 32). The "seal of puberty" to which Israël refers is not yet, however, what the theory of mediation defines as "access to the person", not least because of the logocentrism inevitably found in a follower of Lacan.

For the theory of mediation, the person is a capacity for analysis to which human beings accede at around puberty and through which they "acculture" both their sexuality and genitality – understood respectively as the relation between the members of the specie on the basis of the difference and complementarity between the sexes (sexuality) and the parturition and care of offspring by adults (genitality). As an ability to trace boundaries that are both differential and segmental, the person introduces a radical break with the "being-in-the-world" that is characteristic of childhood. The environment of the adult, who has developed into this person and therefore entered a state of radical excentration, is no longer that of the child who was in history as if by proxy, supported by his significant others (Mead, 1934). What is more, in many civilizations, this break is formalized in the well-known rites of passage which have been an object of considerable attention for ethnologists from van Gennep onwards. It brutally exposes the adolescent to the arbitrariness of law and social customs, the principle of which he has now acceded to and which he must now assume and come to terms with.

To access the "person" is therefore to cease living in a story created by others and instead to become the actor of one's own story, to accede to historicity, defined as the ability to produce history and sociality. That having been said, this accession to the person does not efface what has been inherited from primary socialization. Childhood, and with it all the embodied history that constitutes the *habitus*, is not cancelled out but instead persists

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in everyone as a dimension, or phase, in an emerging dialectic of divergence and convergence. As such, it now has to be assumed. Access to the person, in effect, does not imply a renunciation of the "original social being". On the contrary, it implies that this "original social being" now has to be assumed in the "aspiration for a social identity" that appears in adolescence. And as we all know, this is not always without its difficulties…

To become a person, it is not sufficient to be *caught up* in a game of social or interlocutory relations. It is also necessary to be able to *master* this game. This, again, represents the full importance of puberty. The child, as Berger and Luckmann understood, is caught up in relations with significant or generalized others whom he has not himself chosen: "Since the child has no choice in the selection of his significant others, his identification with them is quasi-automatic. For the same reason, his internalization of their particular reality is quasi-inevitable" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 134). Moreover, the question does not relate solely to this issue of choice. It also involves an absence of conflictuality in a self-evident world with self-evident social customs. Let us recall here a quotation from Berger and Luckmann that we have already cited above: "The child does not internalize the world of his significant others as one of many possible worlds. He internalizes it as *the* world, the only existent and only conceivable world, the world *tout court*" (*ibid.*). The adolescent, by contrast, discovers the arbitrariness of law and social customs with which he may enter into conflict. He is not simply caught up in relations. Through his more or less marked behavior of opposition or emancipation, he shows that he now intends to master these relations.

But what are these? In stating above that the person "accultures" his or her sexuality and genitality, we have already indicated one possible answer. In effect, Jean Gagnepain distinguishes between two "faces" (or "sides") of the social bond: the acculturation of sexuality defines alliances (Jean Gagnepain speaks here of class or *nexus*[6]) whereas the acculturation of genitality defines competences (which Gagnepain refers to as craft or *munus*[7]). In the next section of this chapter, we will describe what is at stake here. For the moment, let us simply say that we consider this distinction between the two "faces" of the social bond to be consistent with the distinction that Philippe Descola makes in his search for a typology of attachments or schemes of relation: reversible relations between equivalent terms, on the one hand, and non-reversible, hierarchical relations between non-substitutable terms on the other (see chapter 1 above). This is why we are critical of Latour's excessively

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[6]*Nexus* in Latin means knot and designates a tie as well as a constraint or obligation.

[7]*Munus* in Latin designates a duty, encumbrance, office, a service rendered as well as a gift or present. In this latter sense, it came to designate the games "given" by euergetes or benefactors of the Hellenic and Roman worlds.

general use of the concept of attachment. Latour is right to think that during the tracing of the boundaries of social life, in the processes of association, grouping or assembly, one of the questions is to know who counts. But it is not the only question. To trace the boundaries of social life is also to define who is responsible for whom or what. The question is even more complex. These two questions ("Who counts?" and "Who is responsible?") can both be split into two further questions: who counts is simultaneously who is distinguished from whom and who goes together with whom ("Who are we?" and "How many of us are there?"), whereas who is responsible is both who cares for such and such a field and what is the scope of his responsibility.

These formulations are undoubtedly somewhat abstract and we must specify them in greater detail. First of all, however, let us briefly consider the two concepts of identity and otherness. If I say: "Give me *another* plate", what is it that I mean? Do I want a *different* plate (a flat one instead of a bowl-shaped one, for example) or an *additional* plate (a second flat plate)? Similarly, if I say: "We have the same car" am I referring to an identical car (of the same make, model, color, etc.) or one and the same car (which we own jointly)? Although, in most cases, the context makes it possible to decide, English is not very clear in this regard (whereas Latin distinguishes between a different other, *alius*, and an additional other, *alter*). In effect, it seems appropriate to distinguish between two different logics:

- a logic of identities and differences, of similarities and dissimilarities (qualitative logic or "OR-ing" which makes it possible to define the difference between social identities: young *or* old, rich *or* poor, white *or* black, etc.);

- a logic of units and supplements, of independences and dependences (quantitative logic or "AND-ing" which makes it possible to define social units by separating them: a taxpayer and another taxpayer, a household and another household, one group and a second group, etc.).

On this basis, we now need to show that to master social relations is to be able to trace both differential boundaries, which define social *identities,* and quantitative or segmental boundaries, which define social *units,* whether this is on the "face" (or "side") of belonging (or alliances), or on that of competences (or responsibilities).

As actors, each of us traces this type of differential (qualitative) and segmental (quantitative) boundary of belonging and competences. In short, *we are permanently classifying and being classified.*Table 2.1 summarizes these different types of classification (here, instance refers to the implicit subdividing performed by each one of us without us ever realizing it; performance

refs to the way in which we make use of these subdivisions in real-life situations as part of our relations with others).

		Instance	Performance
Belonging	*difference*	status	state
	segmentation	position	partner
Competence	*difference*	function	charge[8]
	segmentation	role	scene[9]

Table 2.1: Boundaries of belonging and competence

Being a person and not simply being caught up in social relations (with the risk of drifting off course) is to implicitly draw together all these boundaries which structure relations. Jean Gagnepain thus defines "person" as a mental ability to structure or analyze social relations. The central hypothesis of the theory of the person is that a human's relations with other humans, like his relations with things, operates through "an implicit organization, a construction, of which we are completely unaware" (Quentel, 1999, p. 119).

Following Georg Simmel, the theory of the person therefore hypothesizes a social "form" based not on the antagonism between the singular and the collective but on the dialectic relations between a process of divergence (instance) and of convergence (performance). Jean Gagnepain speaks of an ethnico-political dialectic, where ethnic designates the implicit process of divergence and draws the boundaries, and political designates the deployment of these boundaries in specific situations. The contrast between schizophrenia and paranoia, to which we shall return, provides a good illustration of this dialectic. In effect, it can be said that schizophrenia fixes, or reifies, this tendency toward divergence and singularity, whereas people with paranoia, because they do not themselves draw any competence-related boundaries, cannot follow any path other than that of pathological convergence. In both cases, what these psychoses allow us to study is the reservation for oneself of an area of competence. Where schizophrenics hypertrophize the tendency to separation, social division, singularity, those suffering from paranoia have lost the principle of this separation, this social division, this singularity. Schizophrenics constantly create an autonomy for themselves. They can do nothing other than give themselves a sphere of competence that is completely separate and that no-one can contest. If, by chance, this sphere seems to coincide with the role attributed to them and recognized as such

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[8]In the sense of "A task or duty laid upon one; commission, trust, responsibility; an office entrusted to one" (Oxford English Dictionary).

[9]In the sense of each occasion (or circumstance) in which an actor's role is accomplished.

by others (such as the role of king in the case of Ludwig II of Bavaria), they show off the "formal" aspects of this role. In paranoia, by contrast, it is not possible for sufferers to set an area of competence or specialization for themselves. There is no longer anything to show them where their responsibilities start and end. They therefore have a tendency either to want to control everything or to abdicate all responsibility. Unable to limit the exercise of power themselves, all they can do is encourage those around them to remind them of its boundaries. Any delegation, since it is not understood as such, becomes transformed into an abusive seizure of power.

This is one of the main characteristics of the theory of the person, its great innovation compared to the entire foregoing sociological tradition. It is not content to postulate the autonomy of social actors. It goes further and claims that this autonomy is linked to a specific mental capability, which it refers to as "person" and which has now become one of the objects studied by sociology. We believe that sociology can no longer be content to describe the different performances of social actors. It must also account for what makes human beings into social actors. To do this, it is necessary to adopt a pathoanalytical approach within the framework of clinical anthropology.

2.2.2 A pathoanalytical approach

When we speak of a pathoanalytical approach (a term borrowed from the psychiatrist Léopold Szondi), we are referring to an approach that uses illnesses – in our case, certain neurological and psychiatric disorders – to reveal normal organization. In other words, pathoanalysis is an analysis of normal functioning conducted in the light of a pathology whose impaired connections reveal the existence of connections that are normally hidden. This approach is absolutely central to the theory of mediation, to such an extent that it is almost possible to equate theory of mediation and the pathoanalytical approach (under the name "clinical anthropology"). It constitutes a continuation of the Freudian approach which Freud illustrated using the metaphor of the broken crystal:

> "Where it points to a breach or a rent, there may normally be an articulation present. If we throw a crystal to the floor, it breaks; but not into haphazard pieces. It comes apart along its lines of cleavage into fragments whose boundaries, though they were invisible, were predetermined by the crystal's structure. Mental patients are split and broken structures of this same kind" (Freud, lecture XXXI, 1965/1933).

And Pierre Karli says much the same thing when he presents the methodology of "cognitive neuropsychology" as follows:

> "The architecture of a system is inferred from the destructuration, or fragmentation, caused by a brain lesion: within a complex cognitive function, specific dissociations arise between operations that are more or less profoundly impaired and others which are completely preserved. Based on the observation of these dissociations of a pathological origin, it is possible to develop a model of the architecture of cognitive functioning in normal human subjects. […] In cognitive neuropsychology, brain lesions therefore primarily serve to reveal – by separating them from one another – the existence of processing operations that are relatively independent of one another in normal subjects" (Karli, 1995, p. 247-248).

It is this pathoanalytical approach – in which the brain lesion dissociates, and thereby reveals, "the relatively independent processing operations" – that enabled Gagnepain to deconstruct reason in an operation that he termed the deconstruction of the "planes" of mediation. In effect, clinical observation shows that, far from limiting itself to the *logos* alone, reason is plural. It is diffracted across multiple "planes of rationality". It is, for example, possible to lose language (aphasia) without losing technical reason (atechnia) and vice versa. And clinical neurology has also revealed the existence of brain-damaged patients who seem to have lost all autonomy even though they are neither aphasic, nor atechnic, nor affected by any type of motor disorder. Such patients appear to disprove the postulate of autonomy. Everything therefore seems to suggest that autonomy can be cerebrally conditioned. Normal human beings – who do not suffer from certain frontal lesions – will never, as Crozier says, agree to be instrumentalized; they always possess a certain measure of autonomy. Some brain-damaged patients, however, lose this autonomy. In the most spectacular cases, this gives rise to the behavior described by Lhermitte as imitation or usage behavior (Lhermitte et al., 1986; Lhermitte, 1986). We shall return to these in the third chapter of this book. However, in our opinion, this brief reference to these disorders is already sufficient to show that it is now possible not only to postulate the autonomy of the actor, which Crozier refers to, but also to identify "functional modules" (to use the terminology of the neurologists) which underpin this autonomy in human beings.

At this point, the reader might object that a sociologist who studies any specific type of organization, as Crozier or Goffman understand the term,

does not need any such demonstration. Ultimately, it matters little to such a sociologist whether or not the brain functioning underlying this autonomy can be demonstrated or whether it simply remains a postulate. If he adopts an organizational approach then Crozier's postulates, complemented by the concepts of uncertainty, power and concrete action system, are sufficient. We are perfectly willing to accept this objection. Under normal conditions, and apart from certain brain lesion cases, it may indeed be sufficient to postulate or note the autonomy of the actor. We, however, continue to claim that contemporary sociology can no longer turn its back on the very real possibility now available to it to give a scientific answer to the question of what it is that underpins autonomy in human beings. This is because providing a scientific account for this underpinning is also to account for a specific modality of reason – a mental faculty – through which humans structure or "inform" their relations with others, whether on the "face" of alliance relations or power relations.

We are now going to examine these different relations from a psychiatric point of view (clinical neurology will be addressed in the next chapter).

2.3   Alliance and social classifications

In the last chapter, we have already discussed Lévi-Strauss's claim that "the prohibition of incest is where nature transcends itself" (Lévi-Strauss, 1969, p. 25), "less a rule prohibiting marriage with the mother, sister or daughter, than a rule obliging the mother, sister or daughter to be given to others. It is the supreme rule of gift" (*ibid.*, p. 481). Lévi-Strauss, as we have seen, placed particular emphasis on the concept of exchange, at a level at which it tends to be reduced to circulation (*ibid.*, p. 479), that is to say to what Testart calls kinetic exchange (Testart, 2007).

Despite the fact that he constantly finds it necessary to speak of endogamy, exogamy, group, clan, families, moieties, sections or subsections, Lévi-Strauss accords only a very secondary importance to the way these different segments are instituted and combined. For this, he is criticized by Irène Théry who reminds us that Mauss, in contrast, paid great attention to the various principles of division which are combined within traditional societies: division by age, division by generation, division by sex, and division by clan. This is, furthermore, one of the points on which Mauss differs from his uncle Durkheim: the idea of small, undifferentiated societies (with a "mechanical" form of solidarity) does not stand up to scrutiny; all human societies, however simple and primitive they may appear, are segmented and even segmented at a number of different levels (Mauss, 1971). It is clearly not

possible to consider the "elementary structures of kinship" without taking account of this segmentation within societies: it is omnipresent in Lévi-Strauss, for example in his discussion of the Australian systems, in that of the Chinese system or the Indian system. However, the emphasis placed by Lévi-Strauss on exchange leads him to address segmentation as a secondary phenomenon. The crucial chapter devoted to cross-cousin marriage seems to us to be of significance in this respect. Lévi-Strauss starts by recalling "the exceptional importance" of this type of marriage for anthropology. This passage deserves to be quoted in full:

> "The exceptional importance of cross-cousin marriage, as we see it, does not derive merely from its unique position at the very hub of matrimonial institutions. Its importance is no longer limited to its role as the 'pivot' between the incest prohibition and dual organization. The interest of cross-cousin marriage lies especially in the fact that the division that it establishes between prescribed and prohibited spouses cuts across a category of relatives who, from the viewpoint of biological proximity, are strictly interchangeable. This point has often been used to prove that marriage prohibitions have no biological basis, but it seems to us that its full significance has never been clearly perceived. It is precisely because cross-cousin marriage disregards the biological factor that it should be able to establish that the origin of the incest prohibition is purely social, and furthermore to reveal what its real nature is. It is not enough to repeat that the prohibition of incest is not based on biological grounds. What then is its basis? This is the real question, and while it remains unanswered the problem cannot be said to have been resolved. For the most part, an answer to this is very difficult to give because the prohibited degrees of kinship, taken as a whole, are biologically closer than the permitted degrees. Consequently, there is always a doubt as to whether it is the biological degree, or the social degree, which is the basis of the institution. The difficulty is completely eliminated only in the case of cross-cousin marriage, for if we can understand why degrees of kinship which are equivalent from a biological point of view are nevertheless considered completely dissimilar from the social point of view, we can claim to have discovered the principle, not only of cross-cousin marriage, but of the incest prohibition itself" (Lévi-Strauss, 1969, p. 122).

According to Théry, once more, this question of cross-cousin marriage is vital "because it directly mobilizes a certain western idea of the marriage-

based family and a biologically-oriented vision of consanguinity which characterizes our entire conception of kinship" (Théry, 2007, p. 163). It is not at all certain that things have changed very much in this regard, more than sixty years after the publication of Lévi-Strauss's *magnus opus*. It remains the case that Lévi-Strauss, after insisting on the fact that analyzing this form of marriage is "the veritable *experimentum crucis* in the study of marriage prohibitions" (Lévi-Strauss, *op. cit.*, p. 123), rejects historically-oriented explanations which see its various occurrences as "the result of a juxtaposition of terms and customs" (*ibid.*, p. 124). Kinship is not a collection of states but instead forms a system of relations, a structural fact which, moreover, native peoples theorize as such and which is reflected in the terminology they use to describe kinship. This system implies differences of status (brother/sister, uncle/nephew, husband/wife, father/son, mother/daughter) and the relation between these statuses (the brother/sister relation, for example, is identical to the sister/brother relation but different from the brother/brother relation or the sister/sister relation). It also implies a segmentation into social units (clans, moieties, sections, subsections). However, while saying this, Lévi-Strauss continues to place the primacy of exchange at the heart of his explanation:

> "It is not enough to give a separate explanation for the prohibition of parallel cousins, nor would it serve any useful purpose to give an interpretation ignoring the fact that cross-cousins are included among the possible spouses. Positive and negative phenomena mean nothing by themselves, but form parts of a whole. If our general concept is correct, cross-cousins are recommended for the same reason that parallel cousins are excluded. These difficulties are clarified if cross-cousin marriage is seen as the elementary formula for marriage by exchange, *and if exchange is seen as the* raison d'être *(in French) of the system of oppositions the structural qualities of which were emphasized in the previous paragraphs*" (*ibid.*, p. 129 – our emphases.).

It is clearly exchange that plays the explanatory role in Lévi-Straus: it is the *raison d'être* of the system of oppositions. However, in our view, it is also the most debatable element in Lévi-Strauss's theory. For exchange here is not a simple circulation. It presupposes a directed address and interlocutors endowed with a status who belong to different social units. In other words, it presupposes the existence of the entire system of oppositions. And presupposing the system of oppositions is precisely what Lévi-Strauss does when he defines "the true nature of cross-cousin marriage" (*ibid.*, p. 130).

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"*Suppose* there are two patrilineal and patrilocal family groups, *A* and *B*, united by the marriage of a *b* girl and an *a* man. From the viewpoint of group *A*, the *b* woman represents an acquisition, while for group *B*, she represents a loss. Thus, for group *A*, which benefits, the marriage is expressed by a change to a debit position, and for group *B*, which is decreased by the loss of one female member to the profit of group *A*, by the acquiring of a credit. Similarly, the marriage of each of the men of group *B* and of group *A* represents a gain for his respective group, and thus places the group in general, and the family involved in particular, in the position of debtor. By contrast, the marriage of each of the *a* or *b* women represents a loss, and thus opens up a right to compensation" (*ibid.*, p. 130 – our emphases).

The marriage of a *b* girl to an *a* man is equivalent to a transfer from *B* to *A*. This transfer means that *B* is the creditor of *A*. *A* is in a debit position and therefore owes *B* a woman in its turn. What Lévi-Strauss is describing here is less a gift situation (contrary to what he has said about the prohibition of incest as the "supreme rule of the gift") than a situation of non-commercial exchange: *A* owes a woman to *B*, even if nothing is specified with regard to the way *B* might demand this counterpart. So far, so good. However, what it is particularly important to observe here is that this situation of exchange presupposes that the boundaries separating the two social units involved in it (families, family groups) as well as the difference in status between their members (a difference which here can be reduced to two "colors": *a/b*) are already established.

Lévi-Strauss suggested illustrating this situation of exchange by means of a diagram in which he assigns each couple a sign – $(+)$ or $(-)$ – depending on whether the couple results in the loss or acquisition of a woman for the original tribe *A* or *B* (figure 2.1).

The diagram indicates a change of sign when there is a change from brother to sister because, as Lévi-Strauss says, "the brother gains a wife, while the sister is lost to her own family" (*ibid.*, p. 130). However, it also indicates a change of sign when there is a change from one generation to the next:

"It depends upon whether, from the initial group's point of view, the father has received a wife, or the mother has been transferred outside, whether the sons have the right to a woman or owe a sister" (*ibid.*). In the cousins' generation, "all those in the relationship $(++)$ or $(--)$ are parallel to one another, while all those
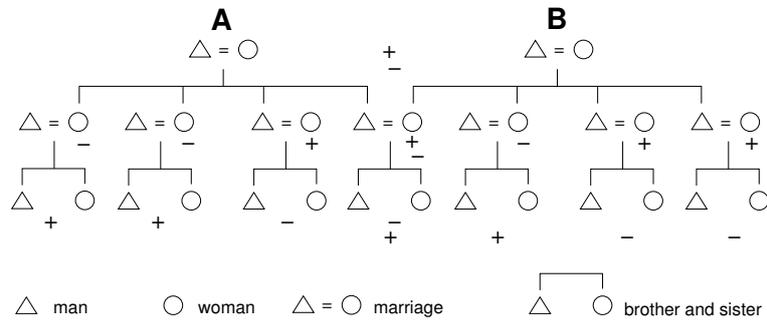
Figure 2.1: Cross-cousin marriage

in the relationship $(+-)$ or $(-+)$ are cross. *Thus, the notion of reciprocity allows the dichotomy of cousins to be immediately deduced.* […] In the final analysis, therefore, cross-cousin marriage simply expresses the fact that marriage must always be a giving and a receiving, but that one can receive only from him who is obliged to give, and that the giving must be to him who has a right to receive, for the mutual gift between debtors leads to privilege, whereas the mutual gift between creditors leads inevitably to extinction" (*ibid.*, p. 131 – our emphases).

In this passage, we again find the confusion between gift and exchange. If there is an obligation "to give" then what is given is not a gift. Instead there is an exchange between the two parties even if this exchange is not a commercial exchange. However, and most importantly, Lévi-Strauss's formulation once again tends to do away with the system of oppositions which he previously emphasized. Lévi-Strauss's reasoning makes the classes of cousins in some way the result of the exchange operation. This is to forget that, from the outset, it was necessary to "suppose" the existence of exogamous groups as well as of the two "colors", *a* and *b*, by stating that these groups were patrilinear and patrilocal (the children of an *a* man are *a* and the new couples come to live in the husband's village or on the lands of the husband's father). This is what we have tried to show by adding a difference in color (white/black) to Lévi-Strauss's diagram (figure 2.2).

In short, the operation of distinguishing and dividing is fundamental. This is also the interpretation proposed by Irène Théry who insists that the rule of exogamy associated with the rule of filiation means that parallel female cousins belong to the same group as the *ego* and are classified as "sisters" with whom it would be incestuous to marry; "in contrast, female cross-cousins always belong to another group with which alliance is prescribed and who are therefore "affinal" (Théry, 2007, p. 165). These two rules combine a
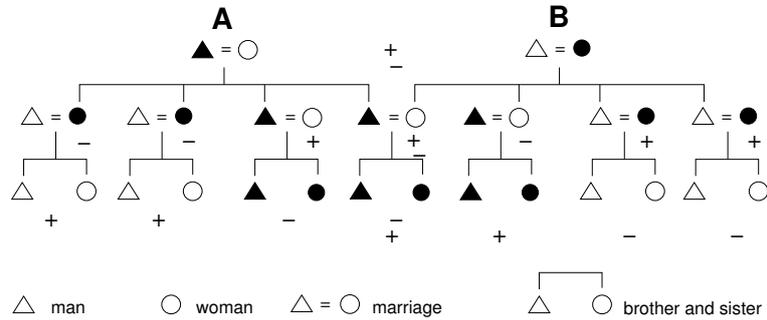
Figure 2.2: Cross-cousin marriage

principle of distinction between the statuses transmitted by filiation (a/b) and a principle of separation which draws a boundary between the "people of the house" (*hoi endon*) and those from outside (*hoi exô*) [10]. In some way, the resulting classifications take precedence over the biological complementarity of the sexes and define the possible alliances. It is these two principles, status and position, that we must now examine.

2.3.1 The distinction between statuses

Status defines social identity through differentiation. As a principle rooted in difference, it "dialectically excludes content because it is founded in relations and accomplishes itself in history" (Gagnepain, 1991). According to Jean-Luc Brackelaire, it designates "our capacity to establish differences between us, to differentiate ourselves, whether as a subject or as a group, from what we are naturally and socially and therefore, for example, to contest the status that is attributed to us because it negates the distinction we make ourselves" (Brackelaire, 1995, p. 191).

And Jean-Luc Brackelaire goes on to propose the term *state* to designate the political identity, that is to say the use we make of status in a given situation, "its reconfiguration as a function of circumstances" (*ibid.*). These context-dependent identities derive in some way from a choice of statuses, some of which only gain relevance in a given situation. "To illustrate things", he writes, "if, within a given historical situation in which these oppositions are distinctive, we are, at instance level, a man (not a woman), white (not black), adult (not a child), French-speaking (not Dutch-speaking), because we ourselves analyze what we are on the basis of these oppositions, then, at performance level, it is in our quality as an adult that we can, for example,

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[10]To confer a more general scope on a distinction made in relation to ancient Greece by Jean-Pierre Vernant (1983).

go to children we meet on our path to show them that it is possible, by moving their improvised football pitch a few meters, to play without constantly treading on the park flower bed" (*ibid.*). Goffman had already made a number of observations of this type:

> "In considering the individual's participation in social action, we must understand that in a sense he does not participate as a total person but rather in terms of a special capacity or status […]. For example, patients who happen to be female may be obliged to act shamelessly before doctors who happen to be male, since the medical relation, not the sexual one, is defined as officially relevant. In the research hospital studied, there were both patients and staff who were Negro, but this minority-group status was not one in which these individuals were officially (or even, in the main, unofficially) active. Of course, during face-to-face encounters individuals may participate officially in more than one capacity. Further, some unofficial weight is almost always given to capacities defined as officially irrelevant, and the reputation earned in one capacity will flow over and to a degree determine the reputation the individual earns in his other capacities" (Goffman, 1967, p. 22).

Even if Goffman does not distinguish between instance and performance as such, his analysis, which supposes that there are a diversity of available statuses (man/woman, white/black, carer/patient etc.) some of which only become relevant in specific situations, is entirely compatible with our own on this point [11].

This differentiation of statuses and their subsequent remobilization in states is particularly clear in the establishment of boundaries of distinction or elegance, the criteria of which naturally vary depending on place and time. This has been described many different times by sociologists, historians and ethnologists and there is little point emphasizing it further here. For some people, the distinction is conveyed, for example, by designer clothes whereas for others, it is reflected in their adornment with body piercings or dreadlocks. The main thing is that it categorizes, distinguishes, singularizes. In addition,

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[11]Similarly, Yvon Le Bot points out that the question "Who is an Indian and who isn't" would, in Latin America, "receive very different and varying answers depending on the country, the context, and the time of asking" (Le Bot, 2009, p. 18). The difference in status between Indian/Métis "is thus an 'internal boundary' that runs across societies, groups, families and right through to people themselves" (*ibid.*, p. 20). This difference in status is reinvested, depending on the country, situation or time, in states that are never fixed or measurable.

it is not necessary to attempt to distinguish oneself in order to be classified. This is one of the most important teachings of Bourdieu who showed that in modern western societies, consumers are classified by their choice of what they consume whether they want to be or not (Bourdieu, 1984).

Many differences in status are indicated by *emblems*[12]. Thus the emblazoned penis sheaths worn by the Bororo indicated the clan status of the wearer (Lévi-Strauss, 1955). Clothing, as we have already said, is another well-known emblem. In our societies, to wear one or other item of clothing is inevitably to distinguish oneself socially, to give a clue as to one's status, whether we like it or not. It is in this light that Goffman speaks of "the fleece-lined leather jerkin and [the] high rubber boots" that were, in the Shetland Islands, "notoriously symbolic of crofter status" (Goffman, 1959, p. 48). For his part, Yvon Le Bot emphasizes how the emergence of the native Indians on the political scene in Bolivia is indicated by the presence in Parliament of MPs who naturally wear, without any particular ostentation, Indian ponchos or skirts (Le Bot, 2009, p. 195). While the Indian movements of Latin America clearly involve much more than wearing such markers of identity, these markers, when worn, show that the status of Indian no longer hesitates to assert itself as a state, although sometimes not totally without ambivalence: depending on the person and the situation, the wearing of traditional costume may appear to be a protection or an indication of the wearer's vulnerability that exposes him or her to discrimination (*ibid.*, p. 272). This is because to wear a particular type of clothing is also to define the situation or, more precisely, to choose which of the range of available statuses suits the situation. Thus, in the very different context of the beach, the decision to wear a bikini or ordinary underwear is not unimportant. Although the "use value" is not very different, the status that is signaled is not at all the same (Kaufmann, 1995, p. 43). The same thing applies to housing: choosing one's apartment, house, district, style of furniture, decoration, wallpaper, garden plan (or just having to make do with what is strictly necessary), is also inevitably to distinguish oneself and to be distinguished at the social level. Another emblem of status in our societies is, of course, the car. Here, again, a distinction is made whether we like it or not. Even if we do not choose a car with the explicit aim of distinguishing ourselves socially, the very fact of making the choice creates the distinction (including when the choice is made by default: because of the limitations to one's budget, for example). Finally, it should be added that the emblems of status are not simply manufactured objects such as clothes, a home, a car, coats-of-arms, flags or other insignia.

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[12]We prefer the term emblem to that of "sign" or "symbol" of status used by Goffman (1959).

Language and accent are other equally relevant emblems of this sort just as religious beliefs may also become.

Fetishistic suggestion

This question of status and the associated emblems is directly linked to the question of fetishism. In effect, while not all emblems necessarily become fetishes, the fetish always implies the presence of an emblem. A good example is provided by the cult of relics in the Catholic religion: an object thought to have belonged to a particular person or even a part of the individual, comes to be venerated as an emblem of this person (such as, for example, the skull of Saint Yves in Tréguier cathedral in Brittany). However, the cult of relics is not found solely in religion. It can also be found in secular life where some people collect and even buy, sometimes for a very high price, an item of clothing or object that belonged to a famous person (Elvis Presley's stage outfit, John Lennon's spectacles, Lady Di's dresses or even part of the cake served at her wedding to Prince Charles, Zidane's football jersey, etc.) [13]. A common type of fetishism can also be seen in the behavior of many parents who keep a lock of their child's hair in a locket. In his works on ageing and widowhood, Vincent Caradec examined, among other things, the question of what families decide to keep of the deceased (Caradec, 2004). All the objects to which people are "attached", which have an "affective value", that they decide to keep "religiously" (grandmother's spectacles, the armchair that grandfather sat in to watch the television etc.), are emblems of the departed and become relics. And everything points to the idea that the deceased person is still present through these relics.

In short, a certain amount of fetishism is present even in the most everyday aspects of social life. It testifies to the attachment between person and thing which Mauss had already alluded to in his *Essay on the Gift* (Mauss, 1990). This special attachment between certain things and certain persons is a very widespread and frequently observed phenomenon. Jean Gagnepain also stressed its existence by recalling that "the Greeks understood very well that what we have is [...] inseparable from what we are, that every theft is rape and every suffrage selective, and then gathered together, within the concept of *ousia*, both the being and the goods of the citizen" (Gagnepain, 1991, p. 44). However, this particular attachment between a person and a thing, which becomes an emblem of the person, is never more evident than in pathological fetishism which in some way develops it to its most extreme

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[13]The media regularly announce auctions specializing in such items, sometimes for the funding of charitable or humanitarian activities.

point: here, the emblem completely replaces the person or one or other of the person's statuses.

In the literature on psychopathology, the first mention of fetishism goes back to Charcot and Magnan who, in 1883, published an article entitled "Inversion of the genital sense and sexual perversions". Here, they described several cases including one of a fetishist "obsessed with women's shoes" and another with a "fetishism for night caps". In a third case, the fetish relates to a white apron which the subject must either take or steal. Fetishism is accompanied by kleptomania and is witnessed by the entire social environment in which the subject is involved: his family, the navy in which he is employed, the Church and religion, the medical world even. The article was ahead of its time in associating the term "perversion" with fetishism and thereby in anticipating, as Gérard Bonnet says, the intuitions of Freud who was to consider fetishism to be the most typical of perversions (Bonnet, 2008, p. 188). In 1887, following Charcot and Magnan, Binet published an article on "fetishism in love". He used the term "fetishism" to refer to the characteristic features of the love and sex lives of certain "degenerates who feel an intense sexual excitement when looking at certain inanimate objects which have no effect whatsoever on normal individuals" (*ibid.*, p. 31). According to Binet, the term fetishism is well suited to describing this type of "sexual perversion" because "the adoration of these patients for inert objects such as night caps or boots is similar in all respects to the adoration shown by the savage or negro for fish bones or brightly colored stones, with the fundamental difference that in the cult followed by these patients, religious adoration is replaced by sexual appetite" (*ibid.*). However, Binet immediately goes on to say that far from constituting some form of "psychological monstrosity", these facts are "present in a less developed form in everyday life" (*ibid.*, p. 32): "everyone is to some extent a fetishist when it comes to love; there is a constant measure of fetishism in even the most normal love" (*ibid.*). Binet therefore distinguishes between a *major fetishism*, which "shows itself to the outside by signs so clear that it cannot fail to be recognized" and a *minor fetishism*, which, for its part, "can be easily hidden" (*ibid.*, p. 33). Binet goes on to refine his definition by saying that fetishism "consists in the exaggerated sexual importance that is attached to a secondary and insignificant detail" (*ibid.*, p. 101). "Thus, amorous fetishism has a tendency to completely separate the revered object by isolating it from everything that surrounds it, and if this object is a part of a living person then the fetishist tries to turn this part into an independent whole. The need to find a word to pin down and identify these small, fleeting nuances of feeling has led us to adopt the term *abstraction*. Amorous fetishism has a tendency to abstraction. It is in this that it contrasts with normal love which is directed at the person in his

or her entirety" (*ibid.*, p. 103).

It was in reference to Binet that Freud gave his own definition of fetishism in *Three essays on the theory of sexuality*: "The substitute for the sexual object is generally a part of the body but little adapted for sexual purposes, such as the foot, or hair, or an inanimate object which is in demonstrable relation with the sexual person, and preferably with the sexuality of the same (fragments of clothing, white underwear). This substitution is not unjustly compared with the fetish in which the savage sees the embodiment of his god" (Freud, 1927).

It is well-known that Freud associated the question of fetishism with the castration complex and therefore with the difference between the sexes: "the fetish is a substitute for the woman's (the mother's) penis that the little boy once believed in and – for reasons familiar to us – does not want to give up" (Freud, 1927). He makes the choice of fetish a question of fixation on an impression that is disturbing or traumatic for the young boy:

> "One would expect that the organs or objects chosen as substitutes for the absent female phallus would be such as appear as symbols of the penis in other connections as well. This may happen often enough, but is certainly not a deciding factor. It seems rather that when the fetish is instituted some process occurs which reminds one of the stopping of memory in traumatic amnesia. *As in this latter case, the subject's interest comes to a halt half-way, as it were*; it is as though the last impression before the uncanny and traumatic one is retained as a fetish. Thus the foot or shoe owes its preference as a fetish – or a part of it – to the circumstance that the inquisitive boy peered at the woman's genitals from below, from her legs up; fur and velvet – as has long been suspected – are a fixation of the sight of the pubic hair, which should have been followed by the longed-for sight of the female member; pieces of underclothing, which are so often chosen as a fetish, crystallize the moment of undressing, the last moment in which the woman could still be regarded as phallic" (Freud, 1927 – our emphases).

For his part, Jean Gagnepain invites us to go farther in the desexualization, that is to say the denaturalization, of this concept of fetishism by defining it as a "hypersociality" of belonging and status that is manifested through a "hypersociality" of emblems [14]. Here we again see the *abstrac-*

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[14]It should be noted that fetishism is now listed in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) under the heading "Disorders of sexual preference" (ICD F65.0). The DSM IV also includes it in the sexual and gender identity disorders (code 302.81).

tion which Binet considered so important. If the fetishist comes to a halt half-way, as Freud says, it is because he rejects obscenity. Gilles Deleuze also stressed this point by showing how masochism, which inhabits a world which has nothing to do with that of sadism, is associated first and foremost with fetishism. Unlike the writings of Sade, the novels of Sacher-Masoch are characterized by the absence of obscene descriptions: "The function of the descriptions subsists, but any potential obscenity is disavowed or suspended, by displacing the descriptions either from the object itself to the fetish, or from one part of the object to another part, or again from one aspect of the subject to another" (Deleuze, 1991, p. 34). Masoch's art, Deleuze goes on to say, is an art of suspense, atmosphere and suggestion [15]. A fetish clearly points toward sex, which it suggests or designates almost through its absence. But it is not sex. In our society, fur, satin, stockings, underwear or shoes all function as emblems of femininity and, as such, they are elements of both seduction and eroticism. What characterizes the fetishist is that, ultimately, he accords them a greater importance than normal and does so to such an extent that they in some way erase the partner [16]. As Deleuze also says, the process of fetishist disavowal is pushed to its limit in masochism (that of Masoch). "The masochistic process of disavowal is so extensive that it affects sexual pleasure itself; pleasure is postponed for as long as possible and is thus disavowed. The masochist is therefore able to deny the reality of pleasure at the very point of experiencing it, in order to identify with the 'new sexless man'" (*ibid.*, p. 33).

Starting from this basis, it is possible to identify a number of hypotheses or avenues of research. One of these was formulated by Jean-Yves Dartigue-

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[15]"Disavowal, suspense, waiting, fetishism and fantasy together make up the specific constellation of masochism" (Deleuze, 1991, p. 72). Here, we follow Deleuze in his deconstruction of the alleged unity of the sado-masochist syndrome. To fail to go beyond this syndrome is, as he says, to be content to use "very crude and ill-differentiated concepts" (*ibid.*, p. 132).

[16]Balzac provides an excellent description of the fetishist component in Lucien de Rubempré's love for the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse. The young man's passion is strengthened by his lover's status. "She [Diane de Maufrigneuse] had letters from Lucien that she had kept, intoxicating letters worthy to compare with Mirabeau's to Sophie, but more literary, more elaborate, for Lucien's letters had been dictated by the most powerful of passions – Vanity. Having the most bewitching of duchesses for his mistress, and seeing her commit any folly for him – secret follies, of course – had turned Lucien's head with happiness". However, we are subsequently able to conclude that Lucien is not a fetishist. "The lover's pride had inspired the poet. And the Duchess had treasured these touching letters, as some old men keep indecent prints, for the sake of their extravagant praise of all that was least duchess-like in her nature" (Balzac, *The Splendors and Miseries of Courtesans (Scenes from a Courtesan's Life)*, translated by James Waring, Gutenberg Project, http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~spok/metabook/humancomedy.html.

nave in his examination of rituality: far from being restricted to the field of sexuality, this fetishism might also be involved in certain cases of hypersusceptibility in which "the slightest denigration of a person's attributes, such as the way he dresses, his behavior or that of his partner, his physical or intellectual abilities etc. put an abrupt end to the ritual of interaction", when sudden eruptions of violence result from "ill-placed" comments (Dartiguenave, 2001, p. 197). Another avenue of investigation would consist in observing the various forms taken by fetishism in different cultures: it scarcely seems necessary to point out that the statuses and their emblems vary depending on the age, place and cultural environment. A man's fetishism for high heels can only be observed in a civilization that is familiar with this type of shoe and makes of it an emblem of femininity. If our interpretation of fetishism is correct then it should be possible, in other cultures, to observe fetishist behaviors that relate to other objects or articles of clothing. In our opinion, this constitutes a field of socio-ethnographic or ethno-psychiatric observation that has hitherto received only scant attention. One final question relates to fetishism among women. We know that this question has been the subject of debate among psychoanalysts, with some authors tending to consider fetishism to represent a purely male perversion. Krafft-Ebing and Moll did not exclude the possibility that female fetishism might exist, even if they did not provide any examples of it in their famous *Psychopathia Sexualis.* In an article published in 1972 in the *Revue française de psychanalyse,* Georges Zavitzianos did not completely exclude the possibility but, due to the absence of reported cases in the literature, concluded that fetishism is extremely rare among women (cited by Bonnet, 2005). Nevertheless, if Jean Gagnepain's hypothesis is correct then, if fetishism is, in other words, indeed a disorder of the person resulting from the exacerbation of status and the emblems associated with it, then there is no reason why it should not be observed in women, even though it undoubtedly manifests itself in different ways in such cases [17].

However, it does not seem that this reification of status – or its emblems – is observed solely in fetishism. It also appears to be found among transsexuals who reject their natural sex and constantly want to change it. This is another hypothesis that we owe to Hubert Guyard, who himself drew from the work of Joël Dor when speaking of transsexuals as the "sex of angels" (Dor, 1987). Ultimately, he hypothesized, transsexuals seem less to want to change their

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[17]Indeed, Gérard Bonnet presents a complete case of what he refers to as female fetishism in a young woman to whom he gives the name Lucie (Bonnet, 2005). We analyze this case in the French version of this book. We can also point to the work of Gaëtan Gatian de Clérambault into "the erotic passion for materials among women" first published in *Archives d'anthropologie criminelle de médecine légale* (1908 and 1910) and reprinted more recently (Gatian de Clérambault, 2002).

sex than to desexualize themselves.

In a case reported by Serge André concerning a subject named Dany, it was precisely on the advice of a surgeon that the patient first consulted the psychoanalyst (André, 1993). At the time, Dany was about twenty years old and suffered from violent bouts of distress. The question that caused him such anxiety was that he had always felt like a female being and wondered whether or not he was a transsexual[18]. Based on what he had read, he was inclined to answer yes to this question. However, he recoiled at the idea of surgical castration and limited himself to hormonal treatment. As a psychoanalyst, Serge André was of course interested in Dany's childhood. Dany's mother had wanted to give birth to a daughter and had been preparing herself for this. When she learned that the baby was a boy, she refused to touch him for two days. Later on, she enjoyed dressing Dany as a girl and teaching him what girls are habitually taught to do: play with dolls, knit, sew etc. At the age of twelve, Dany had to have an operation to lower his testicles which had remained undescended. He underwent this operation with reluctance since he had already adapted to his imaginary status as a girl. At about the age of six, Dany started cross-dressing himself in underwear stolen secretly from his mother who surprised him one day looking at himself in the mirror wearing stockings, a small pair of knickers and a bra. His mother hurried away without saying anything while Dany, overcome with shame, hastened to tidy away the clothes in the wardrobe from which he had taken them. This incident marked the beginning of a new complicity between mother and son. That very evening, Dany discovered under his pillow the pair of stockings put there by his mother. After that, his mother allowed Dany to put on a pair of stockings when he got back from school and keep them on until his father got back home after work. The death of his mother when he was sixteen years old was a great shock for Dany. However, a new complicity was then to arise with his father who, the very next day, suggested that Dany sleep with him in the couple's double bed under the pretext of wanting to furnish the room previously occupied by Dany as a sort of mausoleum in memory of the deceased. The positions in the kinship system were therefore completely disordered. Without there being any sexual contact, in the narrow sense of the term, between father and son, the latter nevertheless occupied the mother's place in the marital bed. The father, who was himself quite feminine in appearance, played the role of mistress of the house and behaved as a veritable mother hen with regard to his son: he

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[18]To use DSM-IV terminology, the clinical picture exhibited by Dany is related to transvestic fetishism (ICD F65.1/DSM 302.3) associated with sexual masochism (ICD F65.5/DSM 302.83).

continued, for example, to dress him himself every morning. For his part, and without his father knowing, Dany borrowed heavily from his deceased mother's wardrobe in order to cross-dress. At the time of the analysis, which lasted only one and a half years, Dany was married but continued to spend the night with his father once or twice a week. He "acted the man" during the day while doing his job as civil servant but then put on make-up and dressed as a woman in the evening. While he refused to visit transvestite venues, which he detested, he sometimes took the risk of going to the office wearing a pair of stockings or a pair of women's knickers hidden under his trousers. He finished by confessing with difficulty to the psychoanalyst that his perverse practices did not stop there. Once a month, he also had to have himself tied up and beaten by a woman. For this scenario to be truly satisfying for him, the woman also had to take real pleasure in whipping and humiliating him. On these occasions, Dany would make himself up as a woman and put on skin-tight clothing, preferably made of rubber. He would walk around the room as if busy with household chores. He would then wait for his partner to insult him, tell him off for the poor quality of his housekeeping and order him to do some particularly humiliating task. She then had to tie him up very tight, almost to the point of strangulation, on the four-poster bed which he had bought specifically for the purpose. She then had to whip him and insult him until he reached orgasm. It was difficult for him to find partners who agreed to take part in this type of scenario and he spent a lot of his time writing personal ads to place in specialist magazines. Serge André stressed that, in this way, Dany was attempting to verify that his fantasy was a female fantasy. He was generally frustrated in his search but he sometimes found partners who said they would not weaken and would go through to the end of the scenario. "He could then hardly believe it", Serge André goes on to say. "In short, the logic behind his contract meant that the other was always suspected of not being able to live up to her commitments" (André, 1993, p. 39).

The woman that Dany had married agreed to participate to some extent in this scenario without, however, going so far as to beat him or really hurt him. When he insisted, it was she who became the victim: she burst into tears and begged him not to ask her to do such horrible things. Everything seems to suggest that, through these scenarios, Dany was trying to test some sort of limit in his partners. Serge André noted something similar in his own relationship with Dany. When he was recounting his masochistic fantasies, Dany regularly asked a preliminary question: "Can I go on?", "I don't know if I can go any further?". "What was he trying to find out by asking this question or expressing this doubt unless it was to measure my *desire* to hear more?" (*ibid.*, p. 38). In effect, recounting these masochistic scenarios made

Dany forget his "transsexualism" as well as the anguished panic attacks that had initially led him to consult a specialist. Dany then put an end to the analysis after having decided to take up a writing project in which he could confirm himself as a masochist.

Serge André stresses the etiology of this "masochism" by focusing on a "primordial scene" that occurred when the then seven-year-old Dany was playing "cowboys and Indians" with a small girl who lived nearby. Normally, it was Dany who took his playmate prisoner before tying her to a tree in the garden which acted as the torture stake. However, one day when they had swapped roles, the girl tied him to the tree and went home. Abandoned in this way, Dany started off by panicking, crying and shouting for help. However, "after a few minutes of panic and despair, he suddenly felt infused with an extraordinary happiness and an unexpected feeling of well-being flooded through his body. From that day onward, he knew that that was where he could find pleasure, dependent upon his bonds and the merciless woman" (*ibid.*, p. 39).

However, should we see in this episode the cause of Dany's perversion? Is it not more properly an *a posteriori* reconstruction? Still addressing the case from an etiological perspective, Serge André interpreted Dany's transsexualism as a defense against the homosexuality that threatened him in his relations with his father. In his dealings with his father, Dany risked being no more than a neutered boy, whereas in his mother's desire for him, he was phallic girl and therefore uncastratable. What is clear is that all Dany's issues revolved around his status and the difference between masculine and feminine. He was caught up in his relations with his mother, and then also with his father, in a way that made it difficult for him to identify his status. As Serge André clearly noted, his masochistic scenarios were the result of an attempt on his part to find in his partners some reassurance concerning his own status [19].

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[19] Fur fetishism, transvestism, personal ads, contracts in which "everything must be stated, promised, announced and carefully described before being accomplished" (Deleuze, 1991, p. 18). It is Dany, much more than Antoine, about whom we shall speak later, who resembles Leopold von Sacher-Masoch. The person whose name was employed by Krafft-Ebing to designate a specific perversion – "masochism" – is very different from Sade with whom he has nevertheless been associated. Gilles Deleuze was correct on this point: Masoch's world has nothing to do with that of Sade. "We are questioning the very concept of an entity known as sadomasochism. [...] It has been stated so often that sadism and masochism are found in the same person that we have come to believe it. We need to go back to the beginning and read Sade and Masoch" (*ibid.*, p. 13-14). Go back to the beginning, yes, but not just on the basis of a rereading of Sade and Masoch. We need to develop new clinical descriptions and ask new questions. By distinguishing between disorders relating to the acculturation of sexuality, on the one hand, and those relating to

In the case we are studying here, we are unable to say whether Dany was suffering from a reification of status (fetishist attachment to certain emblems or the supposed attributes of a femininity attributed to him by his mother) or, in contrast, an inability to delimit himself the relevant status boundaries and thus define an identity which he was therefore condemned to look for in others. Although we tend to favor the first hypothesis, the question remains totally unresolved. If we have presented Dany's case in such detail here, even though it is not drawn directly from mediationist clinical studies, it is because it seems to us to indicate very clearly that the question of status (in this particular instance, the difference between masculine and feminine) is central to such clinical cases which are therefore of great interest within a sociological perspective which wishes to identify the way in which the differences and boundaries of social life emerge.

Exhibitionistic obscenity

In pathological fetishism, the emblem of status takes disproportionate, excessive importance. That, at least, is the theory proposed by Jean Gagnepain and which we support here. However, the model also allows us to hypothesize cases which would be opposite, in which there would no longer be any status boundary. Jean Gagnepain considered voyeurism and exhibitionism to be the possible counterparts of fetishism [20]. Whereas, for the fetishist, the partner disappears behind a status emblem, the voyeur and the flasher eliminate the status of both themselves and their "partners". Both are reduced to their natural sexual characteristics. The male voyeur is interested exclusively in what is "least duchess-like in his victim's nature", to borrow

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the acculturation of genitality, on the other, Jean Gagnepain does indeed call into question the unity of "sadomasohism": the perverse "masochism" of von Sacher-Masoch, like that of Dany, – which questions the difference between the sexes – is not the inverse of the sadism of Sade or Antoine – which is related much more to the paranoia surrounding the question of other people's power over oneself or one's power over them. Deleuze had already noted this relationship between sadism and paranoia in his discussion of fantasy: "In sadism a powerful force of paranoid projection transforms the fantasy into the instrument of a fundamental and sudden change in the objective world. […] By contrast, the constitution of the fetish in masochism points to the inner force of the fantasy, its characteristic of patient waiting, its suspended and static power, and the way in which the ideal and the real are together absorbed by it" (*ibid.*, p. 72-73). The distinction is even more important given that we can no longer ignore the fact that, despite the legend that persists around him, Sade was not just a writer or free-thinking "philosopher" but a perverse criminal similar to some of the serial killers we read about today (Susini, 2004).

[20]Perverse exhibitionism was isolated as a clinical entity by Lasègue in the late 19th century. Currently, exhibitionism and voyeurism are identified separately in the ICD (F65.2 [302.4] and F65.3 [302.82]).

an expression from the work of Balzac cited above. This results in scenarios in which the victim's privacy is systematically intruded upon. The voyeur violates the privacy of the other to see what he is not supposed to see. Such stories are regularly reported in the newspapers. A thirty-year-old municipal employee, married with two children, was sentenced for "invading the privacy of others" after filming his unknowing female colleagues in the toilets by means of a webcam which he had hidden there. A computer engineer, 38 years old and once again the father of two children, was found to have installed a video-surveillance camera in the waste bins in the women's toilets in his company and to have controlled this live using a wireless remote control from the men's toilets. The young owner of an attic room measuring nine square meters in Paris's 16th arrondissement had installed, below the hand basin, a camera pointing toward the shower which allowed him, for a period of several months, to spy on the private life of the female foreign student to whom he had rented the room. Before the judge, the young man explained that he wanted to live out a fantasy. "I don't know if it will reassure her", he added "but I didn't see anything exciting". And he went on to state that the camera had mostly shown him "scenes where she could be seen working or reading on her bed"[21]. Another man glued mirrors to the ends of his shoes and followed women up the staircases of public spaces while sliding his feet below their skirts. His scenario did not stop there. Instead, he went so far in his intrusions as to trigger a reaction on the part of his victim. He had to be seen in order to cause disgust in the other.

The voyeur or exhibitionist's scenario, thus, is one of violation of decency. The pervert attempts to determine the extent of his intrusion, the threshold of status which, for him, is an enigma. The very thing he is no longer capable of (the delimitation of status) he obtains from outside of himself through his victim's reactions. Very often, he pushes the scenario as far as he has to in order to arouse the victim's disgust. His disorder is typically a disorder affecting social relations. Indeed, there are, properly speaking, no longer any *social* relations but simply a relation which tends to be limited to the exhibition of or intrusion into the *natural* characteristics of the sexual individual.

In cases of criminal exhibitionism subjects do everything they can to be caught. "Defiance to the law is essential here: everything is done to confront the law, to oblige it to make a pronouncement, to exaggerate the threats and risks, to demonstrate and, ultimately, to denounce the ridiculous, mean-spirited aspect of it" (*ibid.*, p. 71). However, anonymous flashers, whom Bonnet distinguishes from criminal flashers, should not be confused with

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[21] *Libération*, "Société" section, 9 June 2005.

naturists, nudists or negligent individuals who are inattentive to the way they dress. As in the case of criminal exhibitionism, we can speak of exhibitionism only if there is "an intention to astonish, to frighten, to impress" (*ibid.*, p. 119). According to Bonnet, the main difference between the criminal flasher and the anonymous flasher is that the latter disappears the moment he is seen, without it being possible to identify him. These anonymous flashers are by far the most numerous. Without specifying his source, Gérard Bonnet indicates that 50 % of women claim to have seen one at least once during their lives. Very few of them choose to start a course of psychoanalysis and they therefore represent a methodological problem. We know little about them and that only through the statements of their victims. In *Voir - Être vu*, Gérard Bonnet examines eight accounts provided by students (seven women and one man) in an attempt to gain a more in-depth understanding of the question. These accounts have a number of elements in common. The first point is that everything in the scenario enacted by the flasher is done in order to profoundly shock the victim. The aim is clearly to make oneself seen and trigger a reaction in the victim. The flasher chooses his spot which is always a public place or passageway (stairway, corridor, WC, subway etc.). It can also be seen that these places are simultaneously also nonplaces, as they are referred to by Marc Augé (1992). They are places "frequented by anyone and everyone and for a limited period, where you find everyone and no-one, in which it is easy to construct an immediate and transient intimacy which is simultaneously reassuring and liberating" (Bonnet, *op. cit.*, p. 128)[22]. The choice of time seems to be less clearly defined. It can just as well be a "peak time" as a "slack time". The most important thing is to be sure of capturing the victim's attention. The victims' descriptions of the flashers themselves are much less precise than those of the locations. "As soon as curiosity has been aroused", says Bonnet, "there is no longer anyone there" (*ibid.*, p. 130). The flasher is a being without identity. It seems to be "impossible to get a hold on him as an individual, as a person, or even as subject" as Bonnet goes on to say (*ibid.*, p. 131). We could even say that he has neither status nor social position. The person disappears behind the sexual organ. "The question here clearly involves the relation between the sexual organ and the person as a whole and not simply the sexual organ itself" (*ibid.*). The victims' accounts are more precise when it comes to the act itself and they specify

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[22]In her autobiographical tale, *The sexual life of Catherine M.* (2001), Catherine Millet notes that all her open-air "fuck" sites are also nonplaces of this type. "Taking into account all these factors, terraces, roadsides, stretches of open country and any space designed merely to be passed through, such as concourses and parking lots, all of these are places (or nonplaces as the anthropologist Marc Augé would describe the latter) where it feels good to me to follow their example and be open" (Millet, 2003, p. 106).

the duration, frequency, the means involved (hat, raincoat, elevator, stairway, monument etc.). Most of the accounts also specify the state of the exposed organ (erect, ejaculating, etc.). Finally, the description also mentions the man's overall behavior (passive, provocative, bold). In this respect, it seems that the more transfixed the victims are, the more they stare, the more the flasher does until they are forced to look away, almost as if the "Look at that!" was followed by a "Look away. Flee!". The victim, who is usually a woman, is "rendered powerless, neutralized" (*ibid.*, p. 135). Flashers seem to prefer to choose young, feminine victims who are isolated and defenseless. However, they may also choose a single man or a group of people. Even though not all accounts mention this point, the disclosures made by flashers themselves show that they start by observing the victim before acting. They start as voyeurs and then show themselves. In one of the eight accounts studied by Bonnet, the one in which the victim was a man, this latter said he had felt "something odd, something watching". He had felt that he was being watched before the other person revealed himself [23].

The victim's reaction determines the overall behavior of the aggressor. The bolder the flasher seems to be, the more panicked the victim becomes, and the more the victim panics, the more the flasher does to shock her. This escalation is usually interrupted in a sudden fashion, either with the victim running away or through an action on her part (in one of the eight accounts, the flasher fled when one of the witnesses became aggressive and threatened him by picking up a stone). However, it is difficult to understand why Bonnet here does not also refer to cases in which the scenario is ended through the intervention of a third-party. After all, what truly distinguishes criminal exhibitionism from anonymous exhibitionism except for the fact that, in the former, a third-party intervenes and the flasher is arrested? This question is all the more justified given that Gérard Bonnet himself stresses that both anonymous flashers and criminal flashers are addressing the representatives of the law beyond their victims. "If they use a woman as a witness, it is as a medium, a means, a pretext, but the addressee is elsewhere" (*ibid.*, p. 139). It is possibly even society as a whole that they are questioning. The acts they commit enter into the realm of rumor and the columns of the newspapers. "What do people say about my organ?" seems to be, according to Bonnet, the question they are asking of society as a whole. This question is also that of their identity. "More than a search for identification, it is a search for identity, and for sexual identity. The individual, here, makes something

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[23]Here we can think of all Goffman had to say "of normal appearances and alarms" (Goffman, 1971). The presence of the voyeur in his victim's *Umwelt* alarmed the latter even before the voyeur revealed himself.

happen, he shows his credentials and expects very specifically to be told who this makes him, since his identity is indissociable from his qualification as a sexual being" (*ibid.*, p. 144). Bonnet could not have put it any better. The flasher has no status other than that given to him by others. He identifies himself with his sexual organ and searches for a confirmation of this in others, with the result "that the acknowledgment of his organ and what it represents is an essential precondition for him to be able to enter the realm of existence and affirm his position there as a fully independent subject" (*ibid.*, p. 146). "However, the affirmation he receives is just as fleeting as the rumors to which he gives rise and which he listens out for. In the world of human beings, the flasher is like a foreigner who must regularly renew his residence permit" (*ibid.*, p. 145). "He tries to humiliate his witness but does so in an attempt to join in which fails and obliges him to repeat his acts" (*ibid.*, p. 147).

The flasher, Bonnet concludes, "is a man who needs another to bear witness with regard to his sexual organ at the expense of his person properly speaking. That is why his appeal, however furtive it may be, inevitably takes on the appearance of defiance in every sense of the term: defiance of common sense, defiance of decency, of the law, of any possible understanding" (*ibid.*, p. 141). And he adds: "we can say that he denies the symbolic order – in other words, that he is familiar with it and in some ways adheres to it but only to brutally and suddenly negate it at certain times" (*ibid.*, p. 142). One could undoubtedly formulate things somewhat differently: the flasher is indeed socialized, caught up in the symbolic order of statuses and that is why he is familiar with it. However, this order is external to him and represents an enigma for him. His behavior is a way of questioning this order, of searching for its boundaries through the reactions of others. What both the flasher and the voyeur are questioning is clearly the difference in statuses, even if these questions lead them to violate the boundaries of position[24].

2.3.2 The plurality of positions

If status is what allows us to define our identities through a whole set of differences (man/woman, young/old etc.), then position is what enables us

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[24]It would also be interesting to address the question of the different manifestations of exhibitionism as a function of historical period, place or social environment, without of course forgetting the question of female exhibitionism. Like the question of female fetishism, this question has been the subject of debate among psychoanalysts. On this point, we shall limit ourselves to referring the reader to Gérard Bonnet's study of Marilyn Monroe on the basis of the work published by Michel Schneider (Bonnet, 2008; Schneider, 2006). Both of these authors clearly describe the powerless drifting of a woman who was caught up in social relations without in any way being able to master them.

to define the circles to which we belong, to choose the people with whom we associate as well as those from whom we distance ourselves [25]. In other words, position makes it possible to define who counts, "who forms an ethnic unit in contradistinction to others" (Brackelaire, 1995, p. 196). It therefore permits human beings to delimit an "at home" (whatever its size, from one's house to one's mother country), to separate the private from the public, the familiar from the foreign. This delimiting of an "at home" is perhaps never seen as clearly as in the case of adolescents who, all of a sudden, start to insist on the privacy of their rooms. What was hitherto simply a children's bedroom becomes a private space which the parents cannot enter without knocking. It is no longer possible to come in and vacuum the floor without permission. It is not without reason that Georg Simmel chose to speak of doors as a symbol of the boundaries of social life! And some day or other, the same adolescent will declare that he no longer wants to go with his parents to visit grandmother at the week-end as he has in the past, but that he would prefer to stay at home on his own. It is quite possible that he will be bored to tears but in this way he is showing that he is freeing himself, that he is separating himself from his parents. From now on, he is an independent entity; he is not simply a part of a family unit. A new social unit emerges accompanied by a refusal of promiscuity. Gagnepain also suggested illustrating this concept of social position through the French system of household taxation: for a young person who was previously covered by his parents' tax status, the fact of completing a separate tax return is one of the manifestations, in modern-day France at least, of the appearance of a new social unit.

However, once one has closed the door, drawn the boundary that separates private from public, defined an "at home", it is generally to open the door again or to construct bridges, to reuse Georg Simmel's famous metaphor. But to whom does one open the door? Who is admitted to the private circle? This question clearly addresses the mastery of relations but also the mastery of the boundaries that separate one person from another. The adolescent who has emancipated himself from his parents by closing the door to them will certainly want to welcome in his mates or his girlfriend. Although he has set up a barrier, he selectively lowers it to allow his girlfriend to enter

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[25]Gagnepain used the term "notable" here (Gagnepain, 1991, p. 52). Following Jean-Luc Brackelaire, however, we prefer to use the word "position" since it "more clearly indicates the instantial, that is to say negative, and relational character of the ethnic unit" (Brackelaire, 1995, p. 197). It also sits better within the sociological tradition by designating units which are situated relative to one another "and which 'exist' independently of the human beings who occupy them" (*ibid.*). This is why Henri Mendras used the term "position" to translate the idea of *status* which Merton himself had borrowed from Linton (Merton, 1968).

his private sphere.

> "For if an individual is to join someone in some kind of social bond, surely he must do so by giving up some of the boundaries and barriers that ordinarily separate them. Indeed the fact of having given up these separatenesses is a central symbol and substance of relationship – just as the act of first giving them up is a central mark of relationship formation" (Goffman, 1971, p. 69).

Position, in other words, opens the way to the choice of *partners,* which is the term we use to designate the persons with whom we establish relationships under the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

> "To establish a social relationship is therefore to configure the arena of ethnic positions as a function of a situation in which we have to deal with a partner. More specifically, it is to redistribute the positions to the partner in question and to the entity that we ourselves constitute in our association with him. It is therefore to define simultaneously who our partner is and who we are in our relations with him or, again, what the association that we establish with him is" (Brackelaire, 1995, p. 200).

As a negative principle of separation and emancipation, position allows the person to retain a certain degree of control over those who enter into his circle. One cannot enter uninvited into the intimate circles of belonging. Durkheim, who was quoted by Goffman, put it as follows: "The human personality is a sacred thing; one dare not violate it nor infringe its bounds, while at the same time the greatest good is in communion with others" (Durkheim, "The Determination of Moral Facts", quoted by Goffman, 1967, p. 73). We could do worse ourselves than adopt this quotation from Durkheim provided that we understand that "the bounds of the person" are extensible and are far from being limited to the body alone.

As the principle that delimits social units through their separation, the person defines a whole series of perimeters and circles of belonging that can be arranged concentrically from the most private and intimate right through to the public sphere. Here, again, we encounter the question of decency or modesty. The definition of what is decent or modest and what is not differs depending on era, place and the social environment. The history of the swimming costume since the invention of the beach in the 19th century testifies to this (Corbin, 1994). Whereas the swimming costumes of bygone

times hid every possible scrap of skin, nowadays they have shrunk to the absolute minimum authorized by custom. However, there is still a minimum: the boundaries of decency have shifted but they have not disappeared. "Everyone has the right to do what they want", responded a person asked by Jean-Claude Kaufmann's interview team during a survey of attitudes towards topless bathing. "But you still have to know when to stop. There are limits" (Kaufmann, 1995, p. 177).

A little like the way differences in status are signaled by emblems, these boundaries of intimacy can be observed in our dwelling spaces where they are given concrete form by the layout of the rooms, the partitions, the curtains, the furniture. Thus, it is on the doorstep that we generally greet Jehovah's Witnesses or the postman who arrives with a letter to be signed for. However, we welcome family members and friends in the living room, while the number of people we greet in our bedrooms is more restricted and those we welcome to our beds more limited still. Goffman considered such behavior to relate to the question of control of the backstage and the personal facade.

> "Another area is suggested by the very widespread tendency in our society to give performers control over the place in which they attend to what are called biological needs. […] Such activity also causes the individual to disarrange his clothing and to 'go out of play', that is, to drop from his face the expressive mask that he employs in face-to-face interaction. At the same time it becomes difficult for him to reassemble his personal front should the need to enter into interaction suddenly occur. Perhaps that is a reason why toilet doors in our society have locks on them. When asleep in bed the individual is also immobilized, expressively speaking, and may not be able to bring himself into an appropriate position for the interaction or bring a sociable expression to his face until some moments after being wakened, thus providing one explanation to the tendency to remove the bedroom from the active part of the house. The utility of such seclusion is reinforced by the fact that sexual activity is likely to occur in bedrooms, a form of interaction which also renders its performers incapable of immediately entering into another interaction" (Goffman, 1959, p. 123).

Although none of this is wrong, Goffman, in this passage, undoubtedly accords too much importance to the ability to act and control one's expression. What is more, the public and intimate, private circles cannot be reduced to an opposition between stage and backstage. In our opinion, the question

relates more to the plurality of these circles and the control of promiscuity. The boundaries are not absolute. Friends invited for the evening will be installed in the living room. However, it is perfectly possible that relations with one of them will become more intimate as the evening progresses and finish up in bed once the others have taken their leave.

It is therefore not certain that the separation between the bedroom and the rest of the house is primarily determined by a question of utility, namely by the need to isolate one form of interaction – sexual relations – "which also renders its performers incapable of immediately entering into another interaction" (*ibid.*). Instead, we see in it the concrete expression of a principle of exclusion. To enter into their relationship, the lovers have renounced certain "limits" or "barriers" between them. However, this renunciation relates only to them, to the exclusion of all other persons. And the separation of the bedroom gives concrete expression to this exclusion: the lovers' wish "to have their circle protected from entrance and overhearing by others" (Goffman, 1971, p. 40).

The dwelling is clearly not the only domain in which these "perimeters of the person" can be found. Here, we shall simply build on the many observations already present in Goffman on the basis of the everyday, real-life situations that occur in western societies[26]. "The bar used in supermarket checkout counters to separate one customer's batch of articles from the next is an example; the common armrest between theater seats is another" (Goffman, 1971, p. 42). A sunshade, towels, buckets, children's games define the limits of the "at home" during an afternoon spent at the beach (Kaufmann, 1995), in the same way as an item of clothing or a book placed on a deckchair at the side of the swimming pool. "Moving them or even touching them is something like touching their owner's body, and such acts are avoided in many circumstances or performed with suitable circumspection" (Goffman, 1971, p. 42). Here, as elsewhere, "the central offense is an incursion, intrusion, encroachment, presumption, transgression, defilement, besmearing, contamination – in short, a violation" (*ibid.*, p. 44). The behavior observed on public transport provides numerous examples of the way people create these relative, temporary boundaries of intimacy for the time it takes to complete a journey or a trip. The central armrest between two seats on a high-speed train is the equivalent of the armrest located between cinema seats. Even though "the elbow is part of the body that is little vulnerable to contamination" (*ibid.*, p. 49), intrusion by an unknown neighbor who spreads

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[26]Here, we shall limit ourselves to examples taken from everyday life in contemporary western societies. However, in the same way as for the manifestations of differences in status, it would be interesting to gather systematic observations about the way in which the boundaries of position are manifested in different cultures or civilizations.

out a little too much and takes up the entire armrest has every chance of triggering a more or less vigorous response. The choice of seats in French regional express trains (TER) gives rise to another observation. A single passenger entering a carriage in which there are still a large number of free seats will generally choose to sit next to the window on a seat that is located next to another empty seat. However, if the same passenger climbs aboard a train in which a large number of other passengers are already sitting he will be obliged to sit next to one of the passengers who is already seated there. The same is true of the subway or urban train services. During the off-peak hours when the carriages are practically empty, passengers fill the space by sitting at a "respectful" distance from their counterparts. During rush hour, by contrast, they are packed tight against one another without this causing any discomfiture. To go and squeeze tight against someone during off-peak periods would not have the same significance as finding oneself squashed against him during rush hour. Goffman, again, had already pointed out this phenomenon: "Obviously, to stand or sit next to a stranger when the setting is all but empty is more of an intrusion than the same act would be when the place is packed and all can see that only this niche remains" (*ibid.*, p. 31). This observation can be taken even further. There are, in effect, different ways of being squashed together. In rush hour, when the passengers have to stand in the subway and hold onto the bars, they generally try to find a free space on the bar. The fact of placing one's hand up against or, worse still, on that of another person would be perceived as an intrusion. The "victim" of this intrusion will generally hurry to remove his own hand (however, it is also possible to imagine such a scenario as part of a game of seduction: to refuse the contact would then be one strategy, to accept it another). Finally, let us borrow Goffman's observation of the particular complexity of the opposite phenomenon: distancing behaviors when a public space such as a train carriage gradually empties as the train stops at its various stations:

> "What seems to occur in middle-class society is that arrival creates sequential reallocation but departure leads to somewhat more complex behavior, since an individual who leaves his current niche to take up a freed one produces an open sign that he is disinclined to be as close to his neighbor as he was. (When the two are of opposite sex, there exists the added complication that failure to move away when possible can be taken as a sign of undue interest.) In consequence, a departure may leave an empty place and no change in the remaining allocation, or at least an appropriator may wait for some tactful moment before making use of the newly available resource. In brief, moving in on some-

one or having oneself moved in on is a less delicate task than
removing oneself from proximity to him. In consequence, as say
a streetcar empties, there will be a period when two individuals
signal by proximity a relationship that does not in fact exist"
(*ibid.*, p. 32) [27].

The unacceptable behavior in this case is the violation of the "perimeter
of the person" or the circle it forms with other people. In the case of public
transport, the discomfiture, or even fear, will continue to grow if the stranger
persists in his intrusion despite the clear signs of refusal emitted by the
victim. In their search for a response to the enigma surrounding their status,
the voyeur and flasher cause this type of discomfiture through their unbidden
intrusion in the privacy of their victims. However, in this case, the disorder
is not specifically related to position. The violation of another's privacy
by a voyeur or flasher is instead a consequence of their problem of status
which leads them to search for a positive identity in the difference between
the sexes. By contrast, Gagnepain suggested that donjuanism or swinging
testify to a specific position-related disorder. In effect, a Don Juan is not just
a seducer. What is systematically of interest for him is to "suborn" another
man's wife [28]. He contrives to penetrate the conjugal circle in order to prize
apart the couple. He systematically defies the law of alliance which lies at
the heart of kinship relations. And the more stable the couple into which he
intrudes once was, the greater the enjoyment he derives from the intrusion.
That is why Mozart's Don Giovanni is attracted by Donna Anna, who is
engaged to Ottavio, and then by Zerlina who is to marry Masetto. However,
certain cases of pedophilia can also be reinterpreted within this perspective.
We shall now present such a case taken from mediationist clinical practice [29].

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[27]Goffman is right to speak of complexity since it is necessary to introduce an additional
question here, namely one relating to guilt. A passenger may indeed experience a slight
feeling of guilt at the idea of moving away from his neighbor too brusquely. That is why
he waits for a "tactful" moment. However, we shall not investigate this question further
here.

[28]To suborn: to cause to perform an action counter to one's duty, a bad action (Littré).
"Give him my daughter, give him all my fortune: And he meanwhile, the villain, rascal,
wretch, tries with black treason to suborn my wife" (Molière, *Tartuffe or the Hypocrite,
translated by Curtis Hidden Page*, Act V, Scene 3 - http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/
epub/2027/pg2027.html).

[29]This case was described by Morin et al., 1999. It resembles pedophilia as defined in
ICD (F65.4) and DSM-4 (302.2).

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Pedophilic seduction

David [30] had already been imprisoned once for indecent behavior toward minors aged 7 to 10 years. After 18 months in prison, he moved to a different region in order, in his words, to "create a new innocence". However, he was again imprisoned for identical reasons. He then visited a therapist as part of the obligatory medical treatment required by the judge. At that time, he was 29 years of age and was still very young in his appearance.

He emphasized his aversion to the adult world which seemed to him to be extremely hostile. When in a group, he sought out the company of children. If there were none present, he would get bored and prefer to remain at a distance rather than mix with adults. He regularly prowled around areas where he knew he could meet young boys: near the sports' field, close to the cinema, near the church. He was not aggressive toward them but played with them and gave them sweets. He succeeded in getting two young boys to go home with him. After showing them pornographic videos, he masturbated with them. Having always dreamed of working with children, he had obtained the necessary qualifications and had worked in two children's activity centers. It was then that he became guilty of physical touching and was imprisoned for the first time. At the time, he still wanted to look after children for an occupation. He wanted to get married and have children himself and claimed that he would bring them up better than his own father – who was often absent and generally paid no attention to him – had looked after him.

David acknowledged the facts as they were set out by the judge. He had indeed touched young boys aged 7 to 10 years in a sexual manner. He admitted approaching them at the sports field and tempting them with sweets. He also admitted masturbating while stroking the children. He knew that "it isn't good" but, like the flashers we presented above, he said he was overwhelmed by a force he could not control. He could not repress the excitement that took hold of him at the sight of a child aged between 7 and 10 years, especially if he had fair hair and blue eyes (he himself was blond with blue eyes and very young in appearance and his choice of children seemed to be inspired by a desire for someone similar to himself).

However, admitting the accusation made by the judge did not prevent him from turning it against his accusers. He justified his pedophilia in terms of a need to rediscover the purity of childhood which, according to him, is perverted by the adult world. In brief, it is first and foremost, society that is perverse. David was thus engaged in a "pursuit of innocence" which took two directions.

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[30]This name is, of course, fictitious, as are all those given to the patients whose cases are reported elsewhere in this work.

First of all, he refused to be thought of as depraved and indifferent to the fate of the children. He said that he was able to stop if the child asked him to. He confirmed that in some cases he warned the children: they were not obliged to let him do whatever he wanted. He rejected any suggestion of force, threat or violence against his victims. At the same time, he felt a slight sense of guilt which he expressed to the children: "it's not really very good to do all this", "it would be best not to do it again". The feeling of having done something reprehensible was particularly evident after masturbation. He did not disagree when the children's parents, the judge or the social workers said that he had risked profoundly harming the children. He acknowledged that what they said was justified and even necessary. But only, however, to assert immediately afterwards that he was in the grip of something stronger than him. Only by masturbating frequently could he control his excitement. In other words, David, accepted the role of the judge while simultaneously considering him irrelevant: the force that attracted him to children lay beyond the power of the judge (Morin et al., 1999, p. 150).

David did not really plead guilty to being attracted to young boys. He attempted to assert his innocence by presenting himself as a different type of being. His meetings with the children seemed to him to be imbued with a purity that was foreign to the adult world. He attempted to convince the psychologist that it was the children who chose him and not *vice versa.* What is more, he did not pursue his relationship with them unless he had been "chosen" by them or "moved" by a certain grace. He spoke of being genuinely overwhelmed by certain boys and criticized their parents for failing to understand what was important in these relationships.

His imprisonment separated him from children and life seemed empty to him from that point on. He had already attempted to take his own life by swallowing drugs and regularly talked of suicide. That would be a solution since he had been told that the law prohibited his pedophilia and he could not live as he wished.

Before being imprisoned for the first time, he was, he claimed, completely unaware of the illegal nature of his acts and entered into them without questioning himself. His attraction to children and his way of life seemed natural to him. He was far from imagining the reactions of the judges, the world of prison and the need for psychiatric help. He was well aware, however, that his practices had to remain secret and that he had to avoid talking about them to anyone. At the same time, he was certain that the children would say nothing, all the more so because, between the ages of seven and fourteen years, he had been subject to regular sexual abuse by a man he had met at the swimming pool without anyone ever knowing anything about it.

Before being imprisoned, David scheduled his time in a way that enabled

him to meet the children in the district. He organized his movements to allow him to take the same bus as certain children and followed them for the entire journey, even if this meant a complete departure from the route he needed to take himself. He offered to accompany the children to the sports field or to the cinema. Similarly, he would go to church because he knew that it was a place where he could meet children he had identified earlier. On every occasion, he was able to overcome the distrust of the boys' families. The two children involved in his conviction for indecent behavior had been approached in this way and the enticement had gone so far that the children would spend their Saturday and Sunday afternoons with him, far from their families.

David attempted to fit in with the children's activities. He wore identical clothing so that he was able to play the role of big brother. He lured the children away from their sports activities in order to organize his own games with them. Finally, he gradually attempted to invite them to his own home. Thus, David seems to have been involved in a series of enticement scenarios, permanently testing the extent to which he could tempt the children away from their habitual circles. This is what the authors refer to as scenarios of abduction.

For David, a loving relationship could only be immediate and reciprocal. The authors speak of collusion. David felt attracted, "sucked in" in a way that he could not resist. "There's nothing to say, nothing to negotiate" (*ibid.*, p. 156). David himself stressed the way his eyes focused "in alternation on the child's organ and face in order to determine his complicity" (*ibid.*). However, unlike the voyeur, David was searching not so much for admiration or disgust, as complicity. It was important that the relations took place, if possible, at David's home and, above all, that they were shared. The child's complicity was absolutely essential. David was extremely preoccupied by the different ways of gaining the child's agreement to undress. At the same time, he asked himself, "not without enjoyment, whether his young partner might not, at any moment, revolt and put an end to the progress of the scenario" (*ibid.*, p. 157).

David was able to stand the relationship on its head: from suborner, he transformed himself into the suborned. He visited meeting places for homosexuals where he would allow himself to be picked up, in most cases by men older than himself. He said that he had recently replied to a personal ad placed by an older man who wanted to meet other men on a friendly basis. He went to the meeting in the desire to play out a sexual scenario. However, what he was looking for was less "the sexual act itself than a certain staging of the amorous relationship" (*ibid.*). He set off with the idea of "pretending" not to understand exactly what it was his partner wanted. "He played the innocent,

or more accurately, the falsely naïve child. He pretended he was looking for a platonic relationship based only on friendship. In fact, he allowed the older man to become increasingly bold in order to better attempt to escape from him at the last moment. David claimed that he always remained in control of the situation; sometimes he would yield and sometimes not. On some occasions, David would increase the stakes going, he said, so far as to make his partner pay. In doing so, he was certainly not motivated by a desire for gain but rather by the need, more or less clearly expressed, to alienate his partner and destroy the friendship that was purported to exist" (*ibid.*).

Whether picking up others or being picked up himself, David's *modus operandi* was one of corruption and violation: corruption and violation of the family circle, on the one hand, and corruption and violation of the intimacy of a loving relationship, on the other. Seen from this point of view, the victim is not so much "the child or partner himself as the family circle or the relationship between friends" (*ibid.*). He was attempting to achieve "a sort of amorous collusion obtained through a quasi-delusional fusion with another self, with an equivalent, a naïve 7-year-old child with blond hair and blue eyes" (*ibid.*, p. 158)[31].

We have seen that David wanted to "start a family". He said he had met a young woman, not too bright but "very nice". She seemed to accept the sex games that David suggested to her. For example, she shaved her pubic area at his request, thus giving her a childlike appearance which delighted him. Although David spoke about her a lot during the interviews, this was only with reference to their sexual relations. He wanted to know whether this relationship could be a substitute for his pedophilia which, though more satisfying, was forbidden by the law. Nevertheless, he finished by putting an end to this relationship because the young woman did not go far enough in agreeing to the childlike roles he asked her to play. In addition, she had a small 8-year-old daughter who came between them in their relationship and limited their scope for intimacy. This wish to start a family seems to show that David did indeed possess a sense of parentality but that this was guided by his over-abundant sexuality. He said that he was prepared to accept all the measures that the justice system considered advisable for him, with the exception of castration which would ruin his hopes of ever having children himself. He did not seem to grasp the extent to which he had perverted the family and the social bond. By contrast, he seemed able to weigh up the

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[31] Abduction and pederasty, the main components of such a *modus operandi,* were theorized and praised in the 1970's by René Schérer and Guy Hocquenghem, at the same time as they criticized the "patriarchal family" and the "confinement" of childhood. See: René Schérer and Guy Hocquenghem, "Co-ire. Album systématique de l'enfance", *Recherches*, Vol. 22, May 1976.

consequences that his perversion could have for his job and his possibility of becoming a parent (*ibid.*, p. 163). We should point out here that at the time he was imprisoned, David had been employed in the same company for several years. His employer was very satisfied with him and promised to take him back when he left prison. Despite his initial period in prison, he had never been unemployed.

He compared the attention showered on him by the man at the swimming pool with the coldness of his own father. However, he also dreamed of making him appear before a judge. Once again, there is a lack of candor in his search for complicity: it is coveted only to be besmirched.

It would, of course, be possible to dwell on the etiology of this case and search for explanations for David's current behavior in his primary socialization. Thus, David spoke about the sexual way in which his mother touched him. She stroked his penis every day, either when he went to bed or when he had his bath. According to him, none of his brothers was treated with the same tenderness. He had also shared a certain level of sexual complicity with a maternal aunt who came to spend a fortnight with the family every summer. They had tacitly defined a scenario for their meetings. David left his bedroom door ajar and lay naked on his bed with his penis erect. His aunt would then creep in, look for a long time at her nephew's sexual organ and then, without saying a word, leave in the same way as she had come. This went on for several years without anyone knowing anything about it and without there ever being the slightest verbal exchange between the two. David had therefore been the chosen, secret partner of the man in the swimming pool, his mother and then his aunt. It would seem that his later sexuality reproduced the direct collusion experienced in these earlier relationships.

In his relations with the therapist, David appeared to be capable of dialog. At the beginning, he was unsure of what to say. However, after that, he spoke more and more. Like Dany, he tended to transform the interview into an intimate conversation and the therapist constantly had to reassert the professional framework of the meeting and remind David of the obligatory nature of the therapy. David himself demanded treatment, went beyond what was required by law, but also demanded a form of care specific to him. "Because clearly 'he's like that', you either have to get rid of him or take him as he is! In complete sympathy" (*ibid.*, p. 168). He had no intention of changing himself. If he entrusted himself to a professional, it was first and foremost to avoid being imprisoned again. "For example, he sought the therapist's reaction to the advice of a cellmate, another pedophile, who spoke of the advantage of choosing older children, aged 14 years or more" (*ibid.*), who were better at hiding things from their parents and therefore at keeping

him out of trouble.

The corruption of minors perpetrated by David can be understood as the manifestation of a difficulty or inability to define and respect the boundaries of belonging, starting with those of the child and the family circle. David was very anxious about becoming a father as well as about his employability but he did not seem to be able to gauge the extent to which his pedophilia transgressed social positions. However, it is first and foremost through a comparison of David's homosexuality and pedophilia with other contrasting cases of homosexuality and pedophilia that we shall be able to move forward.

Exclusive complicity

It was the opinion of Jean Gagnepain that it might be possible to identify in homosexuality a manifestation of the reification of social position. However, this hypothesis has to be discussed and set out in greater detail. We know, on the one hand, that homosexuality is no longer included in the classification of psychiatric disorders (withdrawn from the DSM-III in 1973 and from the WHO's list of mental illnesses in 1991). We also know that the term "homosexual" is a relatively recent invention (the neologisms *homosexual* and *Homosexualität* were first used between 1868 and 1869 by the Hungarian writer Karl-Maria Kertbeny as part of the struggle to decriminalize sexual practices between persons of the same sex). Consequently, while there has always been both love and sexual activity between persons of the same sex, there has not always been a category and an identity referred to as "homosexual". According to Serge André (1993, p. 150), the fact that some people nowadays are qualified, or qualify themselves, as "homosexual" is a fact of speech. It is a naming phenomenon which *de facto* creates a certain social bond between these persons. However, this does not tell us very much about homosexuality as a possible symptom and even less about the unity of a clinical entity that could be referred to as "homosexuality". "The history of homosexuality", writes Florence Tamagne, "has to consider the distinction between homosexual conduct, which is universal, and homosexual identity, which is specific and temporal. Homosexuals do not necessarily define themselves as such, even if they find people of their own sex attractive or have sexual relations with them. By the same token, society will not necessarily distinguish an individual in terms of his sexual practices" (Tamagne, 2004, p. 5). Seen from this perspective, it is anachronistic to speak about homosexuality in the worlds of ancient Greece and Rome which were familiar with pederasty (*paiderastia*), or "the love of young boys", but knew of no identity corresponding to "homosexual". The historian Paul Veyne has shown that the important contrast in both ancient Rome and ancient Greece was not

that between homosexuality and heterosexuality but that between activity and passivity. Only an active sexual attitude, which consisted of "shafting" the partner, whether male or female, was considered worthy of a free man. For its part, passivity was considered shameful and reprehensible. It was also shameful to place oneself at the service of one's partner. Thus there was nothing more shameful for a Roman citizen than to be called a *cunnilingus*, or "licker of vulva" (in Latin, the term refers to the person and not to the act) (Veyne, 2001).

Similarly, even though the Middle Ages were characterized by a repressive trend that was particularly marked in the 12th and 13th centuries, it would, ultimately, be as anachronistic to speak of the repression of "homosexuality" by the medieval authorities as it is to speak of its toleration in Antiquity. What was repressed in the Middle Ages was "sodomy" or "buggery" but never, quite clearly, "homosexuality" as such. As Florence Tamagne says, the object of repression was the acts and not individuals characterized by a "sexual identity". So much, then, for our brief historical outline.

The statistics available for the 20th century show that exclusive homosexuality is rare. The Kinsey report of 1948 placed individuals on a 7-point scale from exclusively heterosexual to exclusively homosexual (the Heterosexual-Homosexual Rating Scale). It established that 37 % of men had had a homosexual experience resulting in orgasm between adolescence and an advanced age. However, more recent studies conducted in France indicate considerably lower levels of homosexual practice. In a survey entitled "Contexte de la sexualité en France" (CSF) which was conducted in 2006 by INSERM and INED, 4 % of women and 4.1 % of men stated that they had experienced sexual relations with a partner of the same sex at least once during their lives. However, only 0.3 % of men and women alike had only had partners of the same sex. The reported levels of same-sex partners fell with age, but following a different trajectory for men and women. Among women, the highest level was reported by the age group aged from 18 to 24 years at the time of the study (5.7 %). Among men, the highest level was reported by the age group aged 35-39 years (5.6 %). Among men, there was little difference between the results of the 2006 study and the 1992 study. By contrast, the number of women stating that they had experienced sexual relations with another woman increased from the level reported in 1992 (it was only 2.6 % in the study "Analyze des comportements sexuels en France" - ACSF).

However, these studies themselves are of little use to us. They simply record practices (sexual behaviors according to Florence Tamagne's use of the term). Jean Gagnepain's hypothesis, though, does not concern the existence of sexual relations between persons of the same sex (it is clearly evident that such relations exist!) but instead claims that there is a hypertrophy

(reinforcement) of the circle of belonging, which exclude all other forms of belonging "to the point at which the negotiated or simultaneous membership of multiple communities or relationship circles becomes problematic" (Le Borgne, 2001). The case of Sylvie, which was reported by Robert Le Borgne, might fit this hypothesis.

Sylvie was 25 years old when she was first admitted to a psychiatric ward. She had called the emergency services herself after consuming alcohol and taking antidepressants at the end of a period of several weeks during which she had felt depressed. At the very first interview, Sylvie warned the psychologist "of her propensity to dismantle the psychological mechanisms of her interlocutors, her propensity to grasp the other person's nature and accurately identify his fault lines in order, if possible, to test what he really is amidst all the influences that have crafted his being" (Le Borgne, 2001, p. 95). During her fourth year in secondary school, Sylvie discovered that she felt a special attachment to her classmate Catherine. She chose the same academic course as the latter in order to attend the same high school where she was also enrolled in the same class. After obtaining her school-leaving certificate, Sylvie could not bear the thought of having to leave Catherine. She then got herself pregnant by Catherine's brother. This is what she had to say about it:

> "My child was conceived only to block out the threat of the void left by Catherine's departure. […] I felt that Catherine was escaping from me. I had already cleverly feigned illness on certain evenings when I saw men trying to seduce her. The thought of living with her brother was to cement my place in Catherine's family circle. In this way, I clung on to the hope of always counting for her in some form or other and whatever the price might be" (*ibid.*, p. 98).

Although Sylvie gave birth to a daughter, she was not psychologically capable of coping with the arrival of the child and had to be hospitalized. After various incidents, it was finally the father who agreed to bring up the child. Nowadays, Sylvie only rarely sees her daughter. She says that she idolizes the child when she is far away from her but gets annoyed very quickly in her presence. She says herself that she is cruel, egotistical and incapable of the attention a mother should provide. Despite this, Sylvie tried to complete a training course in the pedagogic field. However, the sessions spent with handicapped children did not go well. Sylvie appeared to be incapable of engaging physically with these children when this was necessary and her colleagues made her aware of this.

After leaving high school, Sylvie renewed her relations with her own father who had separated from her mother when Sylvie was 7 years old. Following the split, Sylvie had lived with her mother and stepfather until she came of age. This renewed contact with her father was accompanied by a break-up with her mother and stepfather, *as if only one alliance were possible at a time*. When she speaks of her stepfather, she sometimes calls him "the lover", one of the most insulting terms in her vocabulary.

After Catherine, Sylvie became infatuated with a number of other women, but always without them knowing. The women she chose were distinguished by a certain elegance and sometimes also by a special feature: the fluttering of an eyelid, a dimple, a lock of hair. On each occasion, Sylvie cherished the same dreams: "*just the two of us* in a relationship, always chaste, in which the height of pleasure is to eat together in a restaurant, *tête à tête*, and enter into a never-ending discussion with the partner" (*ibid.*, p. 101). She sometimes also slept with men. These, however, unlike her female companions of choice, are described as interchangeable, anonymous, ugly, with no genuine qualities. In Sylvie's eyes, only women are graceful. And it sufficed for one of these women to fall once and for all for a man for Sylvie to start feeling bad again. These "break-ups" were frequently accompanied by new hospitalizations. She had to be the only one that counted. However, any overtly sexual promiscuity, any triviality would break the spell. Speaking of Julie, Sylvie said: "Only tenderness matters to me. I want to feel her head on my shoulder and put mine on hers. I'm not really interested in making the relationship erotic. I would be more enthusiastic about shampooing her and doing her hair. If our relationship were to take a sexual turn, I think I would move on to something else, I mean another woman" (*ibid.*, p. 102). All it took was for one of these "girl friends" to reveal some shortcoming, however trivial it might be, for her to fall from the pedestal on which Sylvie had placed her. The fall from grace could be brutal. The idea that a man's hands had touched the bodies of these chosen women was unbearable for Sylvie. She would then want to wash them and keep on washing them. In general she did not like physical contact. For a while, she thought she was a "lesbian" and several times went to lesbian venues, cafés and clubs. But the women she found there seemed "butch" to her and the idea of seeing them naked inspired a feeling of profound disgust.

Generally speaking, it was necessary for her to enjoy a privileged position. She sometimes imagined that she was pregnant again and had returned to the establishment at which she had been received after the birth of her daughter. At such times, she dreamt of being treated as a diva, with all the staff devoting themselves to her service: "she" is here, "she" is back. And if the psychologist was delayed and made her wait in the waiting room for

longer than expected, she would immediately question the strength of the link binding her to this professional. During her stays in hospital wards, she generally managed to gain the sympathy of the carers and benefit from various privileges. When accommodated in a unit that wanted to differentiate itself at whatever cost from "ordinary psychiatry" and which explicitly proclaimed this philosophy, she quickly managed to confront the team of carers with its contradictions to the point at which the doctor confessed to her that she had disappointed him: she had obliged him "to practice psychiatry again" (she had attempted to kill herself)!

Employed in a specialist debt recovery company which was managed by a woman, she witnessed the business fall into bankruptcy. She took pleasure in watching her boss sink a little further into the financial abyss with each passing day. And when the latter, contrary to all evidence, persisted in lying about the future of the company, Sylvie continued coming to work, without any hope of being paid but in anticipation of the moment, the sublime second, when her employer would be *caught out* in her imposture, as if she were trying to track down an *usurpation of position* in her superior. In a similar vein, she made a virtue of confronting upper middle class-looking women who purchased bottom-of-the-range perfumes in discount shops. In such cases, she did not hesitate to ram their shopping carts violently with her own. She gained enormous satisfaction from seeing others lose their dignity (*ibid.*, p. 106). This is also why she took great pleasure in frightening a small dog and then consoling it again in order to be able to frighten it all the more the next time. "She found it extremely enjoyable to have the animal at her mercy" (*ibid.*, p. 107).

Sylvie, says Robert Le Borgne, put others to the test of not failing in the obligations that their social position placed on them (*ibid.*, p. 108). She would tolerate no derogation, in the historical sense of the term: "to lose the privileges of one's rank through the practice of certain activities" (*Larousse*). Sylvie sought to catch people out "in their inability to do all that their reputation imposes on them by way of obligation" (*ibid.*, p. 109). The intimacy that she was searching for was the antithesis of any "natural" promiscuity. Seen from this point of view, sexual relations seemed to her to be a derogation by making the other become trivial. And this complicity could only be unique, exclusive: one alliance at a time and one alliance which is not shared. Because of that, she created a void around her, and her dreams hid the great poverty of her relations. Everything seems to suggest that, for her, the salience of the *social form* (the circle of belonging) prevented her from developing genuine relations. She shows us, through its absence, what is necessary for the establishment of social relations: the ability to negotiate and share belonging.

In many respects, the case of Violette, which was described by Serge André, appears to be the opposite to that of Sylvie. Violette had been living as a prostitute since the age of eighteen. She seemed to involve the analyst "as a voyeur who can only silently observe her sexual practices" (André, 1993, p. 104). In the very first interview, she claimed that since she was very small, she had had "very dirty thoughts" about sexuality. She said that she very much liked pornographic books and conversations. The psychoanalyst did not feel the need to ask her what she meant by "pornographic conversation" because she lost no time in being very explicit about this point, transforming the sessions of analysis into a detailed exposé of her fantasies. Her own life resembled a pornographic film. When she was six years old, a man in a wheelchair gave her a coin in return for letting him caress her and showing him her genitals. She ended her account of this scene by saying that she felt she had always been a prostitute. As of the age of six or seven years, she could not see a man without looking at his flies. At church, she tried to see the genitals on the statues of the saints. At the age of eight, she started to indulge in masturbation sessions with her brother who was one year older than she was. Her father was a sort of drunken domestic tyrant who enjoyed talking about women in the most outrageous fashion, in particular in the presence of his own wife. A policeman, he would end the day in the brothel where one day he took Violette in order to force her to sing songs "full of filth". Her mother, by contrast, was a very withdrawn person who was terrorized by her husband and who fled social contact. Unlike Sylvie, Violette explicitly declared herself to be "lesbian" and "homosexual". She claimed this quality for herself as if it were a sort of belonging to a separate class and stated once again that she felt that she had always been so. At about eight years of age, and shortly after the scene that had taken place with her father at the brothel, Violette started to practice masturbation and sexual touching with a female schoolmate. At the age of ten years, when she was looking after some babies in order to earn a little money, she rubbed them against her genitals until she reached orgasm. At about the same time, in the company of a girl friend, she made the following proposition to a group of boys: "If you show us your penises, we'll show you what we've got". Embarrassed to start with, the boys finally did what she asked. The two girls then ran away laughing. After that, Violette would often laugh with other women about men's sexual organs. Her sexual relations with her male clients were disagreeable to her. However, she compensated for this through her relations with her fellow prostitutes. She felt no pleasure in giving her body to a client. Instead, she put herself in his place and mentally criticized him for his lack of expertise or over-hasty and coarse enjoyment of her. Every time, she concluded that she would be able to perform the same acts better in order

to give pleasure to her female partners. In the brothel where she worked, she particularly enjoyed hiding with a girl friend to watch what was going on between one of her colleagues and a client in the next-door room. As the scene progressed, she would recount what the client was doing and repeat it, "in a feminine way" with her friend. Violette, says Serge André, "seized the man's position" (André, 1993, p. 110). She wanted to prove that she was

> "better placed than a man to experience a man's pleasure with a woman. What is more, she did not fail to treat with irony the man's return to the flaccid state after coitus and contrast it with her own ability to take as much pleasure as she wanted. In the threesome relations that she enjoyed, her greatest pleasure was to see the moment coming when she would take over the other woman from the exhausted, now limp man who was finally reduced to the rank of an impotent spectator" (*ibid.*).

Violette was convinced that the male penis restricted both pleasure and potency. That is why she thought of herself as more than a man, a sort of "superman" and expected her female partners to confirm this fantasy. She wanted to be more potent than men were and viewed woman as sex objects. She competed against men. She dressed and wore her hair like them, drank like them, swore like them, spoke like them, was interested in pornography like them, etc. Again unlike Sylvie, Violette did not idolize women. "What is more, she had little taste for love with a capital L" (*ibid.*, p. 125).Whereas Sylvie's fantasies were fantasies of love, Violette's were explicitly sexual. For her, promiscuity took precedence over intimacy. Where Sylvie could not tolerate the slightest triviality, Violette demanded it in her rivalry with men. Similarly, it is possible to juxtapose Sylvie's difficulties in making physical contact with children with Violette's early sexual practices which consisted of using the bodies of the babies left in her care as instruments of pleasure. After becoming an adult, Violette particularly enjoyed pornographic images depicting sexual relations with pregnant women or very young children. As an adolescent, she had taken great pleasure in posing naked for a series of photographs with a baby between her legs and placed against her genitals. She sometimes expressed the wish to have a child. However, she voluntarily refused to make this desire a reality, stating: "I know very well that if I had a baby, I would always be doing dirty things with it" (*ibid.*, p. 132). In her relation with the analyst,

> "Violette did not ask, she obliged. Her demands were primarily a way to oblige me to silence and inactivity, and then to oblige

me to listen to her. In sum, she took advantage of the neutrality inherent in the position of analyst in order to take possession of a 'neutralized' man whom she made the witness and voyeur of her sexual adventures with women. […] Then, later, it was my complicity that she asked for. Having understood herself the way in which she was using these sessions and recognizing that the only power she left me was to shut up, Violette started to ask me about the pleasure and the benefits I could gain from such a position. She arrived, logically, at the conclusion that I, too, was doubtlessly a sort of prostitute whom one pays in order to take one's pleasure, with the only difference being that in the presence of an analyst, you can only take pleasure in words. Finally, in a third period of transference, Violette made me understand that what she wanted of me was simply for me to be dead" (*ibid.*, p. 141).

That is when she decided to break off the analysis.

The two cases presented above show that there are *different* homosexualities (just as there are *different* heterosexualities). To have sexual relations with partners of the same sex is not necessarily to define an exclusive complicity in the sense we intend here. Circumstances and certain institutions may favor the appearance of homosexual practices. This is the case of the British public schools during the years 1919-1933, studied by Florence Tamagne, in which pupils of between 10 and 18 years of age lived as boarders, sharing their lives with companions of the same sex, without or with only very limited contact with the outside world and young people of the opposite sex. Such an environment is propitious for the emergence of adolescent homosexual experiences and even of a "cult of homosexuality". The situation in France and Germany, however, was different (Tamagne, 2004).

By placing the emphasis on "complicity" in the definition of a "homosociality", the theory of mediation differs from psychoanalysis which, as illustrated by Serge André, continues to define homosexuality in terms of sexual acts between men or between women, even if this means defining at least two fashions of being and declaring oneself to be "homosexual": the hysterical and the perverse (André, 1993, p. 113). On the basis of this opposition, Serge André claims that homosexuality "cannot be considered to be a structure, or even a clinical unity, even though from the social, legal and moral viewpoints, this unity can be conferred on it. One can even go so far as to ask whether we can consider it to be a symptom" (*ibid.*). The contrast between Sylvie and Violette further strengthens the case for casting doubt on the clinical unity of homosexuality and clearly shows that it is necessary to distinguish

between different types of perverse homosexuality (as it is to distinguish between different types of perverse heterosexuality). Because homosexuality, when understood as a symptom, can form part of various clinical pictures, it is doubtless necessary to go farther and stop talking about homosexuality[32].

Despite this, it is on the basis of this classical definition of homosexuality that Serge André supports the argument that male homosexuality and female homosexuality are not symmetrical (*ibid.*, p. 92).

> "Generally speaking, the homosexual man leaves all the women to his father and in this way avoids all conflict with him, while, for her part, the homosexual woman, by giving up all men to her mother, simply prepares the arena in which she sets herself the task of confronting her father in the very sphere of his own desires. Where the homosexual man withdraws, the homosexual woman, by contrast, challenges her father's desires by struggling against him for women or the possession of the phallus or its insignia" (*ibid.*, p. 93).

But, because of his clinical orientation, Serge André is led to distinguish between two types of male homosexuality in the same way as he distinguishes between two types of female homosexuality. In his opinion, perverse homosexuality results from the omission of castration, whereas neurotic homosexuality results from the excessive "marginalization" of castration. The theoretical depiction is relatively conventional and sits within a psychoanalytical perspective which, since Freud and the *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*, tends to see in neuroses, the negative of perversion (Freud, 1920a). But let us leave aside the question of neuroses, which theory of mediation situates on a different plane than perversions and cannot therefore consider to be the negative of the latter, and concentrate simply on the absence of unity of male homosexuality. Just as the observation of sexual relations between women does not permit us to conclude that there is a unique clinical entity that could be referred to as female homosexuality, the observation of sexual relations between men also does not allow us to conclude

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[32]See also E. Roudinesco: "By drawing on the work of Freud as well as that of the great Robert Stoller, a psychoanalyst from California specialized in perversion and transsexualism, homosexual psychoanalysts were finally able to show for the first time, using concrete cases, that homosexuality was a sexual orientation, that in no way ought to be qualified, as such, in terms of pathology. In other words, this thesis made it possible to reestablish the link with Freudian universalism according to which a homosexual is a subject in his own right, one who may also have neurotic, psychotic, perverse or borderline disorders, just like any heterosexual individual" - E. Roudinesco, "Homosexuality Today: a Challenge for Psychoanalysis", *European Journal of Psychoanalysis*, n° 15, fall-winter 2002. [Online]. (http://www.psychomedia.it/jep/pages/number15.htm). (Accessed 19 june 2013).

that there is a unique clinical entity that could be designated male homosexuality. It is necessary not only to accept that "homosexual" relations may form part of a neurotic as well as a perverse clinical picture, but also, and most importantly given our own specific perspective, to remain attentive to the possible differences between observations which psychoanalysts would interpret as deriving from one and the same perverse homosexuality. We shall first of all return to Serge André and present a case which seemed to him to be typical of a perverse homosexual structure in a man.

Several years before consulting a psychoanalyst, Philippe had given up the idea of completing a dissertation in a subject that fascinated him in order to become a professional model. Even though he was very successful in this career, he found it increasingly difficult to put up with the types of environment he found he was having to frequent. His request for analysis resulted from the anguished and confused states he experienced and which were prolonged or aggravated by his consumption of cocaine. He wanted the analysis to enable him to answer the following question: "Am I or am I not homosexual and should I or should I not live as such?". During the preceding years, he had become increasingly involved in a variety of homosexual adventures and had started to frequent the hardcore homosexual scene in certain Italian cities. At the same time, he was maintaining a more or less stable relationship with a young woman. His mental state had then been thrown completely out of balance while he was having a relationship with a certain woman and, at the same time, with the woman's lover. This man had invited him to take part in a fist-fucking party. Attracted and terrified at the same time, he had delayed his response. He felt an almost hypnotic bond of submission toward the person who had invited him. However, for him, to accept meant definitively placing himself amongst the homosexuals. While walking through the streets of Milan and thinking over this proposition to himself, he was accosted by a young woman who asked him to lend her a little money. Seized by a sudden impulse, he immediately gave her all the money he had on him, that is to say the equivalent of approximately a thousand dollars. Then, to use his own words, feeling washed and relieved, he entered Milan cathedral, *il Duomo*, where the sight of a statue representing God the father placing a crown on the head of his son plunged him into a state of extreme confusion. Scarcely knowing where he was, he wandered through the city streets with the impression of being followed. He finally returned to his hotel early in the morning where he remained locked in his room for a week in a state of panic. From that moment onward, he had been subject to this type of panic attack at regular intervals.

"He tried to get over them by systematically, even frenetically,

devoting himself to picking up other men. He then spent days and nights sleeping with strangers whom he met at homosexual meeting places until, overwhelmed by guilt, he would swear to himself that he would abandon forever his relations with men. He then returned, driven by a compulsive urge, to his girlfriend, swore her solemn oaths and made promises for the future and then, finally at ease, could return to his habitual compromise until a new infernal cycle of torment was unleashed" (André, 1993, p. 182-183).

Philippe's father was a man of firm religious conviction who was quite austere and serious but without being excessive. As such, he resembled the father in Mauriac's *Vipers' Tangle* and, to his wife, he appeared to be the instrument required in order to give her children. She had married him without love or desire because her own mother was dying of cancer and it was necessary for her to marry before her parent's death. The mother's entire attention had been monopolized by the body of her son, Philippe. She never tired of telling him how handsome he was. Philippe had to complain to his father to get his mother to stop bathing him even though he was at that time already more than 15 years old. His mother also made him most of his clothes which were greatly admired by his school friends. Philippe could not bear the sight of female nudity. Many of his memories of childhood and adolescence refer to this horror of the female genitalia. When his parents gave him a book on sex education, he found himself face-to-face with a representation of the female sexual organs. The very same day, he experienced his first orgasm when smelling his father's briefs which were lying in the bathroom. This experience marked the start of his acts of masturbation and the acquisition of a collection of briefs which were gathered with enthusiasm. He was never to lose his desire to see men in their underwear. His first sexual relations with men took place at approximately the same time. His relations with a school monitor were limited to caresses. It was during a stay in Paris that he was penetrated by a man for the first time. Although he looked back on the episode with disgust, this did not prevent him from subsequently seeking out fleeting encounters during which he would be quickly sodomized by unknown individuals. Philippe himself distinguished between two types of homosexuality: one, which he thought of as normal in his professional environment, was limited to reciprocal masturbation and fellatio; the other, which was abhorrent to him, but which he could not resist, was passive sodomy of even the most humiliating type. He then felt himself become a hole, destined to be ceaselessly penetrated until he was "full to bursting". Panic, explains Serge André once again,

> "set in the moment one of these two paths seemed to be inescapable to him, condemning him ineluctably to confront castration, and even beyond castration, the forfeiture of the phallus. [...] Death or hole, those were then the only choices that were open to him. For a subject with so great a sense of honor and forfeiture as Philippe had, such a choice was unbearable" (*ibid.*, p. 189).

It was at this time that Philippe put an end to his sessions of analysis. Two weeks later he died at the wheel of his car. He had driven at high speed into the central partition separating two lanes of the freeway: one of them would have taken him into town where his girlfriend lived, the other to one of his male partners.

What can we conclude at the end of this presentation of a small number of cases? That of Sylvie has enabled us to rethink the way Gagnepain looked at homosexuality: the main symptom exhibited by Sylvie lay less in the choice of her female objects of love than in the fact that she was seeking an exclusive form of intimacy that she wanted to free from all promiscuity which she considered obscene. Sylvie did indeed set up boundaries of position. However, for her, these boundaries were not negotiable, as if she were only able to take up one position at a time. The same was not true of Violette or of Philippe. Violette feared neither promiscuity nor obscenity. Her fantasies were crudely sexual. She herself refused to have a baby, knowing that it would be difficult for her to avoid pedophile-type behavior with the child. In this, might Violette more closely resemble David? Is her "homosexuality" (like that of David) not rather the manifestation of a lack of position which makes her into a "suborner". Misused and suborned by her father who took her to a brothel, Violette was to go on to misuse and corrupt others in her turn, whether these were the babies entrusted to her care, the boys on the road to school, or her psychoanalyst in whom she wanted to see a sort of prostitute. Violette's "homosexuality", like her "pedophilia" would therefore seem to be, ultimately, the symptoms of a difficulty or an inability to acculturate sexuality within circles of belonging that respect the rules of alliance. The case of Philippe is more complex. It seems that he was unable to choose between intimacy within a circle of alliance that he formed with his girlfriend and his promiscuous homosexual relations in which he had the feeling of being no more than a hole. Everything in his case suggests that the suffering he experienced was due to a perpetual vacillation between a sexuality resulting from an intimacy which he chose to enter into with certain (female or male) partners and a sexuality in which intimacy disappeared to be replaced by an imposed promiscuity with a multitude of faceless partners.

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The material provided by Serge André does not allow us to go much further than this. However, the case of Philippe, and to an even greater extent that of Violette, when contrasted with that of Sylvie, strengthen us in the idea that homosexuality is not a unified entity. It is (as the choice of an object of love of the same sex) at most a symptom that may be involved in a variety of syndromes and not simply neurotic syndromes as opposed to perverse syndromes[33]. However, only the perverse homosexualities, that of David like that of Violette, Philippe or Sylvie, are of immediate relevance for the theory of the person in that they involve both a difference in status (male/female) and the unity of social positions (the circle of intimacy). It might perhaps be desirable to abandon the term homosexuality (which designates a manifest behavior) and talk in terms of something else in all these cases. Jean-Yves Dartiguenave suggested using the term homosociality for such cases, whereas Hubert Guyard spoke of introversion, which he contrasted with the extraversion of the swinger (Dartiguenave, 2001; Guyard, 2009). We are content simply to raise the question here.

2.4   Competence and profession

Just as there is no society without social classification, so, too, there is no society without a distinction of roles within a "social division of labor". As we know, this question lay at the heart of Durkheim's sociology. Following Durkheim, Linton and Merton defined roles in terms of the expectations associated with different social positions (Merton, 1968). Goffman reformulated this idea of role as an expectation or pre-established model of action and was interested more specifically in the way the actors occupy their roles in situations of interaction (Goffman, 1959). However, we still need to understand how the boundaries between these roles are established.

To do this, we will start with the role of parent (Quentel, 2001). This is indeed a social role. Parent cannot be reduced to genitor as is shown by the well-known fact that in many societies, including our own, the role of parent can be held by someone who is not the genitor (this is the case, for example,

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[33]Frédérique Marseault, of the Rennes University Hospital Department of Adult Psychiatry (based in the Guillaume Régnier Hospital), also refers to the "homosexual" enamoration of two borderline female patients. One of these had lived with a number of different women one after the other, while the other wondered whether she might be homosexual after experiencing a brief period of transference love for her female psychoanalyst. Everything suggests that the "homosexuality" of these patients did not so much question their sexual identity as enable them to find, in the other, a constant mood which was simultaneously calming and energizing and which they hoped would help them control their own affects. LIRL Seminar (University of Rennes 2) of 28 May 2009 (not published).

of adopted children). This distinction between genitor and parent is vital for the argument set out below. It is concomitant with a distinction between infant and child.

All societies make this type of distinction which they mark by some form of *adoption* ritual, even when the parent is also the genitor. Jacques Lizot tells us that among the Yanomami of Venezuela, breastfeeding is the mark of adoption by the group. By contrast, "a newborn baby that has not yet been breastfed still has no status, it is a thing in transition, it is not yet a being and it is possible to kill it if it has an identified congenital deformity or if it is not wanted by its parents" (Lizot, 1976, p. 25). Jean Gagnepain, for his part, reminds us that in pre-homeric Greece, the father had to place the child that had been born on his lap for it to be recognized as his son (Gagnepain, 1993, p. 131) [34]. The action of conceiving, or procreation (*gonos*), like the action of giving birth (*tokos*), did not necessarily result in the child belonging to the community (and the Greek lexicon distinguished between the natural father, *gonos*, and adoptive father, *poiêtos*). Later, the child that had been accepted by its father was lifted up by the latter and carried around the hearth as part of Amphidrome, a ritual held on the fifth, seventh or tenth day following the birth (Belmont, 1973; Vilatte, 1991). This ritual also sometimes coincided with the naming of the child. However, in Athens, the two feasts were distinct (Vernant, 1983, p. 189). Similarly, in ancient Rome, it was also possible for the father to abandon his children. This practice was quite frequent (the children were then put on display and could be taken by someone else, possibly to be sold as slaves). However, if the father decided to keep the child, this resulted in the ceremony of *dies lustricus* which was held on the ninth day after the birth and during which the *paterfamilias* lifted the child up from the ground to recognize it as his own before giving it its *praenomen*.

In Hinduism, the child is given its name during a ceremony known as *namakarana* which is held between the tenth and twelfth day after its birth. In Judaism, the circumcision of male children is the sign of the covenant with YHWH (Genesis, 17, 10-12). Christian baptism marks the child's entry into the Church as the community of the disciples of Christ. Although it is not necessarily a ritual of childhood, the custom of baptizing children as early as possible (*quam primum*) came into widespread use during the Middle Ages.

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[34]In this regard, Gagnepain refers to the alleged shared etymology of the Greek word *gonu*, "knee", and the word *gonos*, related to *gignomai*, "to become, to be born". However, this hypothesis, which is found in Loth, Benvéniste and Meillet and which is based on the ancient Greek custom of recognizing the child by placing it on its father's knees, is questioned by Pierre Chantraine who considers Richard Broxton Onians' reflections on this subject to be highly dubious (Chantraine, 2008; Onians, 1951).

In modern-day France, the adoption of the child by means of a declaration of birth (art. 55 of the French Civil Code) made by the father or a person acting on his behalf (art. 56 of the Civil Code) is what gives the child a social status. This declaration enrolls him in the nation and, at the same time, in a family. He receives a first name and a family name and becomes a fully-fledged member of the community.

In short, it is not sufficient to be biologically born in order to be sociologically adopted by the group (family, collective). Genitality (natural) is not paternity (cultural). To procreate (biologically) is not to adopt (socially). The fact that the infant is ours does not mean that we are not obliged to adopt it as our child.

Even our societies, which tend, at the ideological level, to confound the biological birth of the infant and the social recognition that makes it a child, have not overcome this distinction. We have already mentioned the question of civil registration. However, is not the entire problem surrounding abortion that of the boundary separating the biological "thing" that we can get rid of without being guilty of a crime from the recognized, adopted child which it would indeed be criminal to put to death?

As we know, the law of the 4th July 2001, fixes this boundary in France at the end of the twelfth week of pregnancy. However, this limit can vary as is testified to by the fact that this period was previously restricted to the end of the tenth week of pregnancy. The arbitrary nature of this boundary is clearly demonstrated by a comparison with the United Kingdom where the Abortion Act of 1967 set it at the end of the twenty-eighth week, only for it to be brought forward to the end of the twenty-fourth week as of 25th April 1990. Ultimately, this boundary is the result of a political choice which is the responsibility of the parents as well as of the community as a whole which accepts a compromise between the parties (and the Parties!) involved. It is one policy to recognize the child as of conception, as Hippocrates wanted and as the Church wants now, and quite another not to recognize it at all (as occurred in ancient Rome) or to recognize it only at a later date…

The fact that natural genitality is not the same thing as cultural paternity is once again illustrated by adoption, on the one hand, and bastardy, on the other. We have already spoken about the adoption rituals that are entered into even when the parent is the genitor. *Adoption* in the narrow (and commonest) sense makes it possible to be the (social) parent of a child of whom one is not the (biological) genitor. It can be found in many different civilizations: the laws of Manou permitted it in ancient India and it was frequent in Rome under both the Republic and the Empire (Veyne, 2001). The French Civil Code currently distinguishes between two types of adoption. In the case of simple adoption, the adoptive parents are given parental

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authority but the child retains all his rights with regard to his family of origin (art. 343 of the Civil Code). Full adoption, by contrast, results in the breaking of the links between the child and his family of origin (art. 360 of the Civil Code). The adoptive family then completely replaces the family of origin and social kinship becomes entirely dissociated from biological kinship (genitality). This dissociation between social paternity and biological genitality can also be observed in the case of sperm donation. In this case, the French Civil Code accords primacy to legal filiation over genitality. More precisely, it states that there is no filiation between the child and the donor (art. 311-19 of the Civil Code)[35].

Bastardy, by contrast, signifies that one is not the social father of a child of whom one is nevertheless the genitor, precisely because one does not adopt this child. This was a frequent occurrence in the times when kings would take multiple mistresses and their adultery led to the birth of many bastard offspring. The law of the time set out the form taken by relations between noble genitors and their bastard children[36]. Nowadays, France's "anonymous childbirth" law makes it possible to give birth to a child without assuming the responsibilities associated with filiation (possibility for a mother of withholding her identity on childbirth: art. 57 of the Civil Code and art. L 222-6 of the Social Action and Family Code). Nevertheless, a woman who takes advantage of the possibility of anonymous childbirth may leave her name in a sealed envelope which the child may ask to open when coming of age (art. L 222-6 of the Social Action and Family Code).

What all these examples show, first and foremost, is that the fact of being a parent is not a natural reality. To be a parent is a socially acknowledged competence which has its place in the social division of labor (or competences). In the case of France, this competence is conferred through the declaration of the birth in the registry of births, deaths and marriages (referred to as the *état-civil*) within three days of its occurrence (art. 55 of the Civil Code). Society recognizes the competence of parenthood through the attribution of parental authority (defined in art. 371-1 of the Civil Code). However, it may also annul this competence by withdrawing, in whole or in part, the conferred parental authority (articles 378 to 381 of the Civil Code).

Although the exercise of social responsibility goes far beyond the relationship between parents and children alone, it always involves a principle of exclusion which means that any service provided within the framework of the

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[35]French legislation has also so far undertaken to keep the identity of the donor confidential. However, the discussions held during the summit on bioethics in June 2009 in Rennes suggest that the requirement for anonymity may be scrapped.

[36]In the case of France, see, for example, the definition in the *Dictionnaire de Droit et de Pratique* published in 1762 by Claude-Joseph de Ferrière.

"social division of labor" is defined in relational terms, in contradistinction to all other such services. This, in a nutshell, is the question of the social division of labor (in fact, of competences) that Durkheim discussed. Thus, for example, the creation of a position of director of an association, and with it the responsibility for directing this association, does not simply consist in adding a new position and an additional responsibility alongside the preexisting positions and responsibilities of president and secretary, but necessarily also implies a reciprocal redefinition of the limits of competence of each of these positions (which, in practice, is not always without its difficulties). Competences are therefore defined reciprocally through shared relations. In the same way as for belonging, these relations are both differential (functions) and segmental (roles). It is these two concepts that we shall examine next.

2.4.1 The diversity of functions

Function – or office to use the term employed by Gagnepain – is competence viewed from a differential perspective[37]. It is a qualitative measure of qualification that makes it possible to define differences and identities between competences (competence A $\neq$ competence B). Like status, function is "empty of all content in order to be filled dialectically only with what is left over by [the other functions] to which the system links it and which, in turn, find their own boundaries in their contact with it" (Gagnepain, 1991, p. 69). Function, in other words, is a differential principle. It allows us to define our competences or responsibilities in terms of what they are not, through differentiation, with one person's responsibility or competence not being that of someone else. Function is, in turn, mobilized in the performance of the charge or offer of service, which consists in selecting certain functions in certain situations, within the framework of a contract or a collaboration. The charge is therefore the responsibility assumed in a given situation, "to the exclusion of all others, which continue to be present implicitly and confer on it its full scope" (Brackelaire, 1995, p. 215). And just as the assessment of statuses can, under certain circumstances, enable individuals to challenge the status that society has attributed to them, the assessment of functions makes it possible to challenge these charges. The assignment of a charge which is not commensurate with the function one attributes to oneself will generally be experienced as a humiliation. To avoid humiliation is to search for self-promotion, to attempt to ensure that the function is recognized for

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[37]We prefer to use the term "function", suggested by Jean-Luc Brackelaire, rather than that of "office" as initially used by Gagnepain.

its true worth. Indeed, the study of employment situations regularly shows that the misappraisal of function is a cause of suffering and complaints. The whole history of industrial democracy, for example, can be seen as a rejection of humiliation, submission and infantilization on the part of employees (Le Goff, 2004). From a clinical point of view, it is the scenarios of humiliation that characterize sadistic perversion that seem to be able to account for this qualitative appraisal of competences or responsibilities through function. Everything suggests, in effect, that, in the universe of sadistic perversion, the assessment of functions has been lost and that it is this that results in its systematic abuses of power. By contrast, it seems to be possible to analyze narcissistic, and also perhaps paraphrenic, syndromes in terms of an excess of function. We shall start this clinical examination by presenting a case of sadistic perversion taken from mediationist clinical practice [38].

Sadistic humiliation

Antoine, who was 51 years at the time of the events recounted here, was charged with "rape of minor by natural or legitimate relative" (Morin et al., 1999). The hearing revealed a whole catalog of "perversions": sexual touching, polygamy, swinging, voyeurism, zoophilia, illegal trade in pornographic material. It also revealed cases of mistreatment which took the form of the humiliations to which Antoine subjected his own children. One example. When his son did not behave properly at table one lunch time, Antoine shouted at him that "a meal is something to be respected". However, he did not stop there. For the evening meal, he bought a steak which he made the child eat on the floor without crockery or cutlery. Antoine called this "punishing with humor". Antoine was deeply shaken by the judge's accusations and asked to see a therapist. However, he used these psychological sessions to refute the accusations leveled at him by the legal system: he either denied the facts with which he was accused or did his best to make them appear harmless or playful. During the hearing, the judge challenged him to state the dates of birth of his children. Antoine was unable to answer. During the sessions of psychological consultation that followed, Antoine denounced the evils of the judge who had deliberately provoked him in order to draw the conclusions he wanted and had attempted to "sully" him. He presented himself as the victim: the victim of a manipulative legal system or the victim of the manipulative talents of his own son who was the principal plaintiff in the affair. A few years earlier, under different circumstances, a juvenile court judge had decided that the children should be removed from the family

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[38]This case was described by Morin et al., 1999.

home and that they should also be given a right to accommodation. On that occasion, Antoine had reacted by saying that he would never see his children again. For him, there was no room for negotiation: the children were either his or they were not.

As the hearing continued and the date of judgment drew nearer, Antoine became more and more disturbed. If he were to be found guilty, he imagined committing suicide in a spectacular and public way rather than submitting to the judge. "Death", he said, "seems to me to be the only way to remain the master of my own person". And he counted on his psychologist then coming to state his innocence. Whereas in the case of David, death was preferable to separation, for Antoine, it was preferable to submission. It would ruin the judge's decision. Here again, there was no place for negotiation: it was either Antoine who held the upper hand, or it was the judge. Similarly, he transformed the audience into "a party in the arm-wrestle between him and the judge to the point, for example, of speaking exclusively himself and, without even noticing it, driving his now completely disillusioned lawyer to withdraw from the case" (*ibid.*, p. 150).

Antoine's life was filled with scenarios of humiliation. He described himself as a cheerful person with a great sense of humor. However, this strange "humor" of his was primarily displayed at the expense of others. He gathered a string of female companions and mistresses but preferred vulnerable, socially marginalized women whom he sometimes picked up in homes or shelters. The length of his relations with women seemed to be proportional to the level of domination he exercised over them. He considered that his partners only existed through him: "all these girls, he said, I've done them all good; they've all moved in with me". In prison, he "protected" some of the most vulnerable inmates and wrote letters for illiterate prisoners. "My way of being Christian", he said, "without me, so-and-so wouldn't be anything, wouldn't experience anything, wouldn't receive any mail".

He set great store by never being duped or found to be at fault. He never became indebted toward anyone. In his relations with men, he always found a way to have rendered a service before asking for something himself. In the case of women, he never asked them to do something he was unable to do himself. Thus, never being obligated to anyone, he could never be their dupe. He considered himself a master at unmasking deceit and hypocrisy in others. When his therapist smiled at an attendant, he interpreted the act as just this sort of deceit: did the smile not disappear the moment the attendant turned his back? For him, politeness was a weakness that he turned to his own profit. Similarly, he boasted of being able to "psychologically dismantle", simply through his own eloquence, certain other inmates – in particular those who claimed to be innocent. He claimed that "not one of them could resist

him". It was possible to fool the law, but not Antoine.

Women had played a major part in Antoine's life. How would he manage to do without them in prison? The services which he performed for the most vulnerable inmates were not without ulterior motive in this regard. It was he who wrote their intimate letters to wives or sisters thus enabling him to increase his hold over them. Beyond this correspondence, he took every occasion to enter into contact with women: the doctor, the therapists, the volunteer prison visitors, female visitors, friends coming to visit. Depending on the status of these women and their degree of resistance, he established either a relationship of control or one based on challenge. Becoming aware of the fame of one of the visitors, he set himself the challenge of seducing her, thus launching himself at "something major"[39]. Talking about an older volunteer prison visitor, he took pleasure in telling his therapist that he had "not yet had an older woman". He saw in a letter addressed to him by a young 14-year-old girl from his neighborhood proof of the fact that no woman could resist him. When one of his companions told him of her professional ambitions during a visit, he wrote her a long letter to destroy what he called a pure illusion. He gave vent to his hatred and disdain for another woman who had resisted him: "You were never a girl, it's not possible! There's something a bit coarse, a bit common about you!" Women could not but fail to yield to him. Anyone else was not a woman.

He wrote a series of texts on nature and human experience. In one of these narratives, an unknown woman passes by him with a disdainful air, without looking at him. He then launches into a series of vindictive utterances: "You'll be sorry, you'll go home and you may end up crying tonight, saying: shit, I missed him... because it will be over, I won't want to hear anything about you. You can fill up my answering machine, I won't ring you back". In another text, Antoine starts by reflecting on life and death, speaks about "poetry and pregnancy" and then slips into a morbid vein, describing "this slow growth of the child that eats the flesh, consumes the strength and disrupts the brain of the woman who carries it, like a cancer that devours

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[39]In connection with characters such as Antoine, we can repeat what Gérard Bonnet said, albeit it in too general a way, about perversions: "the pervert bases his choice of victim on extremely precise criteria and does everything possible to negate what it is that makes her worthy and respectable in the eyes of others. The more the person he aggresses is idealized or considered as taboo – young girl, child –, the more interesting she is to the pathological pervert, and the more she will be destroyed, debased, ground down by the implacable logic that considers her nothing more than the response to a need, to the point where she is considered an object, a thing, something disposable whose reactions are of neither interest nor importance. By contrast, if she reacts too vigorously, defends herself, then the pervert will be all the quicker in settling his score with her in order to drag her down brutally to her status of object" (Bonnet, 2005, p. 399-400).

life to live better itself, that has no long-term purpose other than death"[40].

This text can be seen in relation to another statement made by Antoine: "Other people are just materials". Antoine showed no compassion. He had, for a time, worked as a gravedigger and liked "to talk technically and without the slightest tact about the corpses and, more particularly, the children he had had to bury" (Morin et al., 1999, p. 155).

Antoine's inability to consider other people could also be seen in his lack of concern about absence. Imprisoned, he wanted to show that he missed no-one just as no-one missed him. When one of his partners, Gisèle, left their home pregnant with a second child, Antoine kept the first with him. One child each seemed "fair" to him. He then took no further interest in this second child who ended up being adopted. As we have seen, in the arm-wrestle which had pitted him against the juvenile court judge, Antoine preferred to give up his children than to demean himself by submitting to a decision which, as an added insult, also involved a right to accommodation (*ibid.*). However, he did not stop there. He told the judge that, with his new partner, he would have exactly the same number of children as had just been placed elsewhere.

Antoine's indifference to absence was not merely passive. It was something he actively sought as can be seen in the way he regularly changed the children's cuddly toys. He only seemed to be able to assert his authority

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[40]It is easy to find similarities between Antoine's prose, of which we have given a few examples above, and that of the Marquis de Sade and in particular passages such as the following in which Sade justifies murder in which he sees only a transmutation of material: "Destruction being one of the chief laws of Nature, nothing that destroys can be criminal; how might an action which so well serves Nature ever be outrageous to her? This destruction of which man is wont to boast is, moreover, nothing but an illusion; murder is no destruction; he who commits it does but alter forms, he gives back to Nature the elements whereof the hand of this skilled artisan instantly recreates other beings; now, as creations cannot but afford delight to him by whom they are wrought, the murderer thus prepares for Nature a pleasure most agreeable, he furnishes her materials, she employs them without delay, and the act fools have had the madness to blame is nothing but meritorious in the universal agent's eye" (Sade, 1795, p. 43). And, at the same time, it seems appropriate to correct a common misconception which holds that Sade himself remained within the realm of fantasy and, in terms of actual crimes, committed "only peccadilloes which cause a smile" (André, 1993, p. 25). In reality, Sade was indeed a perverse criminal. When he was imprisoned the first time in 1768, it was for having kidnapped, held prisoner and slashed with a knife a beggar he had found on the streets. In 1772, he was condemned to death *in absentia* for attempting to poison prostitutes. And when he was definitively imprisoned by *Lettre de cachet* in 1778, it was, at the request of his family, to keep secret the full extent of his crimes: based on the extensive documentation gathered together by Jean-Jacques Pauvert, Marie-Laure Susini has shown that between 1775 and 1778, Sade lived behind the doors of his château in La Coste surrounded by the corpses and bones of the women he had dissected (Susini, 2004, p. 174).

by testing the extent to which he could humiliate others. His educational practices, which he termed "humorous", were based on relationships of force and the abuse of power. However, Antoine never analyzed or appraised these abuses of power for what they were. It was through "affection" that Antoine came to rape his own son, a rape which, furthermore, he refused to recognize as such.

Antoine had very precise ideas about how to bring up children. You have to teach them never to be swindled but, by contrast, to be able to fool others, for example by exploiting their compassion. He acted as his son's accomplice, for instance, when the latter took advantage of an elderly person in order to extort money from him. However, at the same time, Antoine feared being tricked by his children. He then had the idea of filming them secretly in order to be able to accuse them whenever he needed. If necessary, he would punish them not for having tried to trick others, but for having been too clumsy to succeed in the attempt.

All mothers seemed to him to be unworthy and incompetent. He made constant lists of what mothers should or should not do. This refusal of competence could also be found in his relations with his psychologist. Antoine did not enter into a dialog. He monopolized the conversation, did not seem to listen, never asked any questions. If the therapist interrupted him, Antoine would either resume his monolog or turn to a subject that was of secondary importance for the matter under discussion. He would never allow his partner to speak.

He took no account of professional specialisms and did not use the correct designations. He persisted in calling the psychologist "doctor" even after being corrected. He was not particularly concerned about his own profession. He said he had done many jobs and could do many others. He could not tolerate knowing less than his therapist and thought he could bring his knowledge up to scratch by reading a vaguely psychological bestseller for which he acquired a sudden enthusiasm. He detested being contradicted and rejected from the outset the possibility that he might be wrong. In brief, Antoine seemed to be unable to assess the nature of functions, his own as much as those of others. In him, social relations based on competences seemed to be obviated and replaced by a relationship of force in which there was no limit to one's powers: either one's power over the other is total, or it is nothing. The abuse of power is expressed through scenarios of humiliation. Any charges that are assumed – or rather the jobs that are performed – are defined purely as a function of circumstances and seem to be totally interchangeable.

The grandiosity of narcissism

Jean Gagnepain suggested that the scenarios of humiliation that are characteristic of sadism and masochism could be contrasted with the "autolytic culture of the 'for-oneself'" that characterizes perverse narcissism. Indeed, a number of symptoms that are typical of narcissistic personalities make it possible to hypothesize the presence of a hypertrophy of function: "grandiosity, extreme self-centeredness, and [the] remarkable absence of interest in and empathy for others in spite of the fact that they are so very eager to obtain admiration and approval from other people" (Kernberg, 1975, p. 228). Alongside the "grandiose self" of these patients, Kernberg also placed great emphasis on their refusal to accept dependence on others. One of his observations is particularly evocative of a hypertrophy of function: "Their attitude toward work often reveals the pursuit of some specialized interest or small area of personal investment – whether it is in business, professions, studies, hobbies and collections – where the patient obtains a sense of control and superiority while isolating himself from the broader area of which this particular interest is part" (*ibid.*, p. 290). Here we must confess, however, that the question has not as yet received sufficient attention either from us or from other researchers inspired by the hypotheses put forward by Jean Gagnepain for us to be able to go much further in this discussion. Many questions remain unresolved. Thus, many ways of characterizing narcissistic perverts could equally well be applicable to the case of Antoine presented above. This is also the case, for example, of this quotation taken from Alberto Eiguer:

> "The individuals who use perverse narcissistic mechanisms are those who, under the influence of their megalomaniac self, attempt to create a relationship with a second individual by specifically attacking this individual's narcissistic integrity in order to disarm him. They therefore also attack this other person's self-love, self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-belief. At the same time, they attempt in some way to make the other believe that his relationship of dependency toward them is irreplaceable and is what the other wants" (Eiguer, 2003, p. 4).

It would not be particularly surprising if this narcissistic grandeur (the "grandiose self") were indeed to represent the negative of sadistic humiliation. In effect, Kernberg shows very well that the grandiose self of these patients is accompanied by a belittlement of the other and a hypersensitivity to the prospect of possible abandonment:

> "when abandoned or disappointed by other people they may show what on the surface looks like depression, but which on fur-

ther examination emerges as anger and resentment, loaded with revengeful wishes, rather than real sadness for the loss of a person whom they appreciated" (Kernberg, 1975, p. 229).

However, further research is required here. Another, related question was raised by Jean-Luc Brackelaire who suggested that paraphrenia, as defined by Alphonse De Waelhens, represented the extreme manifestation of this narcissism (Brackelaire, 1995, p. 216). In this view, narcissism would simply be a personality trend whereas the genuine pathology would be paraphrenia [41]. However, the question has barely been revisited since and we can only summarize what has already been said by Brackelaire. The key argument leading him to see in the fantastic delusion of paraphrenia the symptom of a hypertrophy of function lies in the diplopia that was pointed out by De Waelhens:

> "In fact, the decisive factor guiding the diagnosis is, on the one hand, the slow pace of the delusion, the patient's relative indifference in its regard, its more or less total encystment, and also, on the other, its high level of coherence which almost becomes systematic in nature, its wealth of elements and, finally, the diplopia that accompanies it: the patient identifies fully with the character of his delusion but this in no way prevents him from also being somewhere else, which is precisely the context in which others observe him" (De Waelhens, 1972, p. 151).

The patient reported by De Waelhens, who was convinced that she owned the heavens and that she governed the Earth in the name of these same heavens, who said that she "had conceived herself by bringing together two leaves of a tree" that she could not name because it was "an indivisible secret, kept in the fridge", was perfectly capable, at the end of one of her extravagant stories, of asking her doctor to give her a prescription to calm the pain caused by her rheumatism and help her to sleep. Similarly, this patient was able to accompany her husband in his struggle against a cancer from which he was not expected to recover without once making even the briefest allusion to the celestial government. Everything therefore suggests that, despite the hypertrophy of function which placed upon her the crushing responsibility of "governing the Earth in the name of the heavens" and which had led her to be the agent of her own conception, thus assuming her own

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[41]It should be noted that Kernberg spoke of "narcissistic personality". And the DSM-IV which, in this area, was inspired by the work of Kernberg, categorizes narcissism among the personality disorders (F60.8 [301.81]).

paternity, this patient was still able to discern the unity of a role and, most importantly, invest this role in relationships founded on negotiable services, whether as a patient or as a wife. This is what distinguishes these paraphrenic patients from schizophrenic patients whose roles, as we shall see, are no longer negotiable.

2.4.2   The plurality of roles

We have already mentioned how sociology has attached great importance to the concept of role as "the behavioral enacting of the patterned expectations attributed to [a] position" (Linton, quoted by Merton, 1968, p. 368). This, however, was to insist on the content of these roles (the expectations) rather on the way they are delimited with respect to one another. This is precisely the point that was highlighted by Jean Gagnepain when he defined the "establishment" as the unit of responsibility, delimited by segmentation in its formal relationship with other units.

> "By this we mean", he wrote, "that legal entity, which may be an individual person or a collective whole such as, for example, in a village, the town hall, the church or the school, or even the garage or the baker's, and which, in this case, all represent acknowledged occupational units. It should be understood here that we are not interested in their political reality but simply the way in which they illustrate the ethnic principle of distribution that generates all the activities of the group" (Gagnepain, 1991, p. 72).

In referring to this unit of responsibility which Gagnepain called "establishment", we prefer to side with Jean-Luc Brackelaire and use the term *role* which sits more comfortably within the sociological tradition. However, when role is conceived of in this way, it is no longer defined in terms of the expectations associated with it. Our definition of role focuses less on its content than on the subdivision of responsibilities that it brings about, delimiting the units of competence in the same way as position has been seen to delimit the units of belonging. The role is, first and foremost, a framework for the variation of responsibilities in which different functions can take their place and become associated. It is, when competence is considered from a segmentary perspective (competence A # competence B), the unit of competence. The reinvestment of role in an actual service constitutes what we term the "scene". "Every scene is a unit" explains Jean-Luc Brackelaire, "however many roles it contains, and it is what it is only by associating itself contractually with the other. To collaborate is therefore to restructure all the roles

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that make up the scene in the framework of the contract that we determine with another party" (Brackelaire, 1995, p. 223).

Although this formal conception of role, defined less in terms of a content than of its relations with other roles, is clearly opposed to a functionalist conception, it is similar to the conception already formulated by Michel Crozier and Erhard Friedberg.

> "Instead of taking as our basis a set of roles defined *a priori* as necessary for the correct functioning of a whole and internalized by the actors, we shall attempt to reconstruct the relations of power and negotiation between the individuals and groups via which these roles are or are not translated into actual behaviors and the links between these relations in regulated parts" (Friedberg, 1997, p. 236).

To insist in this way on the fact that roles are negotiated is to emphasize the fact that the actors set themselves the boundaries of these roles in a game of reciprocal relations. And it is these role boundaries that organize the actual behaviors (the "scenes") that the actors then adopt in any given situation.

Michel Crozier has shown how, in organizations, power "stems from the impossibility of eliminating uncertainty in the context of bounded rationality which is ours. In such a context, the power of A over B depends on A's ability to predict B's behavior and on the uncertainty of B about A's behavior. As long as the requirements of action create situations of uncertainty, the individuals who have to face them have power over those who are affected by the results of their choice" (Crozier, 1964, p. 158). Which results, for example, in the fact that "workers who have been restricted by scientific work-organization to a completely stereotyped task use every available means to regain enough unpredictability in their behavior to enhance their low bargaining power" (*ibid.*, p. 162).

These notorious areas of uncertainty to which the strategic analysis of organizations owes part of its fame presuppose that people are able to define their fields or areas of competence in defiance, sometimes, of the demands made by the institutions within which they operate. They are a manifestation of the arbitrariness of individuals which the organizational process itself must then attempt to curtail (Friedberg, 1997, p. 281). To quote Friedberg once again, "the complex world of human relationships and social interaction is always potentially unstable and conflictual" (*ibid.*, p. 20). In our opinion, this instability and this conflictuality result from the arbitrariness of persons who, in particular, aim to define their fields of responsibility and continuously construct divergence between them. "The organizational dimension

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of this world is nothing other than the set of empirical mechanisms which stabilize it and make it possible to construct the indispensable cooperation and coordination between the initiatives, actions and behaviors of the various participants" (*ibid.*). In other words, it is a question of going beyond arbitrariness and divergence to construct a level of convergence.

The autonomy of the actors is made possible by their ability to implicitly define the boundaries of role. However, these roles must also adapt to form the scenes which they have to play together. From a clinical point of view, it is paranoia and schizophrenia that are able to provide us with information about this process. In effect, these two psychoses seem to confront us with a disorder in the way roles are delimited. When paranoid patients mobilize their scenarios of interference or intrusion, it is to

> "furiously tear down any independence and set up a sort of totalitarian hegemony. The aim is to totally subjugate others or, on the contrary, to be subjugated oneself. By contrast, the schizophrenic is not implicitly constrained to trigger scenarios of interference or intrusion unless it is to set up, despite himself, a schism or separation, to make a form of independence inevitable. In sum, the two psychoses fix immutably what, in healthy individuals, functions dialectically; the scenario of annexation or dependence triumphs in the paranoid patient whereas the scenario of dissociation – or, more precisely, of autonomy or independence – prevails in the schizophrenic" (Guyard, 2006, p. 601).

Paranoiac drift

We must thank Jean-Claude Quentel for the following description of a case of paranoia studied, from the outset, from a mediationist perspective (Quentel, 1999).

Claude was eighteen and a half when the psychologist met him for the first time following his admission to a medical center for young handicapped persons. He had been excluded from school as of the age of five years due to his disabilities and had already attended five different establishments for adolescents and the mentally handicapped. Although Claude's father and mother lived near the establishment, they had wanted Claude to reside there full-time. They were subsequently also to ask not to have Claude returned to them during the summer holidays even though they knew that the center closed for a month.

Claude was born at full term following a very long labor. At the age of one month, he presented a hemiplegia syndrome following a hemiconvulsion.

The consequences of this were to remain with him: a left hemiplegia (he limped when walking) together with epileptic fits that had been stabilized through the administration of drugs as of the age of 12 years.

Claude, who had a sister a few years younger than him, was very attached to his mother who, however, preferred to maintain the precarious balance of her family which was jeopardized by Claude whenever he returned home. Her attitude, like that of Claude's father, left little place for the child. When he was with his parents, Claude had no bedroom and slept in the dining room. Confrontations were frequent, in particular with his father.

In the center, Claude was extremely demanding and highly dependent on the adults there. He did not like to be contradicted, would not admit that he was wrong and was easily upset. He sometimes slapped the young girls in his group. Although he wanted to dominate, his anxiety was clear. He talked a lot, often going back to the same subjects. He had an opinion about everything and considered himself to be the most important member of the group. The educational team stressed the need to constantly remind him of what he could and could not do. He was very good at pointing out the faults of each of them and took advantage of this ability. Alternately demanding and persecuted, Claude could be very aggressive. He demanded to be protected against himself but would sometimes also seek to be excluded.

During his initial meetings with the psychologist, he straight away assumed the role of an aggressive person who did not acknowledge the professional opposite him: "psychologists, I don't like them". By contrast, he spoke copiously about his family without waiting for any response. He seemed only to exist through different characters, in particular those in the soap opera Dallas, but also Claude François who had the same first name as him. He said that he cried a lot when Claude François died, a little as if it were a half of himself that had died according to the interpretation suggested to him by the psychologist (it should be remembered that Claude was hemiplegic). A little later he adopted a completely different role: that of the social worker in the French TV series Pause-café, played by the actress Véronique Jannot. It would be wrong to believe that Claude *played* these characters which would imply a distance between him and the role. In reality, he *confused himself* with them. During a session in which the psychologist said that he was "playing" at being J.R., Claude reacted very violently and aggressively (he threw the desk blotter at the psychologist's head). Claude, therefore, did not *play* a role. Instead, he successively confused himself with various characters; he *was* each of them. Speaking in psychoanalytical terms, J.-C. Quentel said that Claude "clung" to each of these "identifications". He was not capable of distancing himself from them. "Claude was in some way totally immersed in existence, without any order, that is to say without any historical coher-

ence, and at the same time subject to a drift of identity. He was unable to anchor his being and it was his delusion that accounted for this drift" (*ibid.*, p. 132). Claude therefore reinforces what Freud wrote in a letter to Fliess on 9 December 1899: "paranoia dissolves the identification once more". His case emphasizes what sociology has (for a long time) said about socialization. It is not enough just to internalize standards and values. These standards and these values must also be appropriated by the person who must, in turn, be able to remain the same beyond the diversity of situations and identifications. However, it is this permanence beyond the diversity of situations that is called into question in the case of Claude.

It was the fact that other people had the first name as him that both reassured and disquieted him. "There are too many Claudes in France", he would say when affirming his wish to move abroad, sometimes to become an Italian, sometimes an American. But what was he underneath? Everything in his delusion shows that he was unable to answer this question. There were as many Claudes as there were hypotheses or possible situations.

Not only was Claude extremely demanding but, in addition, everything seemed to suggest that other people's points of view did not exist for him: "other people's positions could not be different from his own: in a certain way, there was only one position that could not be opposed to any other or, more precisely, could not be relativized" (Quentel, 1999, p. 126). Claude wanted to be understood but without any distance being possible between him and the other, "which amounts to saying that he required the partner in his communications to coincide with him". Claude expected full and entire acceptance. He was unable to expect anything else. This same acceptance can be found in the paranoid subject's relationship to truth, as Alphonse De Waelhens explained very well:

> "The paranoid subject cannot ever speak, and almost explicitly so, but in the name of truth. He expects of us, without discretion, to acknowledge this truth; if need be, he will demand it of us. However, when we listen to him, this mode of speech surprises us. The paranoid subject is not looking for truth, he possesses it. He makes no effort to move toward the position of a third-party. Instead, he occupies it as of right, like a throne. He coincides with it, constantly and by privilege. And he neither understands nor accepts that anyone might doubt of this privilege" (De Waelhens, 1972, p. 143).

Claude, like all paranoid subjects, would therefore suppress the otherness of his interlocutor. However patient these interlocutors were and however

great their powers of empathy, they were not Claude. "They will have to, at some time or another, show their difference […].And it is at precisely this moment that Claude becomes aggressive, demanding and sometimes violent: when he perceives that the other is escaping him" (Quentel, 1999, p. 126). Everything suggests that such encounters with otherness were intolerable to Claude. However, we must again point out that in Claude's case, the otherness in question is the one that underpinned the service relationship.

A professional, whoever he may be, constructs his own competence at the same time as he relieves the customer, user or patient of his own. "Let me do it!", "Don't worry. I'll handle everything". These very familiar phrases provide a good summary of the service relationship. Through them, the professional takes on a responsibility from which he relieves others. In agreeing to be relieved of these responsibilities, the customer or user recognizes the competence of the professional and places himself in his hands even if only temporarily. Everyone, during the course of social life, experiences situations in which they entrust themselves to someone else, thus giving this other person a genuine power, or, by contrast, of inviting someone else to entrust him or herself to them, which equates to assuming power in the knowledge that the limits and obligations of this power are at all times defined by contract (if the clauses of the contract are not overtly stipulated then they are generally defined by law, as Durkheim observed). Furthermore, the service relationship is, by principle, anonymous. It is quite clear that the roles are held by specific persons who are assigned them within the framework of the social division of labor. However, these persons may change (relocation, retirement) even though the role persists. The role here goes beyond the person of the professional who temporarily fulfills it.

Everything suggests that no such anonymity existed for Claude. The professional was reduced to a mere physical presence and it could only be Claude who dictated matters. While he could accept that other people owed him something, this obligation was absolute and could involve no possible counterpart. Conversely, if Claude did something for someone else, it was in a dominant way that completely confiscated the other person's power from him. Claude's relations with others were relations of dominance: dominate or be dominated. Everything suggests that Claude placed no limitations on the power he exercised or to which he could be subjected. It is not for nothing that the care team found it constantly necessary to remind him of the limits which he seemed to be incapable of setting himself.

Schizophrenic hermeticism

Schizophrenics, by contrast, set limits to roles. However, they do it so well that their role becomes totally hermetic and impervious to any form of negotiation.

Let us first of all consider the case of Ludwig II of Bavaria (Clavreul, 1987; Oberdorfer, 1983). How did Ludwig II exercise his competence as king? Let us first briefly recall his history. The son of Maximilian II and Marie Friederike Franziska Hedwig of Prussia, Ludwig Otto Friedrich Wilhelm von Wittelsbach acceded to the Bavarian throne under the name Ludwig II on his father's death in 1864. In 1867, he became engaged to his cousin Sophie of Bavaria (the sister of "Sissi"). However, the marriage was postponed several times. In the political field, Ludwig II's reign was marked by the unification of the Kingdom of Bavaria with an emergent Germany. An ally of Austria at the unsuccessful battle of Sadowa in 1866, Bavaria was to join forces with Prussia during the war of 1870. However, in 1886, Ludwig II was declared mad and deposed by his own government. He was held captive in Berg Castle near Munich, under the supervision of a renowned psychiatrist, Doctor Gudden who was also the teacher of Emil Kraepelin. Three days later, Ludwig II's body was found with that of the psychiatrist drowned in a nearby pond…

Everyone knows the phrase, attributed to Louis XIV, "the State, it is me". It is often presented as an expression of absolute monarchy. Ludwig II was also familiar with this phrase which he had learned from his governess. However, as Clavreul puts it, this formulation asks as many questions about the "me" as it does about the State. For his part, Ludwig II responded to it with another formulation: *Meicost Ettal*, an anagram of Louis's original French statement "*l'État, c'est moi*". In this new formulation, both the State and the "me" are "broken down into their literal elements before being recombined differently" (Clavreul, 1987). Ludwig II also responded through his castles. "Difficult to get into, like fortresses, imitating and surpassing in size even the largest, bringing together all styles from all countries and all ages, adorned with allegorical representations of the Niebelungen, their function was to create the very essence of the castle" (*ibid.*). These castles were never inhabited, unless it was by the ghosts of Louis XIV and Marie-Antoinette who were easier to *get rid of* as Ludwig II put it. Other visitors were not welcomed and there was no place for courtiers there. The courtesans who attempted to curry favor with the virgin king were treated with ridicule and disdain. Even ministers and respected diplomats were treated as unwelcome intruders and, if possible, hidden from the king's sight by a candelabra or flower display before being quickly sent on their way. The

bedroom, which Ludwig II had wanted to be bigger than that of his father Maximilian, never welcomed a queen. As Clavreul said, Ludwig II always refused to perform the act that Marx called the only constitutional act of a king, namely the sexual act through which he produces a successor [42]. In the castle of Herrenchiemsee, he had constructed a hall of mirrors larger than that at Versailles. But the only reflection he could see in it was his own. He was thus the only actor in a theater without an audience.

He also ordered that a domestic servant who had displeased him be whipped and placed in chains. He would even condemn to death those who had failed to respect the meticulous etiquette that he had established. However, he rarely insisted that these orders be carried out. The main purpose, as in the case of his castles, was to pursue to the point of absurdity the logic of the monarchic principle. He did not want ministers. Irritated by their resistance, he threatened to form a cabinet presided over by his hairdresser and with cooks and grooms as ministers. This was, Clavreul stresses, the most perfect possible expression of the monarchic principle that considers that the king only has *subjects*, the best of whom are those who are the most subjugated. If he respected his mother, it was only, as he said, because she had the "honor to be the king's mother". But he added that she was "only the mother, at the same time as being a subject". He even referred to his mother as "the wife of my predecessor", thereby eliminating the relationship of genealogical ascendance. It is not to push Clavreul's own observations too far to see in this an additional proof of Ludwig II's identification with the *role* of king, beyond the biological relationship of genitality. This is because the monarchic power (etymologically speaking, the power of a single person) must be distinguished from its mode of transmission which is not necessarily hereditary. By refusing any form of genitality, Ludwig II was in some way demonstrating the autonomy of the role.

By refusing genitality, Ludwig II had, as Clavreul says, "succeeded in reducing himself to his own being in his monarchic function, without ascendance or descendance, without wife or ministers. He did not think of himself as *a* king, but as *the* king. What is more, he was identified with the State or, more precisely, the head of the State" (Clavreul, 1987). In brief, he was not just the temporary, transient holder of a position by virtue of a hereditary principle; he *was* the role of king.

What is it then, asks Clavreul, that distinguishes a king from a madman who thinks he is a king? Certainly not the simple fact of being recognized

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[42]"Der höchste konstitutionelle Akt des Königs ist daher seine Geschlechtstätigkeit, denn durch diese macht er einen König und setzt seinen Leib fort". *Marx, Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie*, 1843 [Kritik des Hegelschen Staatsrechts (§§ 261-313)].

as king by others. In the case of Ludwig II, recognition by others (by all of Bavaria and by all of Europe) settled nothing. Napoleon, for his part, was considered by a significant amount of Europe to be an adventurer and not an emperor. This, however, did not make him a madman "because Napoleon did not think he was Napoleon at all, since he knew full well by what means Bonaparte had produced Napoleon and how Napoleon, like Malebranche's God, sustained his existence at every moment" (Lacan, "Presentation on Psychical Causality", Bonneval, 1946, in *Ecrits*, New York, W. W. Norton, 2006, p. 140).

This is precisely the difference, according to Clavreul: unlike the madman, the king does not think of himself as king unless, that is, he is both a king and a madman at the same time. And, it is in this respect that Clavreul compares Ludwig II with his model Louis XIV, the very person to whom we attribute the statement "the State, it is me". Louis XIV, Clavreul explains, devoted all his energies to constructing his stature as the "Sun King". He took the greatest care to subject himself to a rule of etiquette that Ludwig II thought only to impose. Louis XIV had never forgotten the humble hunting lodge where the Fronde had forced him to take refuge when he was only five years old. It was very close to the site of this lodge that he ordered the construction of the château de Versailles where the country's aristocracy would come to learn to do him reverence. Unlike Versailles, the castles built by Ludwig II were empty. Other people were excluded from them. They were but the empty shell of a hypertrophied role. And because Ludwig II was unable to draw on his role to take part in a game played with others, he hated all festivities including, and most particularly, those where his was the leading role. "He fled from them with violent haste, sometimes at the very last moment, taking refuge in places where no-one was able to find him" (Clavreul, 1987). Ever since adolescence, he had avoided being seen by others, a characteristic that was initially attributed to his shyness. Under the pretext of etiquette, he ordered that others should lower their eyes when approaching him and should always remain at a distance from him. This was less a manifestation of a phobia than of an inability to tolerate otherness.

Paradoxically passionate about the theater, Ludwig II was particularly concerned about the scenery and demanded that it be an exact reproduction of reality. In historical plays, the costumes also had to be faithful reproductions. "Most of all, he was searching for the perfect identity between an actor and his role" (*ibid.*). Thus he could not accept that the actor Joseph Kainz could play a role other than that of Didier in Marion de Lorme. In brief, at the theater, "Ludwig II did everything he could to eliminate, to suppress anything that could act as a framework and, more specifically, anything that might identify the fiction, however vital this might be for the pleasure of

ordinary spectators" (*ibid.*).

Our second case is the story of a Louis which, as it happens, is French for Ludwig. This is, at least, the first name given to him by the authors of the article in which this case is reported (Guyard *et al.*, 2004). Louis was a patient who had been receiving psychiatric follow-up care for schizophrenia for approximately ten years. He always had to be, the authors claim, in a situation of being the absolute author. But, they say, that of an author "characterized by his absence".

In the field of cultural knowledge, he sought out the choicest pieces and had a tendency towards anthologizing (just as the castles of Ludwig II tended to constitute an architectural anthology). Passionate about literature, Louis enjoyed discussing how literary works were distributed into *separate* genres (poetry, theater etc.). He himself had a specialist knowledge of certain works such as *Madame Bovary* by Flaubert or *The Stranger* by Camus. At an even more extreme level, he considered himself to be the specialist of specialists in such matters. At the same time, Louis adored jazz, but not *all* jazz, only that from the years between 1940 and 1960. Here, again, he created an area of specialization for himself. He possessed more than 150 records by Lionel Hampton and claimed to have most of the recorded works of Louis Armstrong about whose life and work he seemed to know everything. He hunted out details, exceptions, rarities. His outings to go shopping outside of the hospital were highly ritualized events. It was essential that he always went to the same record shop and saw the same "highly" specialized salesman. If, by misfortune, the specialist in question was absent this was a veritable catastrophe for Louis. Apart from jazz, Louis knew almost nothing other than the Four Seasons by Vivaldi. But in this, he was a true specialist. "He demanded that his interlocutor pay attention to certain orchestral attacks or to certain passages that only he was able to point out" (*ibid.*). At chess, he was a specialist in the field of classical openings and some endgames played by famous players. However, he refused to modify his game through contact with other players and his chess games became the setting for the display of an inflexible, unchanging knowledge, closed in on itself. What is more, all his knowledge was characterized by the same inflexibility that permitted no negotiation. He was a teacher who always repeated the same lesson without taking any account of his pupils. The role in no way had to respond to the context in which it was "performed". It was written in advance and could be replayed as many times as necessary.

In the everyday life of the hospital, he never made himself part of a workgroup but instead sought to construct his own "niche", that is to say a competence specific to him and to him alone. If he did agree to take part in the everyday tasks of the hospital or the various therapeutic workshops then

it was only on the condition that he could construct a highly specialized or precisely delimited area of activity for himself. No-one could count on him to sweep the floors of the ward. But that did not stop him from showing that he was a specialist even in the field of domestic chores. Thus he might content himself with putting the broom away in the cupboard while explaining that a broom must "always" be stored with the brush end upwards to prevent it from being crushed. And if, by chance, he should start to sweep, it was to transform his activity into a demonstration of sweeping. Similarly, disinclined to help peel the vegetables, he was very happy to show that he had *his* method of peeling potatoes. In the workshops, he refused to take part in the proposed scenarios. If he did not master a technique, he would "place an order" with other patients. In this way, he ordered three terracotta bowls in order to specialize in decoration, with decoration then becoming *his* specialty, as a result of which he appropriated for himself all the necessary materials. If he could not find a field that he could reserve for himself, he would withdraw and refuse to take part in anything at all. And even though he was barely employable, he knew how to play at being the employer. Once his terracotta bowls had been delivered, he made use of the patients closest to him by incorporating them within his own enterprise. He hired and fired as he wished without negotiating in any way with the head of the workshop. In brief, in the same way as in the field of cultural knowledge, it was essential that he was his own boss, a specialist in a niche in which he acted with total autonomy.

Similarly, in the field of law, he did not attempt to master the entirety of the legal code but instead sought to be an expert in certain precise cases.

> "Wherever there is not necessarily any problem, he rapidly makes one appear. He is an expert in the art of presenting 'textbook cases' which make it necessary to re-examine problems which he then is the only person capable of solving. The nurses know this better than anyone and also know that even the slightest discussion of questions relating to regulations or the organization of the life of the hospital can swiftly develop into an endless round of subtle hair-splitting" (*ibid.*).

Guyard *et al.* (*ibid.*) tell us that in every field, he constantly sought to construct an independent competence, totally separate, that would be exclusively his. In short, in every field, Louis made certain areas of competence his own. He was *the* specialist, master of his domains. Like the maintenance workers in the industrial monopoly studied by Crozier (1964), he defined an area of uncertainty. Anyway, "are we not maintenance workers who keep our 'tricks' to ourselves and savor the moments when we appear as the 'repair

men', that is to say the saviors" (Friedberg, 1997, p. 287)? The difference, however, between these maintenance workers and Louis is that, in the latter, the field of competence was not negotiable. His interventions were designed less to instruct than to emphasize the incompetence of others. This isolated, separated, independent competence, however, remained abstract and devoid of any actual application. Because the scene (as defined above) presupposes a political negotiation of competence. It requires that we take account of others. And this is something that Louis never did. He was a teacher without pupils. His knowledge remained closed in on itself, beyond any negotiation or effective communication. Similarly, in the workshop, he could only be specialist and boss. "But a boss without any real work, a boss whose business is ultimately empty, formal, beyond any negotiation" (Guyard *et al.*, *op. cit.*).

Louis also indulged in a form of harassment which he pushed to the point at which severance was inevitable. For example, he would engage his discussion partners in conversations that became increasingly scandalous or cause those around him to witness some form of indecent behavior. However, he did not especially attempt to shock or offend against decency. Everything he did suggests rather that he was systematically attempting to reach a threshold of unseemliness beyond which he would cause the hospital staff to reimpose order, that is to say the point at which he would be segregated from the group or no longer had to contribute to the current activity (Guyard, 2006, p. 598). The form of harassment practiced by Louis could also involve hostility or threats. This was the case, for example, when Louis stared at his victim, sometimes for hours on end, until the victim called on a third-party or the third-party (the nurse) decided to intervene. In the same way as his unseemly behavior, these threats resulted in a severance. And everything suggests that this was the desired goal. "Louis feels constrained to search for a threshold of intrusiveness beyond which a separation, or *schism*, becomes inevitable" (*ibid.*). In this, the authors see a further manifestation of his obligatory independence: "these incidents hasten the discontinuation of the various forms of participation in which Louis finds himself (too) involved" (*ibid.*). "By agreeing to enter into a relationship with Louis, you run the risk of triggering a specific scenario of severance in which the initial dependence is gradually amplified until it turns into rejection" (*ibid.*, p. 599).

And these harassments were not the only type of intrusion he practiced. Louis was constantly in contact with professionals (doctor, psychologist, nurses, record shop owner, etc.) and, through his behavior, he never ceased casting doubt on the boundaries of their competence. Thus he would frequently pursue a conversation or line of questioning to the point where his interlocutor was unable to reply. He would then rush (insincerely) to apologize: he had been tactless, he should not have started a conversation about

a topic with which his interlocutor was unfamiliar. The authors considered this to be a scenario in which Louis sought to destabilize the other. He constantly cast doubt by questioning individuals at the very limit of their domain of competence. It is clear that a nurse cannot answer a question that falls within the sphere of competence of a doctor, that a doctor cannot answer a question that should be addressed to a psychoanalyst, etc. For Louis, "other people always have the weakness of not possessing the specialist knowledge corresponding to the present situation" (*ibid.*). This could also be seen in the field of technology. When Louis asked a nurse to help him assemble his hi-fi system, he also stated that he did not expect miracles from him since a nurse could not also be a hi-fi specialist. To thank him for the help provided, Louis considered lending him a 33 rpm record of Ella Fitzgerald, but then reconsidered because to play this type of record it is necessary to use special equipment including a highly sensitive stylus which the nurse almost certainly did not possess. He was equally expert in subjecting the team of carers to problems of conscience. I shall consider just one example of such a situation out of the six presented by Hubert Guyard:

> "The care staff were having a meeting. The door was opened part way and Louis's head appeared very gently as if he didn't want to intrude. Of course, he didn't doubt for a moment that we had to meet but he wanted to tell us anyway… There was a patient who had hurt his head and needed care immediately. He was simply telling us of the problem: perhaps someone should tend to him? Once the question had been asked, Louis calmly closed the door again. And the staff were left in an embarrassing situation that, in the whole ward, practically only Louis could orchestrate so cleverly" (*ibid.*, p. 600).

In all these situations in which he attempted to destabilize the professionals around him, he would insidiously take control: it was he who assumed the authority to determine the limits of a domain of competence.

Ludwig and Louis show us how schizophrenia reifies the aptitude of human beings to give themselves a separate domain of competence or power, to give themselves a role that is distinct from the roles of others. We are entitled to speak in terms of reification here because this separate domain of competence is normally negotiable. It is reorganized in the specific situation, in a scene, in contact with others. However, it is not negotiated in schizophrenia. It seems that schizophrenia involves an extreme manifestation of a need for specialty and autonomy.

"Louis suffers from a hypertrophied need for uniqueness, an independence inflexible to the point of making any negotiation impossible. This excess of autonomy is manifested through the fencing-in of competence, in the field of cultural knowledge as much as in that of work or legislation. This excess of autonomy is also manifested through a communication that persists even though it is without influence, that is to say through the delirious belief of being able to do anything, that can potentially be exercised, but is not actually exercised, through the implementation of severance strategies conceived of as the due occurrence of a pre-programmed eviction, as well as by taking advantage of the lack of competence of others" (*ibid.*, p. 596).

* *

This chapter has shown how psychiatric disorders can be understood based on the hypothesis of an implicit formalization in human beings of their belonging and their competences. The formalization of competence, for example, accounts for the construction and appropriation of the areas of specialization observed by Crozier in the case of the industrial monopoly. Schizophrenia, for its part, seems to reveal the hypertrophied functioning of this specialization. Whereas, in normal life, the boundaries of competence can be negotiated, they are non-negotiable in schizophrenia. Everything suggests that schizophrenia constitutes an extreme case of the eminently social human ability to appropriate a domain of competence or a part of such a domain.

This model enables us to reexamine the postulate of the autonomy of human beings. Methodological individualism was right to postulate the existence of autonomous actors. However, clinical evidence obliges us to take this postulate itself as an object of study. In other words, it is necessary to understand what this autonomy is based on. This enables us to inject new vigor into Simmel's idea of a formal sociology. In effect, clinical observations make it possible to identify the processes that make humans into beings who constantly formalize their relations with others. We must now demonstrate this no longer on the basis of psychiatric clinical practice but on that of neurological clinical observations. Indeed, a certain number of disorders observed following brain lesions corroborate the idea that there is a mental ability to establish the boundaries that structure our relations with others.

Chapter 3

Brain conditioning

The neuropsychologist Pierre Karli devoted two chapters of a book published in 1995 to a question he referred to as the "life and becoming of the social actor" (Karli, 1995). This intrusion by a neurologist into a domain that usually belongs to the sociologist, accompanied, what is more, by a clear statement of position in favor of a specific conception of sociology (methodological individualism), deserves our attention for a few pages. All the more so because this was not the last such intrusion by a neuroscientist into the field of sociology. No work published in the field of the neurosciences can now ignore the question of the "social brain" (Jeannerod, 2002; Decety & Ickes, 2009). It should be noted, however, that the aim of the current chapter is not to review the present state of knowledge on this subject. Neither will it attempt to discuss all the additional questions it raises, whether at the scientific or at a more polemical level. Our aim is solely to indicate how sociologists can benefit from taking account of studies of certain neurological disorders in their search to gain a better understanding of what it is that underpins the autonomy of the actor and his ability to form social bonds.

Karli starts by defining human beings as a trinity: "three beings in one who coexist, interact and mutually develop their structure" (Karli, 1995, p. 9). These three "beings" are for him the biological individual, the social actor and the subject, the last of which is defined by a "quest for meaning and internal freedom" (*ibid.*). However, Karli goes on to say that these three "beings" possess only one brain "which is therefore the mediator of this triple dialog which progresses and develops over the entire lifetime" (*ibid.*, p. 10). The central concepts of Karli's work are therefore mediation and interaction (between the different "beings" that constitute humans, as well as between the latter and the different environments they inhabit: physical, biological, social). Considerable importance is also accorded to the temporal (historical) dimension in which the potentialities defined by the genetic program "are re-

vealed" (and between which a selection is made based on the interactions with the environment). Finally, the importance of language is stressed as an instrument available to the "subject in search of liberty", which allows him to step back and consider from a distance "the present moment and the original meanings of the things of this world" and which contributes to the "conditioning undergone in the sociocultural environment in which he is immersed" (*ibid.*, p. 13). Although affirming the unity of the brain, Karli nevertheless defines a triple division which corresponds more or less to the three modes of being that we have distinguished above: the individual, the subject, and the person. More specifically, an initial level involving the mesencephalon and the diencephalon "ensures the immediate satisfaction of the individual's primary physical needs and the defense of his physical integrity" (attraction and approach or aversion and withdrawal in the immediate present in accordance with a stimulus-response mode of operation) (*ibid.*); a second level, which primarily involves a set of structures in the temporal lobe, gives behavior its historical (mnesic) and affective dimension; finally, a third level, at which the main role is played by the prefrontal cortex in association with other brain structures, seems to be one of distancing, planning, reflection or, in short, liberty "beyond immediate incentives or the conditionings determined by experience" (*ibid.*, p. 14).

I shall not dwell here on what Karli has to say about the individual and his biological identity, whether at the level of genetic identity or the molecular (blood groups, "genetic footprints", HLA types, etc.), morphological and physiological identities that are closely associated with it. The corresponding arguments can be directly integrated within the issue of individuation as we have defined it above (see chapter 2 above).

Instead, I shall go straight on to the neuropsychological observations reported by Karli in order to identify what it is that makes a human being a "social actor". These neuropsychological observations, he explained

> "show that lesions that affect one or other of a set of closely interconnected brain structures (certain region of the central grey nuclei or of the associative frontal cortex) induce a very specific state which nevertheless has a range of different names: 'loss of psychic autoactivation', 'loss of vital force', 'psychic akinesia', 'loss of psychomotor initiative', 'behavioral inertia' and 'mental void'. Even though the intellectual and motor faculties remain intact, they are not spontaneously deployed even though they may be mobilized by external stimuli: there is a loss of 'spontaneity', of 'motivation', of 'projection into the future'. [...] There therefore seems to be an elementary process of autoactivation which,

in human beings, is necessary for the spontaneous initiation of
both language acts and observable behaviors (*ibid.*, p. 131)[1].

In other words, such patients who are incapable of autoactivation are
no longer actors, or at least not of their own volition, even though their
intellectual and motor faculties are preserved. However, is to be an actor the
same thing as to be a *social* actor? Can action be identified with autonomy?

Other observations reported by Karli seem to show that it cannot. These
relate to patients suffering from a lesion of the frontal lobe who experience
great difficulty "freeing themselves from the hold of immediate incentives
and the original meanings of things" (*ibid.*, p. 253-254)[2]. Thus, placed in
the presence of a glass and a jug of water, these patients have a strong
tendency to fill the glass and drink "for no other reason than that these
objects are present" (utilization behavior). Furthermore, if the doctor makes
a particular gesture, the patients have a tendency to imitate him (imitation
behavior). Karli adds that "this abnormal dependence can also be seen in
more complex situations (such as visiting an apartment or a souvenir shop:
the patient acts as if the situation implicitly contains an instruction that
requires him to respond) and reflects a certain loss of autonomy on the part
of the subject in relation to his habitat" (*ibid.*, p. 254). After stating that this
type of "disorder of intentional activity […] often contrasts with a very high
level of preservation of the intellectual faculties", Karli concludes as follows:
"In any event, it is clear that the prefrontal cortex must function normally if
behavior is to take place and make sense – beyond immediate incentives and
the conditioning resulting from experience – in a more conscious, considered
and wished-for personal project" (*ibid.*). Unlike patients characterized by
the "loss of psychic autoactivation", these patients described by Lhermitte
"interact", but do so without any autonomy, as if they were "clinging" to
their environment.

In brief, these observations clearly seem to show that both action and
social autonomy are conditioned by the brain. But rather than Pierre Karli,
who speaks of a single "capacity for autonomous social action" whose dis-
orders are described by Laplane, Habib and Poncet, on the one hand, and
by Lhermitte, on the other, we shall instead follow Olivier Sabouraud who
considers the "utilization and imitation behaviors" to represent a manifesta-
tion of a disorder of social reason and the "loss of psychic autoactivation" to
constitute an aboulic disorder, that is to say a natural disorder of "affectiv-

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[1]Karli refers here to the work of Habib and Poncet (1988); Laplane et al. (1988);
Laplane (1990).

[2]These brain-damaged patients have been described by François Lhermitte (Lhermitte,
1983; Lhermitte et al., 1986; Lhermitte, 1986).

ity and its ethical regulation" (Sabouraud, 1995). The fact that the loss of autoactivation is distinct from the utilization and imitation behaviors leads us, in effect, to dissociate action (as a "causing to move" i.e. an "emotion" in the etymological sense [3]) from autonomy (as the social independence of the "actor"). Accessing the person, historicity, would therefore not be so much a case of accessing action as of accessing the autonomy of action (or autonomy in action). It is this autonomy of action that will form the main focus of our attention in the remainder of this chapter.

3.1 Disorders of the person

During the 1980s, our colleague, Hubert Guyard, worked on the hypothesis of the brain conditioning of the person, understood as the ability to define boundaries of belonging and competence.

His central hypothesis was that the ability to *live* one's own story in relation with others is closely linked to the ability to *tell* stories. He therefore studied disorders of narrative in patients suffering from brain lesions. The first task was to identify the different determinisms involved in the construction of a narrative. A comparison between the performances of aphasic patients and those of patients suffering from frontal lesions in narrative construction tasks makes it very clear that narratives are affected differently by an aphasia and by a frontal syndrome. Whereas aphasia has an incidental effect on narrative and can be seen in difficulties occurring *in* it but without eliminating the ability to tell the story, frontal syndromes seem more directly to affect this story-telling ability itself.

The frontal lobe accounts for approximately a third of the cortical mantle. We use the term frontal syndrome to designate a set of symptoms observed in the case of lesions to the anterior part of this frontal lobe. Even though the motor areas and Broca's area are also located in the frontal lobe, disorders resulting from lesions to them are generally excluded from such frontal syndromes. Here, we shall discuss only two major families of frontal syndromes: frontal convexity syndrome and frontal mediobasal syndrome.

Frontal convexity syndrome results from lesions to the premotor and prefrontal regions leading to mood and behavior disorders as well as to

> "a loss of initiative, a loss of interest in familiar things, apathy, indifference and a slowing-down of most activities. Patients are not aware of these disorders and undertake no self-criticism. Oral expression is sometimes characterized by mutism and, more

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[3]While making it clear that the loss of psychic autoactivation is not a motor disorder.

often, by impaired fluency and a loss of initiative when talking. […] Motor and gestural performances are […] generally simplified, whether in the case of motor sequences, gaze orientation or tasks involving the use of objects. […] the patient omits certain stages in the procedure, certain indispensable characteristics. Complex intellectual activities, problem-solving for example, are also disturbed. Either the patient does not respond or he suggests only an incomplete solution, or stereotypical or repetitive responses" (Guyard et al., 1992, p. 164).

Frontal *mediobasal* syndrome is due to orbital and internal lesions of the frontal lobes. Behavior and mood are characterized by exaggerated euphoria or joviality. Moria is observed less frequently [4]. Impulsive behaviors are also observed. Patients may then appear to be coarse, irritable, facetious and uninhibited. They are sometimes able to criticize their behavior but without being able to modify it. This is the syndrome that corresponds to the case of Phineas Gage, one of the most famous in the neurological literature (Damasio, 1994).

Frontal convexity syndrome has been interpreted as a disorder of programming while frontal mediobasal syndrome has been interpreted as a disorder of selectivity. However, these concepts of programming and selectivity are much too general (Guyard et al., 1992; Le Gall et al., 1993). What are the objects of this programming and this selectivity? One step toward a greater level of precision is to note that the mediobasal syndrome relates to the control of affects (with inhibition being either excessive or inadequate), whereas, in humans, the frontal convexity syndrome relates to the differentiation of arguments or the segmentation of the steps in the resolution of a problem, as Luria, to whom the identification and analysis of frontal convexity syndrome owe a great deal, indicated many years ago when speaking of difficulties understanding instructions or drawing up plans (Luria and Tsvetkova, 1967).

Our hypothesis (as well as that of Guyard) is that that the frontal convexity syndrome is a disorder of the person, defined above as the ability to define boundaries and become the author of one's own story. However, the frontal lobe is not the only structure involved. Anterior lesions of the left temporal convexity result in the clinical pictures known, since the work of

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[4]Moria (from the Greek *môria*, "folly") is a "syndrome characterized by a loss of inhibition coupled with euphoria, a facetious tendency and a casualness in social behaviors. It may be associated with an intolerance to frustration, sudden depressive moods, apathy and an appearance of psychopathy, even though the personality structure is not as well organized as in psychopaths" (Bérubé, 1991, p. 19).

Elisabeth Warrington, under the name of "selective impairment of semantic memory" (Warrington, 1975). A number of possible etiologies have been described: atrophies, necrosis following herpetic encephalitis, vascular disorders (with more widespread lesions leading to semantic disorders coupled with Wernicke's aphasia) (Sabouraud, 1995, p. 485). These disorders, which are characterized by a loss of social knowledge (starting with the words of the language which become foreign to the patient), may also represent a valuable approach for the study of the brain conditioning of the person, conceived of as the ability to structure relations with others, both on the face of parity and that of responsibility. Although we repeat that our aim here is not to draw up an inventory of the neuropsychological knowledge surrounding the "social brain", we shall, in the pages that follow, present in some detail a number of cases studied by our colleagues at the Laboratoire interdisciplinaire de recherches sur le langage (LIRL - University of Rennes 2).

3.1.1 Presence without abstraction: the case of RG

The performances of this first patient have been described in great detail by Attie Duval-Gombert (1992)[5]. RG was head of service at a vehicle repair shop. He was hospitalized for the first time in 1986 and referred to the neurological department for an impairment of the general condition, memory problems and a mild loss of words. The medical record states:

> "The disorders consist of an abnormally slow naming of persons or things. The patient says that he forgets and takes a long time to remember the names of his neighbors or work colleagues, that he sometimes says one word instead of another (for example, tomato when he is thinking of an apple), that he sometimes forgets what people have said to him during work meetings so that he has to take regular notes. He says that when someone asks him for a drill, for example, they have to explain to him what the tool is used for before he can understand what it is. Finally, he states, for example, that when he re-assembles a car engine, an activity he is very familiar with, he does not know what part comes next and it is only when he sees it that he knows which one to use" (Duval-Gombert, 1992, p. 231).

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[5]We can find a very similar clinical observation, although with a different etiology (trauma due to a fall), with regard to a 71-year-old woman reported in an article by Clément de Guibert who is also a researcher at LIRL (De Guibert, 2006). Generally speaking, patients of the type we are going to present here are well described in the literature.

The neurological examination did not reveal anything. It was hypothesized that he was suffering from the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. Two years later, in December 1989, the patient returned following an aggravation of his difficulties. The neurological examination still revealed nothing. The diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease was confirmed. However, in November 1990, the neurologist pointed out that the picture presented by RG was significantly different from the typical description of Alzheimer's. It had started a long time previously and its development was slow. Unlike Alzheimer's patients, RG was perfectly able to find his way to where he was supposed to go. However, like them, he did not recognize the people he had to deal with after arriving. Like these patients, his stock of words also diminished. In February 1991, RG was hospitalized once again, primarily due to behavioral problems and character disorders reported by his wife. The medical record reported a progressive deterioration of the dementia "with an increasing paucity of the stock of items and ideas but with the possibility of logical reasoning. The capacity for abstraction is totally lost (literal interpretation of proverbs). Oral language is very disturbed, especially at the level of comprehension. The same is true of writing which, not being understood, has become phonetic" (*ibid.*, p. 233). The arguments between RG and his wife were attributed to RG's irritation in response to the very solicitous attitude of the latter who found it difficult to comprehend that he could not understand what she said. Finally, a new examination conducted in 1991 confirmed the tendency toward deterioration.

Although it was not possible to perform a scan, the homogeneous nature of the clinical picture at the time suggested that only one brain region was affected [6]. The illness subsequently worsened and RG was eventually completely unable to use words. He could only make two cries: one as a reaction to something that he perceived as an aggression, the other representing a sort of sigh of comfort when he saw that everything was all right [7].

RG's "lack of words" was not the same as in Wernicke's aphasia (he did not exhibit the morphological and syntactic difficulties that are characteristic of an aphasia). His, indeed, was a case of the "increasing paucity of the stock" rather than an absence of the logical processing of words. RG's memory disorders seemed to be concentrated around the use of nouns. He

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[6] Because it was not possible to perform a scan, RG's lesion could not be localized. However, the fact that the profile was different from that associated with left temporal lesions (Duval-Gombert, 1992, p. 330) led to the hypothesis that it was localized elsewhere. In the case of the patient described by Clément de Guibert (2006), whose clinical picture was similar to that of RG, the lesion was not a left temporal lesion but a fronto-parietal lesion.

[7] Attie Duval, personal memo.

exhibited no rapid forgetting nor any disorders of episodic memory (he could recount certain episodes of his life down to the smallest detail). By contrast, he suffered from significant disorders of semantic memory which resembled those described by McKenna, Warrington and Shallice (Duval-Gombert, 1992, p. 234) [8].

For her thesis, Attie Duval-Gombert presented a whole series of RG's performances in various trials or tests, some of which we present below. The first two examples are taken from picture identification tasks. In the first of these, the patient had to find the picture on the basis of the name given to it [9].

O. —Show me a stool.

RG, *points to a stool, but says at the same time: —* It's not a ladder, is it? Stool, I don't know what that is.

O. — Point to the bee.

RG. — The what?

O. — A bee.

RG. — The bee, no, I don't know what a bee is.

O. — Point to a needle.

RG. — ?

(*The research personnel show him the object.*)

RG. —That's what you call a needle?

In the second example, he had to name what was present in the picture:

Hat	It's a hat. I've seen one.
Dinghy	It's not a boat, it's a little boat.
Letter	A letter
Wheel	A wheel, I know that.
Car	A car
Church	It's a church.
Mouth	I don't know what it is.
Tiger	It's not a cat after what I saw earlier, but I don't know what it is. (O. A tiger) That doesn't mean anything to me.
Butterfly	I don't know.
Cherry	I don't know.
Clog	It's a… what is it… ch… chairs? No… (O. A cl…) clocks?

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[8]The references cited by Attie Duval are McKenna and Warrington (1980); Warrington and McCarthy (1983); Warrington and McCarthy (1987); Warrington and Shallice (1984).

[9]In all the dialogs reported below, the letter O designates the observer.

Basket	I don't know. It's for carrying.
Windmill	It's for wind, for air. I don't know what it's called.
Waistcoat	It's a… It's trousers. Not trousers. A chair, not a chair. A jacket.
Ring	It's a watch. A jewel.
Hedgehog	An animal, but I don't know which.

It can be seen that RG did indeed "lack words". Everyday words had become foreign to him. He did not know what they referred to. When he was told, he was astonished. He could, however, name certain images. His experience seemed to help him in this case ("I've seen", "I know"), but not always. When he did not give the name, he could sometimes provide an indication of use ("It's for the wind") or a generic term ("It's an animal"). Similarly, for him, "frog" could not be an animal "because animals, they're meat". All the flowers presented to him (daisy, mimosa, violet, tulip, lily, poppy) were "the same, they're flowers".

When it came to writing, he exhibited a tendency to phonetic writing if he did not recognize the word. By contrast, if he recognized the word, he had no difficulty writing it. RG had no problem reading except in the case of certain words that he did not recognize and meant nothing to him. If he was presented with a phonetic written sequence whose meaning he understood then he was capable of correcting it (thus he corrected "donémwalamin" to "Donnez-moi la main" (give me your hand)).

In everyday life, RG had the same type of difficulty recognizing how to use certain objects, whether presented to him as isolated parts or complete assemblies. In his job, he did not know what to do with an engine part if he saw it in isolation. Whenever he dismounted an engine, he had to mark in an identical color the parts he removed in order to be able to replace them in the correct location afterwards. A part that had been used in one place could no longer be used anywhere else. Any given screw would become that screw which goes with that part and that part only. Outside of this assembly work, he no longer knew what was what nor what it was used for. For him, parts could not be used elsewhere (either at a different location in the same engine or at the same location in another engine). He no longer recognized certain everyday objects. A nutcracker could no longer also be used to crack crab claws (or he thought that the picture of a crab shown to him was a picture of a nut!).

Here are his answers to a test in which he was asked to recognize famous persons:

De Gaulle	"I must have seen him on TV at lunchtime. It's de Gaulle isn't it? They talked about him on TV at lunchtime."
Yasser Arafat	"He's a foreigner. But I'm not sure who. I've seen him on TV."
Mitterrand	"You see him on TV. He's a president, the president of France. You see him a lot, as well."
Gérard Depardieu	"With that hair, with his… (*he gestures running his hand through his hair.*)… I don't know."

He recognized the members of his family but not his friends, colleagues or neighbors. If the recognition test was performed using photos, he only recognized the members of his family as such if he himself was present in the photo. Otherwise, he mistook them for others. Thus, when shown a photograph of his granddaughter's baptism, he first of all recognized himself, then his wife and then his son. From this, he deduced that the other woman in the photo must be his daughter-in-law which then enabled him to recognize his granddaughter and conclude that the photo had been taken at her baptism. By contrast, when shown a photo of his wife's family on which he was not present, he recognized perfectly well that it was a photo of the "in-laws" but he mistook his wife for a "sister-in-law". This suggests that, for him, his wife could not simultaneously be his wife and his brother-in-law's sister. One day on which his wife drove his car, he recognized the car perfectly well but he did not recognize the driver because he was not used to seeing his wife drive the car.

His geographical knowledge was greatly disrupted. If unable to consult a map, he would place Brest in Normandy, Marseilles in the North, Strasbourg in Brittany. Lille was problematic for him. "*Quelle île?*", he would ask (= what island, Lille and "l'île" - the island - having identical sounds in French). When he was shown an old photograph of the Thabor garden in Rennes, he was unable to say whether it was old or new because "I haven't been to the Thabor for a long time". When he was shown a photo of the Sacré-Cœur in Paris, he was unable to say whether it was old or new because he did not know what it represented.

As his wife pointed out, it seems that he was unable to recognize a word, person or thing unless he could relate it to his own experience. Thus a photo of the Mont-Saint-Michel meant nothing to him until he could establish a relation between it and his own vacations. Once that had been done, he was able to explain how to get there. Similarly, he was unable to recall

the historical details of the Second World War unless he could put them in relation to what he himself had experienced during that period. Words like "crankshaft", "camshaft", "valves" were ultimately recognized only when he could establish a relation between them and his own job. This also accounts for the lack of consistency in his responses from one session to the next. If, during a session, he was shown a picture of a paint brush then he remembered the word and the thing because he had done painting that morning. However, one week later, he recognized neither the word nor the thing because he had not done any painting in the meantime. When asked about makes of car, he could only provide a very limited list. However, this list was not produced at random: it contained his make of car and those of his sons ("BX, that's a Citroën, I've got one", "A Volvo, that's my son's", "A Fiat, that's my other son's"). Here, we can talk in terms of *autocentration*. This is one of the major characteristics of patients such as RG and it has already been noted by McKenna, Warrington and Shallice who commented that these patients find it most difficult to name the things that are furthest from them (Duval-Gombert, 1992, p. 242).

We see this autocentration in the fact that RG was able to locate or situate in time historical personages, cities, or events that form part of collective memory. However, this was always with reference to his own experience: "I know it, I've been there", "I remember because I've seen it", "but we didn't see very much". Here is an example of a dialog on the subject of history:

O. — Have you heard of Christopher Columbus?

RG. — No, I don't know anyone... The names of people... What's he supposed to have done?

O. — He went off in a ship.

RG. — When?

O. — 500 years ago.

RG. — 500 years? What does that mean? That makes... ? When was it?

O. — In 1492.

RG. — Ah! Fourteen... As long ago as that? Did ships exist back then?

O. — So, Christopher Colombus, what did he do?

RG. — What did you say?

O. — He discovered America.

RG. — Oh, right! I'm not really up with all of that, especially it being so long ago, you understand?

This autocentration was associated with a difficulty in abstracting himself from a sort of immediate presence. This can also be seen in his lack of awareness of homonymy or the "figurative" meaning of words. He understood everything literally and this explains his great perplexity when faced with

certain expressions [10]:

O. — **What's a bedhead?**

RG. — Bed, it's for sleeping. The head… it's… (*he points to a duffle bag:*) isn't that a head? A bedhead? It's for resting your head.

O. — Not quite.

RG. — It's a bed that goes up and down.

O. — A bedhead?

RG. — It's not the feet…

O. — **Lend a hand?**

RG. — If you need something… to assemble something or dismantle it. The hands… (*he looks at his hands*), it's that! Oh, no! Hands, you can't lend your hands! Have strong hands. Lend something. You can't lend your hands!

O. — **A crowbar?**

RG. — A crow? A crow? What's a crow?

(*He is shown a picture of a hammer with a crowbar end.*)

RG. — That's called a crow? I call that a hammer.

O. — **Walls have ears?**

RG. — Oh? Walls can have ears? No, I don't see why there would be ears in walls. (*He looks at the walls of the office with great attention.*). Ears… ears (*he touches his ears.*). Ears, those are ears, aren't they?

O. — Walls have ears?

RG. — I don't know. I don't see why… A wall… that's what it is, isn't it? (*He points to the wall*) No, I don't understand at all.

At the same time, he found it extremely difficult to project himself into the world of fiction as his manner of "telling" the story of Little Red Riding Hood shows:

O. — Do you know the story of Little Red Riding Hood?

RG. — The story of? Red riding hood, what's that? I don't know what it is. What does that mean? The story of the red riding hood? Red, that's a color… The story, why story? The story of what?

O. — There was a little girl…

R.G. — Little girl, I know…

O. — … who lived near a forest.

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[10]Only examples with expressions which have an equivalent in English have been translated here. Although the researchers reported other examples, for instance "prendre au pied de la lettre" ("to take something literally"), "un pied à terre" ("a holiday flat"), "dormir sur ses deux oreilles" ("to have a good sleep"), these have no equivalent in English. It is, of course, possible to imagine other expressions such as "it's raining cats and dogs" which, without doubt, would be impossible for an English-speaking patient with a profile similar to RG's to understand.

R.G. — Forest… A little girl who lived near a forest… Forest.. That's not a big piece of ground, is it? Oh! Isn't it through there, where there are the trees?

O. — Her grandmother lived on the other side of the forest…

R.G. — Yes…

O. — Her grandmother was ill.

R.G. — Ill, yes, I know.

O. — Her mother said to Little Red Riding Hood…

R.G. — Little riding hood? I don't understand…

O. — To the girl…

R.G. — Yes.

O. — Go now and take some butter, jam and galettes [=a buckwheat pancake] to your mother.

R.G. — Butter, what's that, butter?

O. — What you put on bread.

R.G. — Oh yes, but I don't put any on!

O. — Jam.

R.G. — What's that, jam?

O. — What you put on your bread, for breakfast…

R.G. — I don't eat bread. I have … (*He makes a square with his hand to show that he eats rusks.*)

O. — Rusks?

R.G. — They're called rusks are they? OK…

O. — Galettes.

R.G. — Galette, what's a "galette"?

(*The research personnel explain to him by comparing them to pancakes and then to cakes*)

R.G. — When you talk about cakes, I know what that means. Cakes, there are a lot of them…

O. — Do your grandchildren eat a lot of cakes?

R.G. — I don't know, they don't live with us!

O. — What happened on the way?

R.G. — I don't know.

O. — What happens?

R.G. — No, nothing happens… I don't know.

O. — She meets a wolf.

R.G. — A wolf, that's an animal, but what is it exactly?

O. — Mum had said to the girl: "Take care, there are wolves in the forest"

R.G. — Wolves? Here? There are wolves here? (*He looks out of the window.*)

(*The research personnel explain that the wolf occurs in the story of Little Red Riding Hood and then tell him of the conversation between the wolf and the girl. RG listens to them with a skeptical air and then interrupts:*)

R.G. — But wolves don't talk! Do they?

(*The research personnel explain that in this story, wolves can talk. They continue the story in which the wolf arrives at grandmother's house, knocks on the door and talks to grandmother.*)

R.G, *Interrupts again.* — That's not true! It's not possible! Animals don't talk! None of them do!

This difficulty in projecting himself into a fiction can again be seen in his responses to another type of test in which he had to tell a story based on pictures provided by the research personnel (Duval-Gombert, 1992, p. 254 *et sq.*). Here is one example. RG saw four pictures depicting, in sequence, the following scenes:

1. A little girl scatters breadcrumbs on the lawn. Two birds arrive.

2. The birds peck at the breadcrumbs.

3. The birds carry on eating. The little girl watches them eat from a window in the house. A cat arrives.

4. The little girl bangs on the window. The birds are frightened by the noise and fly off before the cat is able to get too close to them.

RG placed the pictures in the right order (or apparently did). Then he told the story:

1. "Some birds… "

2. "Have come down to eat."

3. "Then there's a cat."

4. "That's why they go away."

And he added: "I've got a cat, as well. Yes, because mine, when he's on my land, the birds fly away." He was therefore relating what he saw on the pictures to his own experience (here we see his autocentration). However, the story that he told did not make any mention of the little girl. The research personnel attempted to get him to take account of her but without much success:

O. — Why is there a girl in the drawings?

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RG. — Because she's there to give them something to eat, isn't that it?

O. — Yes, and then?

RG. — What do you mean "and then"?

O. — And then? (*The research personnel show him the little girl behind the window of the house.*)

RG. — She's in the house.

O. — And?

RG. — She's knocking.

O. — Why?

RG. — For the cat and for the animals.

O. — And what next?

RG. — After that, it's finished.

The research personnel then showed him the little girl's happy expression and asked him why she was like that. RG's response:

RG. — I don't know, because the cats have gone away, is that it? No, not the cats, the birds. The birds, I know they are birds, but I don't know what sort.

The instructions required RG to take account simultaneously of the little girl, the birds and the cat in order to tell a story based on the pictures. However, he paid almost no attention to the girl, while his narrative seemed to be borrowed from his personal experience (i.e. his experience of his own cat who made the birds fly away). When he did take account of the girl, it was peripherally, because the research personnel had asked him to.

Once again, we see that it was only in the "taken for granted" derived from his professional and family experience that words had an existence. "It is the 'goes-without-saying' of common sense: there is no need to say more because we all know what we are talking about. Now, RG needs circumstances of this type in order to give words existence as names, as something typical of a precise knowledge in context. Without this conventional knowledge, words mean nothing to him" (Duval-Gombert, 1992, p. 268). These latter tests clearly demonstrate RG's autocentration and, at the same time, his inability to abstract himself from the present situation ("there are wolves here?").

Can we go further and see in this type of patient disorders in the analysis of identity that are different from the disorders relating to the analysis of units? This is what Hubert Guyard attempted to do in the study that we present below.

3.1.2 Disorder of identity and disorder of unity: Mister B. and Mister G.

In this study, Hubert Guyard compared the performances of two patients, Mister B. and Mister G (Guyard et al., 1992). The first of these was observed at Rennes University Hospital, and the other in Angers. It should be noted that Mister B. had previously been hospitalized as an in-patient for treatment for paranoia. However, there was not necessarily any link between the disorder resulting in his admission to psychiatric hospital and his neurological problems. These two patients were asked to perform two types of test, namely vocabulary tests and story-writing tests. It was also possible to observe Mister B.'s responses to arithmetic tests.

Mister B. was asked to write down the story of Little Red Riding Hood. Here is his response:

> Once upon a time there was a woodcutter who came to the aid of Little Red Riding Hood who once again was not eaten.
> Researcher: Write the whole story please.
> While she was going to her grandmother's house, she met a wolf who she told about her but a woodcutter came to her aid so well that he was surprised by him and had to run away without eating her.

There are many ways of looking at this type of performance. One initial way is to gage the differences compared to a "normal" narrative. We can note, for example, the brevity of the narrative, which is reduced to a single sentence, as well as the extensive and incoherent use of substitutions[11]. A second, and less superficial, approach consists in hypothesizing about the reasoning that explains the patient's performances. In this specific case, we can ask whether the patient was capable of anticipating the reader's lack of comprehension. The patient seemed to know what characters the substitutions referred to. However, he did not take account of the fact that the reader would not necessarily know this. When an author writes to be read by readers, he must anticipate the possibility that they might not understand him. The reader is already present at the time of writing in all the precautions that the author must take in order to construct a certain conspiracy

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[11]The term "substitution" here refers to cases where an element already present in a text is replaced by another element (for the sake of economy or to avoid having to repeat the same word). In English, substitution makes considerable use of pronouns (he, she, his, her etc.). A distinction is made between substitution and anaphora, which relates to an element already present in the context but without there necessarily being any substitution or economy of expression.

between writer and reader. In other words, the author must take account of the reader's otherness. In the case we are examining here, by contrast, everything suggests that the patient made the assumption of a shared knowledge without feeling that it was necessary to construct this common ground.

When he took the test for the second time, the patient was told that he had to tell the story in three episodes:

> *The story of Little Red Riding Hood*
> First episode: Little Red Riding Hood meets the false grandmother.
> Second episode: She gives her the pot of butter but is surprised at its long ears.
> Third episode: When he sees the woodcutter run up, he starts to run, thus showing his long ears.

The patient did not introduce the characters. He did not feel the need to say who "the false grandmother" is. We find the same use of substitutions. To whom or what does "it" refer in the second episode? The pot of butter? Who is "he" who has the long ears? The woodcutter? Once again, the patient did not seem to feel any need to construct a conspiracy which he mobilized from the outset, as if it were self-evident. The narrative takes no account of the reader, as if comprehension was a given. The patient did not seem to be able to imagine that his narrative could give rise to misunderstandings.

The third time he wrote the story, the patient was given a list of items. He had to use these items to tell the story in three episodes:

> *The story of Little Red Riding Hood*
> *List of items: clearing, house, big ears, galette, wolf, flowers, path, Red Riding Hood, mother, big teeth, woodcutter, basket.*
> First episode: A clearing, Little Red Riding Hood opens the door latch. In her hand are flowers, in a basket intended for her.
> Second episode: In the background, we see big ears, those of a wolf, and also a big nose.
> Third episode: In the forest a wolf is unhappy because the wild animals escape him and the door closes on a little red riding hood and her big mummy is happy with the little pot of butter.

Here, the patient used only a subset of the proposed items (he did not use house, galette, path, mother, big teeth, woodcutter). Once again, he did not seem to be concerned about constructing a conspiracy with the reader. He did not state who "her" refers to in episode one. Neither are there any indications

about the wild animals or the door that closes. By contrast, there does seem to be a certain sequence of events (associated with the instructions which required the patient to subdivide the story into three episodes?) but still no real narrative thread. Like an essay, a narrative usually has a start, some intermediate stages, and an end. These different narrative phases influence one another. In the case of Mister B., it seems as if these stages on the journey proceed in succession without having any effect on one another. Hubert Guyard spoke of this as "composition without theme". "There is composition because the patient again sequences facts and actions" (Guyard et al., 1992, p. 189). But there is no theme because the facts and actions in one episode are not influenced by the choices made in the episodes that precede or follow it. Another example of a response provided by the same patient in the same test confirms this (in this test, there were no items and no obligation to subdivide the story into three episodes):

> *The story of Little Red Riding Hood*
> Wishing to visit her grandmother, Little Red Riding Hood meets and even converses with a wolf who is much too daring since he rushes through the woods then having eaten the grandmother is saved by a woodcutter and runs away. After which he intervenes.

Who is saved by a woodcutter? Who is "he" who intervenes at the end? The patient once again did not really take account of the reader and the possibility that he might not understand. There is a certain sequencing of events (as evidenced by the conjunctions, adverbs and prepositional locutions: "and", "since", "then", "after"). However, the choice of an event here seems to be no more influenced by those surrounding it than in the previous response: the last episode announces the woodcutter's intervention even though this intervention has already taken place in the preceding episode.

It seems that the patient was able to take account neither of his reader nor of the internal consistency of his narrative. As we have seen, everything suggests that he based his writing on a knowledge that he assumed was shared and without being able to question the actual existence of this shared underlying knowledge. Indeed, the patient's knowledge of the story is not in question, as the results of the following test show (the patient was asked to answer yes or no to indicate whether various items were present in the story of Little Red Riding Hood). What is in question is the ability to postulate the otherness of the reader which would normally require the writer to anticipate misunderstandings in order to avoid them the better.

The story of Little Red Riding Hood

basket: yes	big teeth: yes
forest: yes	fox: no
ogre: no	wolf: yes
sailor: no	bear: no
red riding hood: yes	pot of butter: yes
flowers: yes	clearing: yes
grandmother: yes	pull the latch: yes
grandfather: no	football chant: no
big ears: yes	telephone: no
big nose: yes	

It is possible to go a little further in our analysis of this patient's responses by returning to the distinction between identities and units that we presented when speaking about status and position, function and role. Our hypothesis is therefore that if a patient produces a composition without a theme, it is because he still masters the unity of each event, but no longer masters the identity of the events. In effect, to construct a narrative is to define a certain *number* of episodes (or *sections* in an essay). However, this totaled number of episodes or sections in the narrative is not enough to allow it to progress. It must also be possible to contrast what has already been said with what remains to be said. When one starts a narrative, nothing has as yet been said. It is therefore necessary to present the characters, the surroundings, the arguments. Of course, it does not all have to be presented straight away. However, it is always necessary, during the narrative, to contrast what has been said with what has not yet been said, what has already happened with what has still to happen. It is necessary to differentiate between and identify the events with reference to one another. Once an event has taken place, its identity is maintained during the subsequent episodes and influences them. This is precisely what Mister B. did not seem to be able to do. Everything suggests that the events could take place in any episode since they could not be contrasted with one another. Similarly, what the patient knew could not be contrasted with what his reader knew. The patient no more contrasted one event with another in the narratives that he constructed than he contrasted one knowledge set with another in his relationship with the reader. The events and knowledge are imposed directly. No contradiction, misunderstanding or disagreement is possible. From the very start, the patient acts as if agreement and conspiracy were assured.

However, if this hypothesis is correct then it should also be possible to observe patients with the opposite profile, that is to say patients who still have control over the identity of events but who are no longer able to sub-

divide them into units. This would seem to be the case of another patient, Mister G.

The first observation is that Mister G. never spontaneously produced any narrative. It was not enough to give him instructions such as "tell us the story of Little Red Riding Hood". It was essential, if the aim was for him to produce something resembling a narrative, to provide him with the elements that he had to use. The researchers therefore presented him with the same lists of items as those given to Mister B. in one of the versions of the test. They then asked him to tell the story in four episodes.

> *The story of Little Red Riding Hood*
> *List of items: clearing, house, big ears, galette, wolf, flowers, path, red riding hood, mother, big teeth, woodcutter, basket.*
> First episode: Red riding hood it's clearing at the house with the big ears, the galettes the wolves and the flowers, the paths are full.
> Second episode: The red riding hoods it's clearing at the house with the big ears with its galette, with its wolves, with its flowers with its red riding hood path.
> Third episode: The mother and the big teeth the woodcutters and the basket make the whole story of red riding hood.
> Fourth episode: The big teeth the woodcutters and the basket make the conclusion of red riding hood.

We have seen that in the same situation, Mister B. omitted certain items. For his part, Mister G. did not pause to ask himself the slightest question. He took the items one-by-one in the order they were presented to him and did no more than place them next to one another. Whereas Mister B.'s response still bore some resemblance to a narrative in that it was possible to distinguish some sort of subdivision into episodes, that of Mister G. has practically nothing in common with a narrative. Instead, more than anything, it seems to be a mere stack of items drawn on until there are no more left in stock. The end of the narrative, which the patient nevertheless did seem to indicate, corresponds to the end of the list. The end of the pile, as Hubert Guyard puts it, puts an end to the story (Guyard et al., 1992, p. 191). This is what lends support to his hypothesis of an absence of composition. Whereas the first patient studied produced a composition without a theme, the second did not compose anything at all [12].

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[12]The authors did not consider they had sufficient material to speak of composition without a theme and therefore referred only to the absence of composition.

Other responses obtained from Mister G. tended in the same direction. The research personnel started by asking him to add a title to each of the episodes in his previous response. Here is the result:

The story of Little Red Riding Hood
List of items: clearing, house, big ears, galette, wolf, flowers, path, red riding hood, mother, big teeth, woodcutter, basket.
First episode: Red riding hood it's clearing at the house with the big ears, the galettes the wolves and the flowers, the paths are full. Title: Red riding hood it's clearing at the house with the big ears.
Second episode: The red riding hoods it's clearing at the house with the big ears with its galette, with its wolves, with its flowers with its red riding hood path. Title: The red riding hoods.
Third episode: The mother and the big teeth the woodcutters and the basket make the whole story of red riding hood. Title: The mother and the big teeth.
Fourth episode: The big teeth the woodcutters and the basket make the conclusion of red riding hood. Title: Red riding hood.

When asked to provide a title for each episode, the patient did the same thing three times out of four. For the first three episodes, he repeated word-for-word the start of what he had just written in the same way as he had repeated the items from the list to construct his "narrative". The response was slightly different for the fourth episode for which he reused the last three words. However, he again repeated them unchanged. He seemed in some way to cling to the supplied material. To test this latter hypothesis, he was asked to perform another exercise which consisted in constructing sentences or stories using predefined sequences of two to four words.

Supplied material
tape measure + measure   French + speak + hyacinth
crow + fox   stagnant + braces + airplane + watering can
skin + sell + bear   handkerchief + snail + close
lemon + hour

The patient's responses:

- the tape measure is used to measure

- the crow and the fox are playing

- I kill the bear before selling its skin

- the hour is not at the lemon

- the hyacinth thinks it can speak French

- the stagnant braces water the airplane

- the snail closes the door of his drawing which is a handkerchief

What does this tell us? The patient was able to construct grammatically correct sentences using the supplied words. There were no syntactical difficulties (however, the researchers already knew that the patient was not aphasic). In cases where the associations between the proposed items did not depart greatly from common usage, the responses held no surprises. By contrast, when the suggested associations were less common, the patient produced strange sentences. One might – with good reason – object that that is the fault of the test. After all, it was the researchers who gave the patient these unusual word associations. But that is precisely the point. A normal speaker with a sufficient mastery of language would, when faced with the same test, comment that some of the word sequences were unusual and made it almost impossible to construct sentences similar to those that one is used to hearing. The same normal speaker might think for a little longer and attempt to imagine special situations that match the somewhat unusual sentences. Mister G., however, did neither of these things. He did not object, nor did he attempt to think of unusual situations that could be described by sentences which were themselves unusual. Instead, he took the items given to him as he had done for the story of Little Red Riding Hood and responded in each case as if there were nothing odd and no conflict with normal usage. The least one can say is that he did not make a fuss! The objections or the sophistication of the responses of a normal speaker would testify to his or her perception of the oddity or conflict with normal usage. Nothing of the sort was observed in our patient, as the answers he gave when asked to comment on the probability of what he had just written testify:

1. the hour is not at the lemon

2. the hyacinth thinks it can speak French

Observer: Are these sentences absolutely true? Partially true? Absolutely false? Partially false? Absurd? Would you say that it exists?

1. It exists given that we call an hour a lemon. It is 3 lemons!

2. Partially false. It speaks French, that's a fact! But perfectly? That's something else!

We have only given two examples. However, they are typical of Mister G.'s functioning. *Ad hoc* justifications were provided in all cases. New usages were created without this seeming at all strange to the patient. Mister G. did not seem to be able to call the instructions into question and always found a way to justify his answer.

Other types of test were used to try to identify the specific disorder affecting these two patients. The first of these consisted of vocabulary tests. First of all, we present the answers given by Mister B[13].

le cousin (the [male] cousin)	la cousine (the [female] cousin)
le jumeau (the [male] twin)	*la jumelle (the [female] twin)*
le garçon (the boy)	*la fille (the girl)*
l'époux (the [male] spouse)	*l'épouse (the [female] spouse)*
l'oncle (the uncle)	*la tante (the aunt)*
le père (the father)	*la mère (the mother)*
le frère (the brother)	**le frère (the brother)*
le papa (the dad)	**le père (the father)*
le parrain (the stepfather)	*la marraine (the stepmother)*
le gendre (the son-in-law)	**le beau frère (the brother-in-law)*
le fiancé (the [male] fiancé)	*la fiancée (the [female] fiancée)*
le neveu (the nephew)	*la nièce (the niece)*
le fils (the son)	*la fille (the daughter)*
le mari (the husband)	*la femme (the wife)*

A superficial reading of the results seems to suggest that the patient responded "well" in all but three cases (which are indicated by a *). However, such a reading does not go far enough. We have to go further and try to understand the reasons for the patient's answers. The spoken comments that accompanied his written performances are very useful here. This is what he said about the answer "frère" (brother): "There's something, because the brother, that can also be a brother, logically. There's nothing to stop the brother from having a brother, it's logical. Just like he can have a sister, a little sister, can't he?" Commenting on the item "papa" (dad), the patient added "you can also say the father". In connection with "le gendre" (the son-in-law), he stated: "personally, I say the *beauf* [contraction of beau-frère = brother-in-law]". What can we conclude from this? Everything here suggests that for this patient, one instruction was no more exclusive than any other. There is nothing to stop a brother from having a brother, unless it is the instruction. This instruction was not "forgotten": the patient also said that there was nothing to stop the patient from having a sister. But the

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[13]The patient's answers are in *italics*.

instruction did not seem to represent a constraint for the patient. The usage instilled by the instruction did not seem to contrast with the other possible usages. To test this hypothesis, the patient was asked to perform another task with what *a priori* appeared to be a more constraining instruction [14]:

une savonnette (a small bar of soap)	un savon (a bar of soap)
une chemisette (a blouse)	*une chemisette (a blouse)*
une cuvette (a bowl)	*une cuvette (a bowl)*
une casquette (a cap)	*une casquette (a cap)*
une lunette (spectacles)	*une lorgnette (a telescope)*
une cigarette (a cigarette)	*une cigarette (a cigarette)*
une brouette (a wheelbarrow)	*une brouettée (a wheelbarrow load)*
une camionnette (a van)	*une camionnette (a van)*
une mallette (a trunk [case])	*une mallette (a trunk [case])*
une bicyclette (a bicycle)	*ou un vélo (or a bike)*

To succeed in this test, it is necessary to mobilize a number of different skills. A mastery of derivation (which makes it possible to produce "savon" by removing the suffix "-ette") is not sufficient. It is also necessary to master the potential change of gender (when going from "*une* [feminine] savonnette" to "*un* [masculine] savon"). The test also includes exceptions that are associated with usage and the history of words. In modern French, a "lunette" (spectacles) is not a little "lune" (moon) and a "brouette" (wheelbarrow), at least from the 13th century onwards, is no longer understood as a little "*broue" (non attested form, probably from vulgar latin *birota*: "two-wheeled vehicle"). However, in order to identify these exceptions, it is necessary to identify *one* usage (that corresponding to the instruction) in the test and stick to it all the way through. Instead, right from the beginning, the patient adopted *a different usage* from that set out in the instruction: he copied the word from the left column into the right column. When he reached "lunette", he changed usage and produced a synonym before reverting to his initial usage again. In the case of "brouette" (wheelbarrow), he introduced yet another usage (container/content), commenting in speech that "brouettée" (wheelbarrow load) "is spelled e-acute, e". He then started copying again before finally producing the synonym "vélo" (bike). This patient's linguistic abilities are not in question (he mastered both derivation and synonymy). However, in this case once again, the instruction did not represent a constraint for him. At no stage was the patient unable to answer. There were no exceptions to the rule (given by the instruction) since there was no rule: any usage, any instruction would do. Mister B. became unpredictable. Even

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[14]The patient's answers are *in italics*.

when the level of constraint in the instruction was increased, it still failed to
assert itself. The following example provides a good illustration of this. To
lend more strength to the example, the researchers provided three example
responses instead of just one:

une savonnette (a small bar of soap)	un savon (a bar of soap)
une chemisette (a blouse)	une chemise (a shirt)
une cuvette (a bowl)	une cuve (a tank)
une casquette (a cap)	*ou béret (or beret)*
une lunette (spectacles)	*une paire de lunette (a pair of spectacles)*
une cigarette (a cigarette)	*avec ou sans filtres ? (with or without filter?)*
une brouette (a wheelbarrow)	*toujours seule (still alone)*
une camionnette (a van)	*conduit les matériaux (transports materials)*
une mallette (a trunk)	*ou une valise (or a suitcase)*
une bicyclette (a bicycle)	*le vélo aussi (the bike as well)*

Strengthening the instruction did not increase the constraint on the pa-
tient. On the contrary. The usage indicated in the instruction still failed
to assert itself. The patient's answers were still related to a possible usage
(give a synonym, give a definition, construct a noun phrase, ask a question).
But none of these usages was what was required. The usage required by the
instruction did not take precedence and was not used exclusively throughout
the test. We could say that the instruction did not have the status of a
convention for the patient. There was no convention because there was no
one usage that could be asserted as the correct one in the face of the others.
It seems that any usage was acceptable.

The specific characteristics of Mister B.'s responses can be seen more
clearly if we compare them with those produced by Mister G. in the same
sort of test. Here is a first example of the answers given by Mister G.:

un abricot (an apricot)	un abricotier (an apricot tree)
une poire (a pear)	*un poirier (a pear tree)*
une prune (a plum)	*un prunier (a plum tree)*
une banane (a banana)	*un bananier (a banan tree)*
un haricot (a bean)	*un haricotier (a bean tree)*
une cerise (a cherry)	*un cerisier (a cherry tree)*
une noisette (a hazel nut)	*un noisetier (a hazel tree)*

Mister G. seems to have followed the instruction. However, he followed it so well that he was not aware of the exception (haricot/*haricotier). In this case, the usage that is internal to the text seems to assert itself and permit no possible divergence. It might be objected that Mister G. did not know the vocabulary or the plants in question. However, he was a plant specialist by profession. What is more, he answered the questions the researchers asked of him perfectly:

O. — What do you have to do?

G. — I have to put the name of the tree next to each fruit.

O. — Are they all fruits?

G. — No! There's a vegetable: the bean.

O. — Do beans grow on trees?

G. — No!

Given the first set of responses, we can hypothesize that Mister G. was unable to free himself of the instruction present in the test. He was therefore entirely predictable since he was entirely constrained by the test. This seems to be confirmed by the following responses:

un cruel (a cruel man)	une cruelle (a cruel woman)
un industriel (a male industrialist)	*une industrielle (a female industrialist)*
un tunnel (a tunnel)	*une tunnelle (non-existent)*
un colonel (a male colonel)	*une colonelle (a female colonel)*
un autel (an altar)	*une autelle (non-existent)*
un tel (someone - male)	*une telle, quelqu'un (someone - female)*
un sel (a salt)	*une selle (a saddle)*
un dégel (a thaw)	*une dégelle (non-existent)*

In the test reported above, the researchers introduced a greater number of exceptions in order to force the patient to recognize them. He, however, was still unable to go beyond the instruction which determined his responses without the least resistance. There are no exceptions. The instruction is the only possible usage. "There are no exceptions to the rule because there can only be a single rule at a time" (Guyard et al., 1992, p. 184).

It is interesting here to compare Mister B.'s responses with those of Mister G.

	Mister B.	Mister G.
un cruel (a cruel man)	une cruelle (a cruel woman)	une cruelle (a cruel woman)
un industriel (a male industrialist)	*une industrielle (a female industrialist)*	*une industrielle (a female industrialist)*

un tunnel (a tunnel)	*Le Tunnel du Mont Blanc (The Mont Blanc tunnel)*	*une tunnelle (non-existent)*
un colonel (a male colonel)	*Un colonel et son régiment (A colonel and his regiment)*	*une colonelle (a female colonel)*
un autel (an altar)	*dans une église (in a church)*	*une autelle (non-existent)*
un tel (someone - male)	*Ce garçon-là (That boy there)*	*une telle, quelqu'un (someone -female, someone - male)*
un sel (a salt)	*Une épice pour la ménagère (A condiment)*	*une selle (a saddle)*
un dégel (a thaw)	*Au bout de l'hiver (At the end of the winter)*	*une dégelle (non-existent)*

Mister B.'s answers were unpredictable. He constantly went "off subject", ignoring the usage required by the test. However, he did not understand this. For him, all possible usages would do, without there being any reason to use one rather than another. Mister G.'s answers, by contrast, were entirely predictable. The instruction overwhelmed him and he could not free himself from the usage it demanded of him.

Mister B. was asked to complete one final type of task. This task type consisted of arithmetic tests. Here is an example of a problem together with his answers:

A son is 5 years old. In 15 years, his father will be three times older than him. How old is the father now?

M. B. (*replying as if he were sure of himself*): A son is 5 years old. In 15 years, his father will be three times older than the son. So the son hasn't been born.

Researcher: Why?

Mr. B.: 15 years minus 5 years, that can't be right.

Researcher: Why?

The reasoning itself is wrong. Look, he would have minus 10 years before being born. That's why it can't be right, because the son wouldn't even have be as old as the son is now.

Researcher: I'm not convinced.

Let's assume that the father is 20 years old. Then, the son is 5 years old and he is three times older… Because the father is 20 years old, there's nothing to stop him being born then.

A little like when telling the story of Little Red Riding Hood, Mister B. seemed to introduce a certain sequence of steps into his reasoning. He indicated this, in particular, through the use of certain words ("therefore", "then", "because"). However, there is more to mathematical reasoning than simply joining together a series of steps. It also makes it necessary to choose one's arguments and maintain these from one step to the next in order to construct a coherent argumentation. In this way, the different steps are coordinated with one another. This is what Mister B. did not seem able to do. In this example, the arguments are arranged in the various steps without any coherence between them. The arguments are not contrasted with one another and any argument will do. Based on this first arithmetic test as well as what we know concerning his responses to the narrative and vocabulary tests, it was to be expected that Mister B.'s answers to arithmetic tests would be unpredictable. Since responses cannot be contrasted with one another, no choice is possible and there can therefore be no consistency in the choices. The more often the patient took the test, the more different answers he produced, as can be seen from his response during the second attempt at the test:

> Second attempt: Three times older. Three times five. So he would be 15… that would be the father's age. So the son is actually 18 years old.

By contrast, when the researcher broke the problem down and eliminated the need to choose by removing the conflicts between the arguments, Mister B. was able to perform the calculation correctly:

> — A son is 5 years old. How old will he be in 15 years?
> — 20.
> — His father will be three times older so he will be?
> — 60.
> — He will be 60 years old, but now he is?
> — 20.
> — In 15 years, he will be 60 years old, but now he is?
> — 45.

Conversely, when extraneous data was introduced into the statement of the problem, Mister B. was not able to distinguish it from the other information:

> The cook has to make an omelet for 12 people. In effect, 15 guests had been invited but 3 couldn't make it. If you need 3 eggs per person, how many eggs is the cook going to have to break?

Mister B.'s response: 12 times 3, that makes 36 eggs. But 3 can't make it. So that makes 3 and 3 = 6 and 3 = 9. 9 less, that makes 27. He breaks 27 eggs.

This type of performance is typical of a subgroup of patients with frontal lesions such as Mister B., who, in odd-one-out tasks (arithmetical problems or scripts), include these in their answers and are capable of justifying this in a plausible way (Le Gall et al., 1993, p. 95-97). This subgroup exhibits no or only minor planning difficulties.

The earlier responses to the vocabulary tests should be seen in the light of the performances in the narrative construction tasks. What both patients have in common is the fact that they did not correct themselves. For them, there was at no time any conflict of usage which inspired them to make any correction. However, at the same time, their performances were very different.

We have seen that the authors spoke of a "composition without a theme" when referring to the narratives produced by Mister B who seemed to be able to break narratives down into episodes without, however, being able to contrast between the identities of events. Since events cannot be contrasted with one another at the level of their identities, they no longer determine the progress of the narrative. To construct a narrative or develop an argument, it is necessary to maintain a theme over a number of different episodes or stages, as a result of which the addressed themes influence one another. This is what Mister B. no longer seemed to be able to do when "telling" the story of Little Red Riding Hood. Indeed, he did not tell very much and what he did tell was barely coherent. This dominant qualitative aspect of his disorder can again be seen in his responses to the vocabulary task. Here, there were no exceptions to the rule and any usage was as good as any other because these usages were no longer contrasted with one another. To respect an instruction, to stay "on subject", it is necessary to adhere to the "theme" imposed by the instruction throughout the exercise. Within the framework of any given exercise, we adopt a thematic convention and stick to it. Although we know very well that other themes are possible, we exclude them from the framework within which we are working. Mister B., however, was no longer capable of adhering to a theme. Instead, he repeatedly went off-subject and switched from one instruction or one theme to another. Nothing was subject to convention. There was no longer any choice of theme because there was no longer any ability to contrast usages at either a differential or qualitative level. Mister B. had lost the ability to differentiate between usages. It is this that rendered him unable to escape the clichés invested with all the supposed conventional wisdom. The fact that the interlocutor was different completely

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eluded him: this can be seen both in the fact that he took absolutely no account of the reader when telling the story of Little Red Riding Hood as well as in the observation that the instruction to which he responded in the vocabulary tests was not that of his interlocutor but rather any possible instruction. Whereas a normal interlocutor is capable of selecting one usage rather than another as a function of the specific constraints of the situation, Mister B. drifted from one usage to the next. These different usages were no longer mutually contradictory. When tasks are too disparate, a normal interlocutor is able to defend himself. He can identify irreconcilable points of view and take sides (Guyard et al., 1992, p. 194). For Mister B., by contrast, nothing was ever irreconcilable and there was no need to take sides.

In the case of Mister G., by contrast, the authors hypothesized that there was an absence of composition, that is to say there was no subdivision into units. How does this hypothesis account for the observed performances? In both the narrative and vocabulary tasks, Mister G. adhered to the test material. He adopted no critical distance in following the instruction. Mister G. could not think outside of the task. There was therefore only ever one usage at a time, namely that suggested by the test and therefore also by the interlocutor. To be able to step back and consider an imposed usage presupposes the ability to separate this usage from others. That is why in a discussion or conversation, we often hear one of the parties comment to the other that the question hides a number of questions. They can say this because they are able to step back and break down the question in a way different from that of the person who asked it. And it is just this that Mister G. never did: for him, the task never contained multiple questions. He never distinguished between the items that corresponded to normal usage and those that appeared exceptional and might have required a specific response. For Mister G., what was specific was what was imposed by the interlocutor or the situation. This is what made Mister G. so predictable. He himself did not isolate anything, did not set any boundaries, did not distance himself. Where a normal interlocutor is able to list a number of different usages on the basis of a range of positions or points of view concerning a situation, Mister G. could not step back at all. He was held captive by the situation because he could no longer delimit his own point of view. This is why he remained passive during tasks that were either too complex or too disparate. A normal interlocutor is capable of separating out what seems to him to be intolerably confused (Guyard et al., 1992, p. 194). Indeed, it is without doubt this ability to separate that reveals confusion. This is what, *a contrario*, seems to be proved by the case of Mister G. for whom nothing was ever too complex or too confused.

What do these patients tell us about the social bond? The first thing we

can observe is that neither of them – like RG – ever asked the researcher for his agreement. "The usage to which they adhere no longer requires, from their point of view, the assent of the protagonists; it is assured from the outset" (*ibid.*). More accurately, perhaps, they never ask the question of assent or agreement. They do not have an interlocutor.

To establish a social bond in a situation of communicative exchange, for example, it is necessary to define the interlocutors and usages by contrasting between them and to delimit the interlocutors and usages by separating between them. This is a necessary precondition in order to posit a same and an other, whether this is the self of the person who is speaking, the you of the person one is speaking to or the he/she of the person who is being spoken about. Patients with frontal lesions such as Mister B. and Mister G. no longer seem to be able to make these contrasts (case of Mister B.) or these separations (case of Mister G.). Instead, they are irresistibly influenced by the situation. It influenced Mister B. because he could not stand back from the possible social usages. He could not choose between them. He could not resist the conventional wisdom that imposed itself upon him. They influenced Mister G. because he could not define a position "beyond" the instruction, the situation. For him there was no knowledge or usage external to the instruction, the situation. Both of them were therefore placed in a sort of situation of constrained convergence. They each "stuck" in their own way to the situation, to the conspiracy, to what was supposed to be shared from which they were incapable of abstracting themselves. It is here that the concept of alienation might be at its most appropriate. These two patients, each in their own way, were unable to create a basis for their own usages. They were alienated by the usage received from the environment, whether this took the form of the immediate data relating to the situation or the stock of conventional wisdom that they had memorized. These patients were not the authors of their own usages but the echoes of the usages they had received from the environment. In some cases, they seemed to give the "right" answers. But they were no more the authors of these "right" answers than they were of the "wrong" answers they gave. Mister B.'s responses in the arithmetic tests are interesting from this point of view. When the researcher broke down all the stages of the problem for him one-by-one, Mister B. managed to arrive at the correct result. However, his "right" answers in this case were not differentiated from his "wrong" answers in the other cases. In every case, he was entirely dependent on the usage given to him. He did not construct this usage himself. He was not its author. "Patients with frontal lesions", concluded Hubert Guyard, "can only be understood in terms of an inability to create by themselves, through analysis, their own usage, that is to say a usage that can be contrasted with or made independent of

the other possible usages" (*ibid.*, p. 196).

In the same way as patients like RG, these two patients provide compelling evidence in support of the hypothesis of the brain conditioning of the person. The brain lesions from which they suffered seem to have eliminated their ability to appear as actors in a social relation, to be the authors of a usage, on the basis of a point of view or a position of their own. A comparison of the performances of Mister B and Mister D (reported below) allows us to go even further and provides support for the hypothesis that relations can be analyzed in two different ways: one based on differentiation and the other on segmentation.

3.2 Disorders of the subject

3.2.1 Forced arbitrariness: Mister D.

The brain-damage patients whom we described above had become unable to abstract themselves from the present situation. Other patients, by contrast, are still capable of an abstraction from which they are totally unable to escape. Hubert Guyard, to whom we owe the analyses of the cases of Mister B. and Mister G., also provides us with another analysis – this time conducted in collaboration with Robert le Borgne – of another patient, Mister D., in whom the ability to differentiate and separate seemed to be intact but, as it were, appeared to operate in a vacuum. Mister D. was observed in Rennes psychiatric hospital. The alcoholic etiology of his disorder was similar to that found in Korsakoff's syndrome [15]. However, unlike patients suffering from Korsakoff's syndrome, Mister D. exhibited no memory disorders. First of all, the patient completed the WAIS (Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale). This test contains a task in which the patient has to arrange a set of one- or two-colored blocks in such a way as that, when viewed from above, the blocks accurately reproduce a given pattern. Although Mister D.'s performances were never entirely wrong, they were inconsistent. He sometimes worked in two dimensions, sometimes in three and was always able to give a reason for his constructions. The test also includes a picture arrangement task in which the subject has to reorganize a set of cards into the correct sequence as quickly as possible in a way that tells a story with a beginning, a middle and an end. The task starts with a set of three pictures, with more pictures being added as the task progresses in such way as to make the task increasingly

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[15]It should be recalled that this syndrome results from a lesion to the mammillary bodies and/or the dorsomedial nuclei in the thalamus, often due to chronic alcoholism accompanied by a vitamin B1 deficiency.

difficult. However, and surprisingly, Mister D. could fail to arrange series that *a priori* seemed easier and succeed on those which were *a priori* more difficult. Furthermore, his results were anything but consistent. He would be able to organize a sequence without difficultly at a given time and then fail on the same sequence half an hour later (or vice versa). Rather than scoring the patient's performances on each occasion (in terms of a percentage success or failure rating), an approach which would furthermore have been largely irrelevant given the patient's inconsistency, the researchers attempted to identify the underlying principle that could account for the patient's overall performance pattern. This inconsistency itself was a phenomenon that had to be explained.

It was nevertheless possible to identify a certain consistency in the picture arrangement tasks. This consistency can be seen in the following responses to five picture sequences (the patient had to arrange the cards and to comment on his choice orally):

- stairway sequence (three pictures representing the same person at the top, middle and bottom of a flight of stairs), Mister D.'s response:

    1. a young man is going down the stairs,

    2. three brothers are having a race,

- house sequence (three pictures representing a house in different stages of construction), Mister D.'s response:

    1. a worker is gradually building his house,

    2. three houses are built by three workers with three trades,

- "come in" sequence (a person approaches a door but despite all his efforts is unable to open it – he goes about it the wrong way – and leaves; a second person arrives and opens the door at the first attempt: he goes about it the right way), Mister D.'s response:

    1. two men try several times to open a door,

    2. some soldiers go into an office to learn how to introduce themselves correctly in accordance with military regulations,

- fisherman sequence, Mister D.'s response:

    1. a fisherman arrives, catches several fish and goes away,

    2. there are several fishermen together, it's a fishing competition,

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- sleeper sequence, Mister D.'s response:

    1. a boy goes to bed, sleeps, wakes up,
    2. several children are sleeping, it's a dormitory.

In each case, the responses labeled "1" construct a chronology (a single identity is maintained – the same person, the same house, etc. – throughout the sequence, but this identity is seen at different steps). The responses labeled "2" do not construct a chronology (there are as many identities as there are pictures and these identities are seen in parallel).

The "correct" responses to the test are the type 1 responses and Mister D. was capable of producing these. However, when taking the tests, he would also produce random type 2 responses. These latter responses correspond to situations that are, after all, plausible and are not in themselves all that surprising. What is surprising, however, is the fact that Mister D. did not see any contradiction between these two types of response which, for him, did not seem to be in any way conflictual. What is more, when he was asked to tell the story that he had just constructed with the pictures, he would sometimes give both versions in a single sentence: "you can clearly see that it's a boy who's going down the stairs, yes, yes, those are three brothers having a race".

In brief, the material used for the test was not unambiguous and could be interpreted in two different ways: 1) one and the same person appears several times, 2) several different people appear once each. These two interpretations both correspond to plausible narratives, one favoring a type of diachronic approach (chronology) and the other a sort of synchrony (parallel situations). Unlike the patients whose performances we described above, Mister D. did not have any difficulty mastering these two dimensions of a narrative: 1) a single event takes place over time, 2) multiple events take place in parallel. However, he never seemed to be able to conceive of these two interpretations as the two sides of a single alternative. He switched from one to the other without noticing. Two stories were possible and were told at the same time without there being any way for him to choose and abide by his choice. Hence the question that the researchers sought to answer: what is it that allows a normal author to make the choices that seem to be impossible for Mister D.? Might it be the situation? The patients we described above – Mister B., Mister G., and RG. – all seemed to adhere to the situation, although each in his own specific way. Mister D., by contrast, seemed to be able to tell one story or another in a way that was not totally arbitrary (both stories still being related to the pictures) but with few constraints imposed by the

situation. But what does "constraint imposed by the situation" mean? Does the case of Mister D. allow us to define this?

In his case, the material continued to induce narrative hypotheses and Mister D was quite a good story-teller. However, nothing seemed to enable him to choose one narrative hypothesis rather than another. The various plausible hypotheses were equally valid. It was sufficient for a hypothesis to be plausible for it to become true until another hypothesis presented itself and superseded it. These hypotheses were not constructed completely at random. They resulted from two different ways of formalizing the real world: as the maintenance of a single identity within a plurality of temporal sequences or as a variety of identities within a single temporal sequence. However, Mister D. fluctuated between the two without ever choosing. An observation made by the nurses seems to indicate that this problem was also found in Mister D.'s relationship with space. Indeed, they reported that Mister D. frequently went into other people's rooms. But what could be more similar than two hospital rooms? If one and the same character can be considered at different moments in time, then one and the same character can also be present – successively it is true – in several different places. In both cases, the character's identity is maintained in the various different places and at the various different times (in the WAIS picture task, as in the various drawings making up a cartoon strip, the temporal sequence is always represented by a juxtaposition in space). Conversely, if different characters can be thought of "in parallel" at one and the same point in time, then these different characters can also be thought of "in parallel" with each of them in a different place (which is the case of different patients each in their own room). Movies, novels and cartoon strips all often recount different episodes of a story that take place in parallel (in cartoon strips, a note such as "Meanwhile… " is often seen in a caption at the top of the picture). But was Mister D. capable of choosing between these episodes? Was he not always in his own room in the same way as he was always in the right story?

The patients in connection with whom we have hypothesized a disorder of the person were incapable of narrative coherence. Unable to set boundaries, qualitative in some cases, quantitative in others, they existed in someone else's story, stuck in a given situation. Since they were no longer the authors of their own stories, they were no longer able to tell a story. Mister D., by contrast, was capable of narrative coherence. He told stories. But what did these stories tell of? Unlike the patients described earlier, Mister D. did not stick to the situation. He was not trapped by the instruction. His narratives were coherent. However, this coherence remained abstract. He was, in some way, an unwitting student of ontology, examining, without being able to contrast them, without even seeing them, the different ways of existing in

time.

Other observations make it possible to specify in greater detail what Mister D.'s disorder consisted of.

The patient also performed the Healy Picture Completion Test[16]. This test consists of several pictures all of which contain a blank space. The subject's task is to complete each picture by choosing the piece that fits the scene best from a set of different pieces. As in the WAIS, Mister D.'s responses differed from one attempt to the next: sometimes he completed a picture by taking account of the entire scene it represented and sometimes by considering only a single indicator. Overall appreciations of the situation therefore alternated with considerations limited to certain parts of it.

The patient also complained of only being able to read the headlines of newspapers. The researchers therefore got him to read some newspapers and observed that he had a tendency to believe that there were a large number of different characters involved even when the corresponding article mentioned three at most. Mister D. multiplied the characters reported in the article: there could be as many different people as there were occurrences of the same person[17]. Substitutions also caught him out. Every time the same person was designated in a different way, it was as if a new character had been introduced. This difficulty experienced by Mister D. in connection with substitutions can also be considered in the light of his answers to multiple-choice questions (MCQ). Here is an example designed by the researchers:

To be: ☐ nice
       ☐ a clown
       ☐ the president,
you must first be elected by a majority of people, but to be:
       ☐ a cyclist
       ☐ a horse
       ☐ a clown
       ☐ a butcher
you must first have been to circus school and know how to put on make-up.

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[16]Test developed by the psychologist William Healy. An initial version dates back to 1911, the second to 1917. Cf. Rudolf Pintner and Margaret M. Anderson, *The Picture Completion Test*, Baltimore, Warwick & York, 1917. http://www.archive.org/details/picturecompletio00pintuoft

[17]This is a remark that is often made by readers of long novels such as Tolstoy's *War and Peace*: there are too many characters, you get confused, you end up forgetting who is who. But in *War and Peace,* there really are a lot of characters, there is good cause to become confused. Mister D., however, saw *several different* characters when only one and the same character was mentioned *several* times. For him, there could be as many characters as there were occurrences of one and the same character.

And here are the patient's answers (in *italics*):

To be: □ nice *yes*
         □ a clown *yes*
         □ the president, *no*
you must first be elected by a majority of people, but to be :
         □ a cyclist *yes*
         □ a horse *yes*
         □ a clown *yes*
         □ a butcher *yes*
you must first have been to circus school and know how to put on make-up.

The responses were the same for all the MCQ designed using this model: the need to choose disappeared; every line became a question. If these responses can be seen as related to his tendency to interpret each substitute in a text as the appearance of a new character, this is because the same interpretation can be advanced to account for both cases. What all this suggests is that Mister D. was ensnared by contiguity and its absence. Each occurrence of a character became a character because Mister D. was not able to situate these occurrences within the time (or space) perspective of the text. The absence of contiguity gave him the impression of multiplicity. Contiguity, by contrast, signified unity: this explains why, for Mister D., each possible response to the MCQ became a question. He immediately replied to what he perceived as a set of separate questions. The researchers attempted to confirm this hypothesis by asking him to perform a story completion task. In one test, he had to fill in the gaps in the story with words taken from a list of items. Some of the sentences to be completed were printed on the back of the sheet (the words were printed on the front). The fact that the words were not on the same page as the sentences caused him to change instruction, as if the permanence of the instruction supposed the contiguous, immediate presence of all the material.

Here is another test in which we can observe a similar type of functioning (the patient was asked to answer yes or no and his responses are indicated in italics):

- The sun is shining. *Yes*

- The sun is swimming. *No*

- The sun is setting. *Yes*

- The sun is brushing its hair. *No*

- Every time the sun rises, we can say that it is setting. *Yes*

- It often snows in December. *Yes*

- The soldiers go on parade on 14th July. *Yes*

- The soldiers go on parade on 14th July every time that it snows at Christmas. *Yes*

Whenever the propositions were simple, the responses were correct. By contrast, the patient was caught out by the dual propositions. He was only able to respond to the most recent. Here again, we see the importance of contiguity.

Everyone knows the guessing game in which one person thinks of an object without telling the other players what it is. The others must then ask questions, to which he can answer only yes or no, in order to discover what the object is. After a few questions, the players can try to guess what the object is. To succeed in this game it is necessary to ask coherent questions. Each question is not isolated from the rest. It is through its association with the other questions that it makes it possible to discover the selected object. The researchers asked the patient to play this game. It was up to the patient to ask the questions.

He had a very special way of playing. All the questions he asked related to the objects or persons present in the office: "Is it the eraser? Is it the chair? Is it the book?". In this way, he worked through everything present in the immediate environment. He did not start with general questions in order to work toward increasingly precise questions. He only asked direct questions about what was immediately present. All these results are relatively consistent: Mister D. seemed to be unable to free himself from what is contiguous, present here and now, whether in his understanding of a text, his answers to MCQ, his judgments of different statements (yes or no, true or false, right or wrong), the questions he asked to guess what the other person was thinking about. His answers to the Rosenzweig test provided further confirmation of this observation.

This test, which was first developed in 1948, is still used by recruitment agencies to evaluate aggression or tolerance of frustration. The test takes the form of a booklet containing twenty-four frustrating or conflictual situations presented in pictorial form. In each picture, the first person says something. It is then necessary to imagine the other person's response. Here are a few situations. The patient's responses are indicated in italics:

Sheet 1: A driver splashes a pedestrian. "I'm really sorry to have splashed your clothes, he says, we did everything we could to avoid the puddle".

The two people in the car are sorry to have splashed the clothes of the man on the right. The people in the car say they're sorry.

Sheet 3: In the cinema, two people are sitting behind a woman who is wearing a large hat. "You can't see anything".

The person looks at nothing because it's absolutely impossible to see anything.

Sheet 4: Two men are standing on a station platform; one of them has missed his train. "It's stupid that my car broke down and that's made you miss your train".

The man has missed his train because of the car and the driver must apologize.

All the patient's responses were of the same type. He never put himself in the place of the second character but instead commented on the scene from the outside. It was pointless for the researchers to explain to him that he had to imagine a fictional response, that of the second character. He could only talk about his own point of view, that of a third party who was exterior to what was happening in the picture. To try to force him to respond as if he were the second character, the researchers made some slight changes to the words spoken by the first character.

(original test, sheet 10) "You're a liar and you know it!"

There's one person who says to the other that he's a liar.

(modified test) "You're a liar and you know it! You can't answer that, can you?"

The man calls him a liar and says he can't answer that. The one at the bottom doesn't think of anything to answer. Is it true or false? They're going to talk about it.

Once again, the patient could still not decenter himself. He remained outside the situation represented by the picture, unable to place himself within the material. A final example will indicate more precisely what this incapacity for decentering consisted of.

- On the eleventh sheet, the second character is woken by the ringing of the telephone at 2 o'clock in the morning by someone who has dialed the wrong number: "Excuse me, the operator gave me the wrong number".

- The patient replied by giving his own number.

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One might think that this response is different from the others in that Mister D. did indeed reply in the place of the second character. In reality, he did not in any way "put himself in the shoes" of this second character, he merely substituted himself for him. It was Mister D. who was directly answering the phone, not the second character. There can be no decentering and therefore no fiction is possible. Mister D. was only able to respond on the basis of his own position, either as a spectator or by giving his personal details.

At this point, we can summarize what it is that accounts for Mister D.'s symptoms:

1. there was no way in which he could choose between different narrative hypotheses,

2. he was not capable of decentering or of fiction (since fiction presupposes a certain level of decentering: to imagine a fictitious situation or story, it is necessary to be able to leave the direct here and now).

To a certain extent, these two observations are contradictory. The narratives that Mister D. thought of during the WAIS picture task reveal his ability for abstraction: he was able to construct different narrative hypotheses on the basis of the same material although he switched from one hypothesis to another without delimiting one from the other. By contrast, his responses to the Rosenzweig test revealed an inability to decenter himself, to put himself "in someone else's shoes", to imagine a fiction. In such cases, he seemed to remain fixed within his own situation, that of an outside spectator. If he intervened in the dialog, it was to substitute himself completely for the second character. How is it possible to find a coherent explanation for the type of forced abstraction he manifested in his responses to the WAIS picture tasks and the absence of decentering in his responses to the Rosenzweig test? His responses to the Make-a-Picture-Story (M.A.P.S.) test shed some additional light on his case[18]. The material used in this test consists of a sort of small mobile theater carried around in a case. The subject has to choose items to tell a story from a selection of 22 background scenes and 67 figurines. Mister D., it seems, was unable to tell a story using this test material. All he could do was describe each of the figurines and their costumes in turn. He never went beyond this description. To invent a story on the basis of these characters demands precisely the ability to project oneself, to leave the here-and-now in order to move into a fictional universe or, in brief, to decenter oneself. This is what Mister D. could not do. He did not

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[18]Projective test designed in 1947 in the USA by E. Shneidman.

go beyond the supplied material. Nevertheless, the WAIS picture task had already shown that he was capable of telling a story. However, in the WAIS, this very elementary story is already present in the material (a person going down the stairs, a house at different stages of construction). M.A.P.S. does not provide these story outlines. It only provides background scenes and a set of characters. And Mister D. did not know what to do with them. When the material told him nothing, he, in turn, was also not able to tell any story (see also his response to sheet 3 in the Rosenzweig test: "you can't see anything").

The authors hypothesized that although Mister D. was still capable of *abstraction*, which defines the person, he was no longer capable of *decentering*, which defines the subject. More precisely, it is patients who oblige us to distinguish between these two processes. It is one thing to be able to contrast identities or separate the units in events. It is quite another to be able to project or decenter oneself, "to put oneself in someone else's shoes", on the basis of something that forms a new "center". The following case, described by Attie Duval, will allow us to specify this distinction in greater detail (Duval-Gombert, 1992).

3.2.2 Another case of forced arbitrariness: FM

FM suffered a sudden cardiac arrest (SCA), probably linked to an acute viral myocarditis, when he was 19 years old and a student at business school. This cardiac arrest resulted in a cerebral anoxia with major neurological sequelae which regularly required him to stay in a center for brain injury rehabilitation. Two and a half years after his cardiac arrest, the neurologists noted that he still suffered from physical, spatial and temporal difficulties as well as problems linked to verbal evocation. They also noted the presence of anterograde amnesia involving a certain level of forgetting coupled with a retrograde amnesia [19]. His use of tools was disrupted as was his capacity for "relational" analysis. FM could not draw, say the date or judge the passing of time.

FM chose the wrong words in spoken picture and object naming tasks. A name would sometimes be replaced by another that might belong to the same semantic field. But this was not necessarily the case. FM sometimes also produced names whose semantic link with the object was barely discernible.

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[19]Anterograde amnesia is characterized by an inability to create new, durable memories after the event that caused the amnesia. This symptom is typical of amnesias caused by temporo-hippocampal lesions as in the famous case of HM (Milner, 1966; Sabouraud, 1995). To a certain extent, these lesions also affect memory for biographical items prior to the lesion (this is referred to as retrograde memory).

Sometimes he might also produce a sort of definition or comment. Here are some examples:

Umbrella	Hood
Parachute	Hangglider
Duck	A small car for children
Tap	It's a tap, for doing cooking. It's a pressure cooker, it's a coffee machine. It's a thing for water… It's something to do with water.
Jar	Isn't it upside-down? It's something from your house, that is! It's ugly as well. A glass? A bottle, more like.
Tank (armored vehicle)	Is it an animal? Socks? Colored socks? You'd say it was for the fire brigade. It's red inside. (O. Red?) It's green, but when their feet are dirty, it's like that.
Exercise book	A trunk (O. An exercise book, isn't it?) I wasn't at school back then. I don't know. Your pictures are out of date, my exercise books weren't like that!

Although there seem to be certain similarities, FM was not suffering from an aphasic disorder. In effect, no other problem relating to grammaticality was revealed in his spoken performance. Outside of these naming tasks, FM's language was perfectly normal.

The medical staff noted that FM suffered from memory problems. There was no doubt about this. These problems related to both immediate memory and long-term memory, to semantic memory as much as to episodic memory. However, as Attie Duval notes, the results were very irregular. FM responded correctly to the personal information questionnaire in the Wechsler memory test. He made some mistakes in the general information questionnaire and the immediate orientation questionnaire. Here are some examples:

O. — When did the Second World War start?

F. — It ended in 1945, it didn't last five years.

(When asked for the start date, he gave the end date.)

O. — What day of the month is it today?

F. — Tuesday.

(When asked for the day of the month, he answered with the day of the week.)

He navigated in the days of the week with reference to his activities. Thus he knew that his neuropsychological consultation was on a Thursday

because it took place the day before he left for home on Friday. However, this technique could induce errors because if his consultation was moved to another day of the week, he was convinced that that day was a Thursday. He would also sometimes ask the researchers to remind him of what century we are living in, what year, what month, etc.

Another of the tasks in the Wechsler Memory Scale, in this case intended to assess immediate memory, consists of telling a story that has previously been heard. Here are two examples of his performances:

> First story (original version): Jeanine Laurent, who lives in Paris's 8th arrondissement and works as a cleaner in an office block, reported at the police station that she had been attacked in the Place de la République the previous night and that 50 francs had been stolen from her. She had four small children, the rent had to be paid, and they had not eaten for two days. Touched by this woman's story, the chief of police organized a collection for her.
>
> Version told by FM from memory: A woman in Paris's 8th arrondissement. That's all I can tell you. I know the arrondissement. My brother lives in Paris, in the 8th arrondissement.
>
> Second story (original version): The French ship Paris hit a mine near London on Monday evening. Despite the terrible snow storm and the dark, the sixty passengers, who included 18 women, were able to board the lifeboats that were tossed around like corks on the furious sea. They were taken to harbor the next day by an English liner.
>
> Version told by FM: That's a story about sailors! I know. Everything that's to do with sailing interests me (but he was not able to tell any of the story.)

Thus, although his immediate memory seems to have been vague, FM nevertheless retained certain items of information provided that nothing interrupted memorization. If the research personnel interrupted him during the task in order to ask for details, he could no longer remember what the story was about: "There's nothing left! It's you who've stopped everything!" he might then say (Duval-Gombert, 1992, p. 178).

There is another important observation concerning his immediate memory. FM could, without being aware of it, introduce into his speech in the consulting room words that he had, equally unconsciously, registered in the corridor or the waiting room. He did not know why he said these words and would sometimes comment on them: "I have to say something, don't I?" (*ibid.*, p. 179).

In his case, it is appropriate to talk of "gradual forgetting" since facts and words were gradually erased from his memory. However, it is also necessary to note that he retained in memory a certain number of items of which he was not always conscious.

As far as long-term memory is concerned, FM would be unable to recall a story that he had been asked to tell while nevertheless remembering that this was not the first time this had happened to him: "I remember that I couldn't remember". In addition to this, a temporal disorientation was also noted: FM mixed up chronologies. He situated Chopin a century before Mozart, Louis XIV came long after Napoleon, and he considered that he himself was living not in the twentieth but in the twenty-first century. He was therefore not able to situate historic personages in time but nevertheless knew certain things about them, as the following example illustrates:

O. — Robespierre?

F. — He made the guillotine, there's something about the guillotine.

O. — What period?

F. — Back then! In hundred and fifteen… in fifteen hundred, I tell you. Robespierre, he was brought down by the guillotine, wasn't it by the Chouans? Chouannerie, that was up around Mayenne.

O. — What century?

F. — There's 1515. There's Marignan, so … a few years later. But in any case, it's all hearsay!

O. — Racine?

F. — Boileau, La Fontaine, Molière! I know my classics!

O. — What period?

F. — Their period! Fifteen hundred and a little bit. 1515 that's Marignan… There's Voltaire, so … Fifteen and a bit. I'm talking rubbish, but I don't know.

O. — Louis XIV?

F. — That's ages ago! Before 1500. Before 1515… It was in 1540. Oh! I'm just saying any old thing!

O. — Einstein?

F. — Einstein and Rummenigge, who caused a scandal, he's a footballer.

O. — It was Schumacher, but Einstein?

F. — Einstein, that's the story of… He was able to go back in time…

O. — What did he discover?

F. — Wasn't it the electric battery? Timetables?

In the same way as in the case of immediate memory where it can be seen that FM was sometimes "interfered with" by words heard just before the consultation, here we note that he introduced into the dialog items taken from earlier narratives or other historical accounts. Similarly, he would suddenly

introduce items from *Little Red Riding Hood* into his recitation of *The Crow and the Fox*:

> Master Crow sat on a tree,
> Holding a cheese in his beak.
> Master Fox was attracted by the smell
> And took the cheese from him…
> Oh! What big ears you've got!

However, it should be noted that he realized his mistake and shouted: "No, that's Little Red Riding Hood, that is!"

In brief, while FM suffered from difficulties at the level of both long-term and immediate memory, it can be seen that in both cases, not everything was lost.

Did FM exhibit semantic memory disorders? We have seen above that he mistook words in naming tasks. he was often perplexed by the strangeness of the thing he was asked to name. However, unlike RG, he never questioned the meaning of a word or the existence of the thing. He sometimes had doubts about what he said but most of the time "he does not seem to be able to change his hypothesis about what there is to see" (Duval-Gombert, 1992, p. 181).

Episodic or autobiographical memory relate to events experienced by the subject[20]. Although FM could well recall certain episodes in his life, there were nevertheless gaps in these memories. "Thus, he says that he cannot remember his primary school but remembers perfectly well that he is a sailing instructor. Similarly, in the accounts of certain of his activities at the reeducation center, he confuses one person with another and does so all the more easily if they have more or less the same 'interlocutory' role with reference to himself" (*ibid.*).

His recognition of faces was disturbed. Although he recognized people when in a situation of dialog with them, outside of this situation, they would pass by unnoticed. He recognized only very few famous people and confused them with others sharing the same profession: Alain Delon became Jean-Paul Belmondo, Maurois was recognized as a "leftist". This is an important observation: he was still capable of "sociological" analysis and able to identify professions. Although he might confuse one movie actor with another or one politician with another, he never took a politician to be a movie actor or identified an actor as a politician. He would make mistakes within, but not between, professional fields (Bellamy et al., 1993).

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[20]Tulving (1972) distinguished this from semantic memory which relates to social knowledge, concepts and the words of the language.

He recognized, without being able to identify it, the château de Montfort situated in the town where he lived (we have changed the names of the places):

> It's a beautiful château. Seen from afar, it's the château des Landes [21]. That means something to me… . I come from near Rennes. If I were at home, I would say they are the châteaux [plural] de Montfort… Being in Rennes, I can't tell you if it's a château de Montfort. If I'd been in Montfort, I would have said it's the château de Montfort!

Here, we can identify an absence of decentering, similar to that which Hubert Guyard revealed in the case of Mister D. The château de Montfort could not be the château de Montfort because FM was not in Montfort at the time the researchers showed him the picture.

In brief, FM did indeed exhibit all the memory disorders that the neurologists attributed to him, but he did not exhibit them all the time. It is therefore impossible to say with certainty which memory disorder predominated in his case. However, behind these "memory" disorders, it is possible to identify an absence of decentering which is very similar to that observed in the case of Mister D.

The neurologists also noted the existence of spatial disorders. In effect, FM was not able to move around on his own in a place which he was nevertheless already familiar with. "He sits wherever you put him. He won't change place and will wait until you come to get him" (Duval-Gombert, 1992, p. 182). He did not know which way up to look at a map, mixed up the side and top view, left and right. Similarly, "when he has to find on his own body an element shown to him in a photo, he mixes up the left and right; when asked to reconstruct a drawing of the human body, he confuses the side and face-on views" (*ibid.*).

We have seen above that he possessed some historical knowledge but that he could not situate either historical personages or himself in time. He also possessed geographical knowledge (in a list, he was able to identify the towns that were not French, state the names of capital cities, etc.). However, he was not able to locate this knowledge in space. Here is one illustration:

O. — Where is Lille?

F. — Lille, it's… that depends on what you want. Because Lille is next to Tourcoing.

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[21] The Landes center for brain injury rehabilitation is indeed located in an old château built in the second half of the 19th century in a style that imitates that of the late Renaissance. The château de Montfort is a medieval fortress which also possesses a Renaissance style wing.

O. — Where's that?

F. — It's in the North. Where there are mining villages. It's what Bachelet [22] describes. He did it "musically"… can you say that, "musically"? At least he talked about the people from the mining villages.

O. — Orléans?

F. — I can tell you it's in France. But where? I can't tell you. It's not in Mayenne. Not Loire-Atlantique. Not Rennes. I'm not sure. We pass by it when we go… It's in the center of France.

O. — Brest?

F. — Brest ? It's… Brest? Wait, Brest, it's maritime. But it's the sea! I'll have to think about everything that's "rivery" (sic).

O. — Dijon?

F. — I don't know it… Wait! There's the mustard of course! Dijon mustard! But to tell you where it is… France is cut into four, East, West, South, East, South and West…

O. — And Dijon?

F. — Dijon? It's close to the mining villages…

In another exercise, the researchers asked him to locate the cities of France with reference to Paris. He started by drawing himself a "map of France" (a simple circle). He then placed Marseilles in approximately the position of Bordeaux, located Grenoble to the North of Paris and Orléans in the center of France (inside his circle). His town of origin, Montfort, was placed close to Lille. He said that Brest was located between Paris and Marseille but positioned it in the Alps, etc.

In a third version of the task, the researchers gave him a proper map of France. He started by turning the map in different directions and finally placed it at right angles to its normal orientation (with the tip of Brittany pointing upward). He was then unable to locate on this map the cities that the researchers asked him to situate in relation to one another:

O. — Marseilles and Grenoble?

F. — First of all, I have to find Marseilles and Grenoble… Let's say that Marseilles is to the left of Grenoble… and Grenoble… South-East!

O. — Which is farther North?

F. — Marseilles, it's the end of the water. If you take that as your base, you have to go up. (*However, F. did not know where to place Grenoble on the map in front of him.*)

O. — So, Grenoble?

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[22]Now deceased French singer one of whose songs from the 1980s that deals with life in the mining towns in the North of France is still well known today.

F. — What did you just say? Anyway, I wouldn't get lost: I've got a compass in my car.

It therefore seems that, far from helping him, the use of a map actually made things more difficult.

FM did indeed possess historical, geographical and social knowledge (he could associate Lille with the mining villages and a song by Pierre Bachelet, Dijon with mustard, etc.). However, he seemed to be unable to situate this knowledge in either time or space. The elements of this knowledge were scattered in a totally random or arbitrary way. To be able to orient oneself, however, in the same way as to be able to orient a map, "it is necessary to have a 'fixed' point, a starting point, that is to say an element starting from which one can go in a precise direction rather than just heading off into the unknown. And that is just the problem: FM can go anywhere and from anywhere, but where should he start from? This 'where' presupposes a precise location and not a constant fluctuation. What starting point, what fixed point can he take in order to go elsewhere?" (*ibid.*, p. 185).

The same thing applies to time: to orient oneself in time, to position the characters who occur in history, also requires a starting point from which one can move "forward" or "backward" in time. Everything suggests that FM possessed no such fixed point.

In the same way as Hubert Guyard did in the case of Mister D., Attie Duval asked FM to tell a story based on pictures. Here is an example of the way FM constructed a narrative:

1. Some children are running.

2. One of the two children falls and hurts his knee.

3. The other child puts a bandage around the knee using a strip of cloth.

FM took the third picture and said: "There's Toti and Toto who are on vacation... what do I have to do?".

The researchers explained to him once again what he had to do: arrange the pictures in the order corresponding to the story. First of all, he arranged the pictures in the order 3-2-1. Then he started again and arranged them in the order 3-1-2.

This is what he said: "There's Toti and Toto... No, who are on vacation. There, they're walking. No, they're sitting there". He looked at the entire set of three pictures and said: "Oh, we could put it the other way round, your story!".

The test protocol was not at all the same as that completed by Mister D. However, we can nevertheless try to compare FM's performance with that

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of Mister D. Like this latter patient, FM was able to produce narrative hypotheses on the basis of the supplied material (he gave names to the children, told us they were on vacation, that they were walking). However, as in the case of Mister D., these narrative hypotheses seemed to be totally arbitrary. Anything that it was possible to recount on the basis of the material would do just as well as anything else, as the following extract from a dialog shows:

O. — What's the child doing with that piece of cloth around the other one's knee?

F. — Do you want her to knit? With that bit of cloth? Or for her to iron the washing?

O. — She's putting on a bandage.

F. — Oh?

O. — Why?

F. — He must have cut himself or fallen down.

O. — While doing what?

F. — No idea!

Nothing seemed to enable FM to make a choice and stick to it. Any picture could form the story. They could be put in order, or equally well in the opposite order: "We could put it the other way round, your story!". Some pictures appeared ambiguous: the child who was lying on the ground might have fallen but he could just as well have been sleeping.

For FM, there seemed to be no permanence to the situation or to the environment suggested by the pictures. For him, "every picture has its own story. The characters and the things are never the same. Nor are the stories" (*ibid.*, p. 191).

It was enough for the observer to suggest a new hypotheses for FM to overcome his initial surprise and accept it (he thus accepted that the "bit of cloth" about which he could just as well make up a story about doing the ironing – in absolute terms, why not? – could become a bandage). Nothing, once again, enabled him to choose between the various plausible stories, and least of all the coherence of the material. He was hardly at all constrained by the situation formed by the set of material provided for the test.

FM did not start from a "concrete" situation or environment with a defined position or location in order to tell a story but instead took any narrative hypothesis as the basis for arranging and describing the pictures. As Attie Duval said, for him everything was a story (*ibid.*, p. 197).

This same disorientation, this same lack of permanence, can be observed in the tasks in which FM had to tell, from memory, a story that he had read earlier or was familiar with. Here, for example, is the way FM told from memory the story of Little Red Riding Hood.

F. — There's an ogre.

O. — What if I say "the wolf"?

F. — He was with Red Riding Hood. There was Tarzan who was there… I have to say something. The ogre arrived, he was with Little Red Riding Hood, and after that the story's over.

O. — And the grandmother?

F. — She was called Mamie? Mamie Nova[23]? Why the grandmother? She gave Mamie Blue[24] something to eat. She was ill so she gave her grandson something to eat… No, it was the grandson who gave his grandmother something to eat. I often get things the wrong way round…

This story contains characters who would not normally be there (an ogre, Tarzan, Mamie Nova, Mamie Blue, a grandson, etc.). What we observe here is the same as in the retelling of the fable of the Crow and the Fox, as the words heard in the waiting room that make their way into the consultation, or as Rummenigge who is lumped together with Einstein. However, these characters do not perhaps come together completely randomly as this new version shows:

F. — There's an ogre. He wants to give Little Red Riding Hood something to eat and Little Red Riding Hood, he's frightened.

O. — Is Little Red Riding Hood a boy or a girl?

F. — It doesn't say in the song. He's a boy, because they're not frightened, boys.

O. — Are there other characters?

F. — That's enough. Someone who frightens him, that's his brother. It's something that frightens him. The ogre will help him because something frightens him.

O. — Is there a sailor in the story?

F. — No, I'd know.

O. — A woodcutter?

F. — Maybe, yes.

O. — A fox?

F. — No, they'd have killed it.

O. — A crow?

F. — That must be in other stories.

O. — A wolf?

F. — I didn't see one in the song.

O. — A grandfather?

F. — No, we didn't see the children, so there are no grandparents.

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[23]Brand of dairy products (yoghurts, cream cheese, etc.) that is well known in France.

[24]Song by Nicoletta that was very successful in France in the 1970s and is still played regularly on certain radio stations.

O. — A grandmother?

F. — No.

O. — Big ears?

F. — Yes, because that frightens him.

O. — A hut?

F. — There's nothing about it.

O. — A clearing?

F. — You know, in places like that…

O. — Lift the latch?

F. — Lift the latch… Yes, that's OK!

O. — Who says that?

F. — The ogre.

O. — The big ears, it's all the better to…

F. — Eat you with.

O. — Who says that?

F. — That must be the woodcutter. Ears aren't for eating with…

In this version, there are clearly some elements taken from the story of Little Red Riding Hood. However, it was another story that FM was telling, maybe a story about fear, or possibly about a song, in which there is an ogre and, finally, also a woodcutter. The research personnel then proposed another story of Little Red Riding Hood which they asked FM to comment on. Here is this version:

> The wolf was lying peacefully in his bed when there arrived in his room a grandmother disguised as a wolf and a Little Red Riding Hood carrying a small pot of butter stolen from a hunter who had big ears and big eyes.

FM, *reads the text a first time before criticizing it at random.* — It's not "a" but "the" grandmother. While we've been talking… You've added something besides. You've put in the wolf and Red Riding Hood. You've mixed them together.

O. — And the hunter?

F. — You're mixing everything up! You're changing the story from top to bottom! There are two proverbs. There's the story of the wolf, the wolf who's going to look after the grandmother. Afterwards, there's Little Red Riding Hood. But the little pot of butter, I don't know what that's doing there… Oh yes! It's for the grandmother.

O. — And the wolf?

F. — No, there's no wolf in Little Red Riding Hood. I know that the wolf goes with the grandmother, but Little Red Riding Hood is a different story…

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O. — The big ears?

F. — They're the wolf's, to trick the enemy! I'll have to find a good answer!

FM, *reads the start of the version.* The wolf was lying peacefully in his bed…

O. — What bed?

F. — The grandmother's bed but not his own! The wolf hasn't got a bed. (*He carries on reading.*) When there arrived… Wrong! The wolf is alone. (*He starts reading again.*) … arrived in his room a grandmother… but she's already in her bed! … Disguised… That's another story, that is. There's the wolf and the grandmother.

O. — The disguise, it's what story?

F. — The wolf must have done I don't know what to the grandmother. He took the grandmother's things and after that he put his own things… that surprises me though, because the wolf has big whiskers. It's the wolf that has put the grandmother's things and the rest is a different story, because Little Red Riding Hood was taking butter to his grandmother.

O. — And the hunter?

F. — Killed a rabbit? Or the runter killed a habbit…

There is a story. Something is narrated. However, there is no possible permanence to this story and its characters. Elements that form part of the story can be excluded from it while external elements can be introduced. And this can change constantly. FM here jumps from one thing to another in a completely arbitrary way. The hunter can kill a rabbit (as in the song by Chantal Goya), but a runter can also kill a habbit. Why not? The story is influenced by everything that it is possible to say or recount. It seems that FM was unable to do anything other than play with stories, with words, with the meaning of words. That is why the grandmother can become a "Mami Nova" or a "Mamie Blue". Again, why not?

FM shows us the arbitrariness of the story that is not pinned down by the permanence of a concrete situation. Instead, FM's reality is constantly changing. There is no stable environment to limit the abstraction of the story. FM can do nothing other than dictate the story arbitrarily or negotiate it endlessly with his interlocutors. "There is no longer anything 'concrete'. Everything is a chimera or, more precisely, a mirage, because, depending on the position he assumes, F. has new ideas about what he is going to make exist. He employs every possible way of re-using the elements but they are all empty" (Duval-Gombert, 1992, p. 205).

While RG could not manage to tell a story (cf. his responses to the test in which he had to construct a story based on pictures), for FM, everything became a pretext for a story. "For him, a story only has postulates, arbitrarily

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accepted themes. Principles have been replaced by premises. A story can no longer have a basis, it just has to be plausible, acceptable" (*ibid.*, p. 207).

This made him very easy to influence in his opinions. Everything, as he said, "could deserve and have the right to exist". He also put it another way: "You know, madam, you have to distrust everything at the moment, you can't be sure of anything… I'm constantly in doubt" (*ibid.*).

The case of FM seems to show that "while no subject is constituted, the person can nevertheless establish an order which, however, becomes purely fictitious and is based arbitrarily on the agreements and disagreements between our respective points of view. Without the constitution of groupings within a specific, concrete universe, the world becomes unreal and our knowledge about it is a science-fiction in which every pattern of things is a plausible hypothesis" (*ibid.*, p. 208).

And Duval-Gombert goes on to say that "this coming and going between the analysis of the person and a political aim can be found in every area of life (in clothing, the way of writing, the way of drawing, eating, behaving in a supermarket where he no longer knows that you don't just take all the products on display and put them back in other locations in the shop but that you make your choice… , etc.), and this 'empty' functioning is also found in the use of words. F. can talk sociologically about anything, even if there is nothing to talk about" (*ibid.*, p. 209).

3.3   Discussion

RG and FM in some ways appear to be the inverse images of one another. What is lacking in one is present in the other and vice versa. RG sticks to the situation whereas FM seems to live in a fictional reality. RG's world is characterized by its permanence whereas that of FM is in constant movement (Attie Duval speaks of "immutable routine" in the first case and "science fiction" in the second). RG is all but impossible to influence whereas FM can be influenced very considerably (there are as many possible stories as there are possible narrative hypotheses, whether these are suggested by his interlocutors or by him himself). RG takes everything literally while FM unceasingly plays on words.

It seems that we can therefore agree with Attie Duval that these two types of pathology "relate, each in their own way, to one of the phases of the dialectic of existence which confront the permanence of the situation with the adoption of a position in the face of this permanence through an analysis of circumstances and encounters" (Duval-Gombert, 1992, p. 297). "What is typical of R.G.'s behavior is precisely this immutable permanence

of existence. There is a symbiotic relationship between the environment and him" (*ibid.*). He forms part of this environment without any way of distancing himself. It is tempting to say that he is glued to it, that he cannot abstract himself from it. However, we need to revisit these terms which are ambiguous because they are too general (the absence of abstraction in RG is not the same as the absence of decentering in FM or Mister D.). Unlike what goes on in FM, RG's world seems to be frozen or fixed. For FM, a "cat" can be "Dick Whittington's cat", a "cat burglar" breaking into a house, or even "khat" (a type of African shrub). For RG, however, a "cat" can only be "a single cat, his own, because it is part of his environment, and therefore of him" (*ibid.*).

Each of these two patients attempts to compensate for his disorder in his own way. In FM, the lack of permanence is compensated for by an attempt to adopt a position in his relations with others. However, this remains merely an attempt because without permanence, all positions, ultimately, are possible. He is, as Attie Duval says, "extremely dependent on the role of his partners as instigators of opinions with whom he must compose his stories and agree or disagree" (*ibid.*, p. 298). But he cannot "ratify any agreement because the clauses of the contract cannot be concretely attested or contested" (*ibid.*).

RG, by contrast, compensates for his difficulty in adopting a position by adhering tightly to his environment. "He does indeed arrive at an agreement", writes Attie Duval, "but this agreement consists more in coincidence of the imposed situation with a previously encountered permanence than a contract between social partners" (*ibid.*, p. 299).

The result is that the agreements that he makes exclude any misunderstanding because they relate always "to a single circumstance, a single moment". It is this unequivocal, transparent adoption of position, says Attie Duval, that explains the increasing number of conflicts with his wife, "because even though the adopted position is always 'right' and words are used with their 'correct' meaning, the reality that emerges and is recounted in this way is a solitary reality that cannot be shared with anyone else" (*ibid.*).

What is more, faced with this life which has become impossible to live, RG "withdraws more and more from the world of other people, taking refuge alone in his holiday home. He says himself that he only feels at ease when he is alone" (*ibid.*). "He isolates himself more and more, disengages himself from history", continues Attie Duval.

We have seen that RG's hospitalization in 1991 was due to his continual conflicts with his wife. These conflicts were directly linked to RG's difficulties. The only reality that existed for him was his own and he could not put himself "in his wife's place" to attempt to understand how she experienced the situation. What is more, his wife no longer existed for him. She existed only in his experience and in his own habits. He could not imagine that she

might have other habits. He always had an afternoon nap at 1.15 pm. No earlier, no later! If the meal was served late then he would go to bed without eating.

RG's obligatory adherence to routines and habits annoyed his wife. But he did not understand that she was annoyed. He did not understand that she did not understand. RG's reality had become immutable, immune from discussion, whereas for his wife, it was still open to discussion. It was this that led to the many moments of conflict. As RG said himself: "I can now only get on with myself".

This comment represents a good moment to stop and consider this concept of me or *self*. Warrington noted that semantic memory disorders and the autocentration of the patients who exhibited these disorders called this concept of *self* into question. This concept, which also lies at the heart of the sociology of Erving Goffman, following on from the work of George Herbert Mead, as well as of psychoanalysis, is still ambiguous. The disorders resulting from brain lesions that we have presented make it possible to deconstruct and specify in more detail this concept of me or *self*. In effect, it seems to be possible to distinguish between:

1. an *abstract me*, an interlocutor that can be addressed or listened to (Théry, 2007), defined in its relations with you, he or she, as well as with the impersonal "one" or "they"; it is this me that disappears in patients such as RG at the same time as the interlocutors themselves disappear (there were no longer any interlocutors for RG, he could not take account of them);

2. a *centered me*, a reference point in both space and time, starting from which a projection or decentering is possible; this second me had not disappeared in RG. On the contrary, it had become extremely salient due to the disappearance of the first me, thus explaining the patient's autocentration. It is only when "me" is understood in this way that he could say that he could only get on with himself, not when "me" is understood in its abstract form, "because that would presuppose that he could posit himself as an other self (existing at a different time, in another place and in a different way), with which he would then contrast himself" (Duval-Gombert, 1992, p. 299). By contrast, this centered me had disappeared in FM who was no longer capable of decentering even though he was still capable of abstraction (indeed, he did nothing else), of procuring interlocutors and intervening as such in a relationship;

3. a *positioned me* which explains the type of adherence to place that we

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observed in FM in combination with an excess of abstraction (FM exhibited the paradox of simultaneously manifesting a forced abstraction and an extreme adherence to places: he stayed wherever you put him, says Attie Duval).

The possibility of clinically isolating these three "me's" lends further support to the distinction that we have made between the three levels of the human condition: that of the individual and his or her relation with a biotope, that of the subject and his or her relation with an environment, and that of the person. The positioned me is the me of the individual, the centered me is that of the subject, and the abstract me is that of the person. It is difficult to dissociate these three me's in normal human beings. It is the pathology caused by the lesion which, by separating functional modules which usually operate together, makes it possible to identify them.

We still need to look briefly at the relations between the neurological disorders of these patients and the psychiatric disorders we examined earlier. Following Attie Duval, we shall do this only for the case of RG. Attie Duval's hypothesis, which we have not set out in full here [25], was that RG could no longer define social *units*, either at the level of belonging in terms of positions, or in the field of competences in terms of roles (see our definition of these terms in chapter 2 above). His difficulties of abstraction do not therefore seem to have been total but related only to segmental analysis while differential analysis remained intact. Within the strict framework of the model and the hypotheses that derive from it, his disorder would be the neurological equivalent of a donjuanism associated with paranoia.

These observations led Attie Duval to emphasize the differences between the clinical picture presented by RG and these psychiatric profiles. She commented, in particular, that RG, unlike paranoid subjects, did not adhere to the position of his interlocutors: "the only position to which he adheres is that which coincides with his own position". RG, she goes on to say, "is, in particular, unable to put himself in the place of his partners" (Duval-Gombert, 1992, p. 321). But are paranoid subjects able to "put themselves in the place of?" When Claude (cf. chapter 2) identified himself with various characters (Claude François, J.R., Bobby) was he "putting himself in their place"? Putting oneself in the place of (while remaining oneself) is not the same as identifying with the other to the point where one no longer knows, as Jean-Claude Quentel puts it, who is there, who is speaking (Quentel, 1999, p. 133). What is more, we need to be cautious in our use of expressions such as "adhere", "stick", "put oneself in the place of", which are merely

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[25]Any readers who are interested can, of course, find the full demonstration in Attie Duval's thesis.

metaphorical expressions taken from everyday language and are subject to all the ambiguity that goes with it. This is because, as we have seen, RG's autocentration is not FM's decentering (even though both of them seem to "stick" to something, they do not "stick" in the same way)[26]. To return to our discussion, other manifestations of RG's disorder closely resemble certain paranoid symptoms: for example, the fact of taking everything literally, the "transparency" of the situations and the fact of being unable to tolerate misunderstandings[27]. What Jean-Claude Quentel was led to say about paranoia on the basis of Claude's case is not so different from what Attie Duval wrote, in the following passage, about RG: "our patient, although he can still talk about his own experiences, about his joys and his sorrows, takes no account of his interlocutor. Not only is the interlocutor not acknowledged physically, because he is entirely subsumed within an acquired habit, but his position of interlocutor as 'partner in a discussion' with his own points of view is also not acknowledged. RG cannot 'respect', that is to say put himself in the other person's place. He can speak to other people very well about his own experiences (his grammatical abilities mean he is capable of rhetoric), but he cannot speak with someone because this presupposes the ability to posit the other person as another self" (Duval-Gombert, 1992, p. 329).

This clearly does not mean that RG's disorder can be identified clearly and unequivocally as a neurologically induced paranoia. The etiology is different, the evolution is different, and many manifestations of the disorder are different. It is quite possible to consider that there may be several different disorders of the person which manifest themselves in similar ways without being identical in all respects: disorders resulting from lesions and disorders resulting from functional difficulties (associated with the brain metabolism), deficiency disorders (congenital lack of an ability) and deterioration disorders (loss of an ability that could previously be exercised), or even degenerative disorders (associated with aging). However, these are only hypotheses and we shall focus here on the subject of the link between paranoia and RG's disorder.

We have, however, to say some words about the relationship between

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[26]This is why we should also be cautious with regard to the idea of symbiosis used by Attie Duval when speaking about RG's adherence to his environment. It would undoubtedly be better to reserve this concept of symbiosis for the field in which it emerged, that of the obligatory associations between species, as in the case of the relation between a fungus and an alga in a lichen.

[27]"Claude cannot really take account of his interlocutor and what he or she might be led to say in return. For him, there were no misunderstandings or, if you prefer, 'different understandings'. What is said has only one meaning, the one he adopts for himself in the situation" (Quentel, 1999, p. 134).

RG's disorder and donjuanism. In effect, Attie Duval claims that the disorder in RG's case relates to both the patient's own analysis of his belonging and to that of his competences. If Jean Gagnepain was right in considering swinging and donjuanism to constitute manifestations of the lack of a segmental analysis of sexuality then we should find similar manifestations in RG's behavior. But it is rather the opposite that we observe in his case. He swapped nothing. According to his wife, RG's illness expressed itself in a specific and quite extreme decency: "for some time, RG had refused to undress in her presence when they went to bed. If Mrs G. was still in the room at the moment when RG wanted to put on his pajamas then he would not undress but would instead get cross and go to bed in his day clothes" (*ibid.*, p. 321-22). Attie Duval sees here a phenomenon that contradicts the suppositions of the theoretical model. This is indeed a possibility: if RG's underlying disorder did indeed relate to both belonging and competences, then the absence of "swinging" behavior in him might well lead us to revise what we might think of the disorders of belonging. However, there is another possibility since it is also possible that RG's disorder might exist only on the "face" of competences (which would account for certain similarities with paranoia) but not on the "face" of belonging (which would account for the absence of perverse symptoms). Here, we are, however, in the field of conjecture and have no way of deciding between the different possibilities.

If this final point shows once again that many of the questions raised by the model proposed by the theory of the person remain unresolved, the work so far undertaken in the field of disorders resulting from brain lesions (work into which we have attempted to provide an insight in the present chapter), lends support to the idea that the person is a mental capacity that can be lost and that is distinct from other capacities such as those relating to the sign or to the tool (the patients we have presented in this chapter were neither aphasic nor atechnic). Pierre Karli, whom we quoted at the start of this chapter, was therefore not wrong to intrude in the sociological domain and show how knowledge about social actors also demands knowledge about the brain. And sociologists, for their part, would be wrong to continue to disdainfully turn a blind eye to the accumulated work on the "social brain" or refuse to accept *a priori* that this is of any relevance for sociology. Because, to summarize (a little crudely) what we have seen in this chapter, no ethnico-political dialectic, i.e. no historicity or "production of society by itself" (Touraine, 1973), is possible unless there is also a subject endowed with an "autobiographical memory" and who is, at the same time, a person capable of abstraction. Neither FM nor RG, although both for different reasons, are social actors capable of historicity.

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