

Self, identities and adaptation

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Introduction

In this chapter, we will focus on the question of the psycho-social adaptation of the individual actor. We have had occasion to show elsewhere that adaptation is to be associated with the dynamics of socialisation, in particular the social insertion and integration of the individual³, but also with the *capacity of the person to develop in a sustainable way (personation)*⁴.

True integration cannot be confused with assimilation involving the loss of previous identity. It can ideally be defined as "the harmonious articulation of differences and similarities between autonomous and active, cooperative and convivial partners"⁵. But social adaptation cannot take place if the individual does not develop as a person who is recognised and respected for what he or she is or is becoming. The social actor only seeks to adapt to his social environment, to integrate into it, if he has the feeling that he can fulfil himself there, not only through the satisfaction of his desires, but also through the freedom to *work for the benefit of his own people*, i.e. to transform such and such an aspect of external reality, physical or social, according to his own projects, or the projects of the group he belongs to. Adaptation, yes, but with a view to self-fulfilment, and a transformation of the current state of equilibrium or the current mode of adaptation, a transformation which he must anticipate at the time of the possible. It is true that the individual can be confronted with extreme situations, such as the Nazi concentration camp experienced and analysed by Bettelheim⁶, involving survival work, the need to face the unthinkable. As Gustave-Nicolas Fisher points out, "the extreme situation refers to the idea of an extreme ordeal which plunges into suffering and misfortune, *pushing the faculties of adaptation to the limit*. It contains a dimension of violence in the sense that it is a radical upheaval that shakes a life and precipitates it into an abyss from which it is not easy to emerge"⁷. Of course, a distinction must be made between voluntary extreme situations (sports, scientific survival challenges, etc.) and those imposed by circumstances (illness, extreme poverty, emotional breakdowns, etc.). In these situations, the individual may experience distrust and estrangement from

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³ See in particular Vanandruel, 1991, Tap, 1991,

⁴ The term "personalisation", which the Toulouse team proposed (and still proposes) in the sense of "development of the person", is used today in marketing to talk about consumer devices which must be closer to the customers. The term "personation", proposed a long time ago by Racamier (1965), seems more appropriate if we associate it with the idea that the development of the person is "durable", i.e. throughout life, and not limited to childhood and adolescence;

⁵ Tap, P. 1991, p.5

⁶ Bettelheim, 1972, 1979

⁷ Fisher, G.N. (1994), p.21

others or from his or her own fragility in a context where conformity and obedience to authority dominate. But the individual can also find within himself the strength to react, to refuse social, moral and professional pressure. Fisher compares this inner strength to an 'invisible spring', 'which bends without necessarily breaking; it is a metaphor for the man who yields without always weakening, who resigns without necessarily being annihilated, who obeys without necessarily abdicating, who is dominated without being absolutely submissive' (*op.cit.* p.248).

Social integration means, among other things, submission to norms. Submission can be socially and personally useful, even if 'voluntary submission' is a matter of debate. But how far is submission *appropriate* (socially and morally *acceptable*) to the point that the individual can *appropriate it* (*make it his own*) in order to advance in his life and give meaning to his practices? Damasio states, for example, that "submission can play a very useful role in reaching agreement and consensus during a conflict, (but it) can also encourage cowardice in the face of tyranny and the downfall of an entire group through simple over-obedience".⁸

Stress and coping strategies of people in difficult situations

The Toulouse team has worked extensively on stress and coping strategies⁹ face of illness¹⁰, economic insecurity¹¹ and *burnout*¹². In addition, based on the development of the Toulouse Self-Esteem Scale¹³,

we were able to discuss the validity of the hypothesis of self-esteem as a moderator of stress. Together with Baumeister et al (2003), we believe that high self-esteem can be associated with stress and health problems. We have shown, for example, that women who smoke have a higher level of self-esteem than groups of men (smokers and non-smokers) and non-smokers, but are also more stressed than people in these other groups (Tap et al. 2003, 2004).

Since most of the chapters in this book deal with coping and coping strategies, we will only make a few remarks on coping and then visit other areas of knowledge, neuropsychology, social psychology, social philosophy and ethics. These detours will enable us to analyse the problematic links between the adaptation of human beings to their living conditions and their behaviour, in relation to themselves, their "self" or "personal identity" as well as their living environment.

Coping activities are commonly referred to as 'coping strategies' for dealing with stress, which involves controlling both the problem situation and the emotions that this situation provokes in the stressed person (Graziani and Swendsen, 2005; Dumont and Plancherel, 2001).

A first remark concerns the very notion of "strategy", which originated in the military and is nowadays mainly used in the economic field. It implies the use of multiple tasks and mental activities oriented towards a goal, towards the resolution of a problem over a more or less

⁸ Damasio, A.R. 2003 p. 167

⁹ Esparbès et al. 1993; Sordes-Ader et al. 1997; Tap et al. 1996, Tap et al. 2005, etc. see www.pierretap.com

¹⁰ For example: on cancer: Sordes-Ader, 1996. On AIDS: Tap and Levêque, 1996, etc.

¹¹ See Tap and Vasconcelos, 2004; Sordes-Ader, Tap and Vasconcelos, 2004; Sordes-Ader and Tap, 2002, etc.

¹² See Pronost and Tap, 1996; Tap and Pronost, 1996; Pronost and Tap 1997

¹³ See Tap et al (2004b, 2005, 2006, etc.), Vasconcelos et al (2005), etc.

long period of time. It is ¹⁴therefore a question of complex and inventive behaviours that are far removed from stimulus-reaction type processes and the classic definition of adaptation. But stress and the multiple emotions that accompany it can provoke both "impulsive reactions" with immediate effects and "tactics" focused on a short time, or strategies with more distant effects. It can therefore be seen that coping involves activities of varying complexity; that it involves the coordination of cognitive, affective-emotional and conative processes (motivations, tendencies to act, preparation for action). Furthermore, activities (mental or behavioural) can be experienced or perceived either as adaptive if their goal (reducing stress or solving the problem that caused the stress) is achieved (functional outcome), or as maladaptive if the goal is not achieved and difficulties are increased (dysfunctional outcome). Adaptive coping theories are assumed to be valid for both simple and complex organisms. The concept of biological adaptation is crucial, and in particular the theory of attack - flight, control - withdrawal. Of course, in humans, we find behaviours of very different adaptive levels, which involve, depending on the case, more or less complex processes of awareness, decision making, choice of orientation, etc.

With regard to the empirical aspects associated with the evaluation of coping strategies, the development of the *Toulouse coping scale* has enabled us to note the importance of the opposition between the processes of control (of the situation and/or of the emotions) and of withdrawal, but also to take into account the importance of relational processes and mediation behaviours, between the endogenous and the exogenous. For example, the "social supports" often considered as "external resources" must also be considered as internal competences, through the ability to ask for help or to accept the support of others. On the other hand, "distraction" (escape from the anxiety-provoking place or stressful space) can be linked to the relationship with other people (with or without addictive supports: alcohol, tobacco, etc.). Nor should we confuse the process of "acceptance" of the problem situation (e.g. one's own illness) with that of "resignation", learned or not. It is worth noting here that Martin Seligman, who is known worldwide for his work on "learned resignation" and depression (1974), is now known for the importance he attaches to "optimism" (2002). This can be seen as symbolic of the need to take into account contradictory, paradoxical processes that nevertheless come together in people's actual behaviour, particularly when they are faced with difficult situations.

What we would like to show here is the importance of processes of coordination, meaning and valorisation in the dynamics of adaptation, if we take this term in its broadest sense of the orientation and evolution of human behaviour under the influence of processes, internal or external, which accelerate or slow down individual aspirations, which alienate, enslave or liberate individuals. All these processes only make sense in relation to increasingly complex processes, such as globalisation. They transform themselves temporally and spatially, changing the niches that constitute the ecological environment of the people concerned.

For an ecological psychology

The analysis of the links between the self, identities and adaptation requires a new presentation of the question of the relationship between the actor (individual or collective) and the physical, social and cultural world in which he or she lives. This novelty could be

¹⁴ "Strategies are activities by which the subject chooses, organises and manages his or her actions in order to accomplish a task or reach a goal". They involve "sequences of skills and knowledge invented and deployed to achieve a solution" (Ducret, 1991, p. 650 - 651).

situated in the context of an *ecological psychology*, if we understand this term to mean the relationship between the sustainable development of the human species, including the *sustainable development of the individual*, his or her responsibility and interdependence with the environment. This ecological psychology should undoubtedly be placed within a complex anthropology, which is itself concerned with the preservation of the planet, its fauna and flora. This would imply the articulation between the future of man and the future of the house in which he lives (ecology being the "science of the house"!)). As Edgar Morin rightly writes: "Humanity emerges from a plurality and interlocking of trinities: the individual-society-species trinity, the brain-culture-spirit trinity, and the reason-affectivity-drive trinity, which is itself an expression and emergence of the triunity of the human brain, which contains both reptilian and mammalian heritages"¹⁵.

Studying the adaptation processes of a human individual therefore requires us to take into account its place in the evolution of species, from non-cerebrate species to cerebrate species, and therefore to man. To speak of ecological psychology is to lead psychologists to introduce and take into account several levels of interactions: the organism/environment interaction (extended to Nature in its planetary complexity: chemical, biological, psychological, socio-cultural), biological interactions (inter or intraspecific), inter-human relations and their importance in the construction of the individual. Presented in this way, such openness is a utopia paradoxically associated with 'adaptive' emergencies, themselves created by '*homo demens*', by predatory man who is the only one who has the power to change the world. ¹⁶by the predatory man who tends to destroy his own "ecological niches" and his fellow human beings.

Many psycho-biologists (Gibson, Barker, Bronfenbrenner, Varela and Maturana¹⁷, etc.) have guided this new sub-discipline of ecological psychology in their own way. But it seems to us necessary to establish links, differences and interactions between, on the one hand, the biological adaptation and development of *the human organism* and, on the other hand, the psychological and social adaptations and developments of the human being, as a *person*, as a self-conscious *subject*, both autonomous and supportive, but also as a citizen, in the face of the conflictual dynamics of globalisation.

It is indeed necessary to take into consideration *the dynamics of personation*, or *the sustainable development of the person*, i.e. the way in which the human being develops as a person, gradually becoming aware of himself through the appropriation of the permanence of objects and the variability of contexts, of the nature and effects of internal or external, physical or relational changes, but at the same time being the object of influences, of calls for conformity that can sometimes alienate him, reduce him to submission or subjugation (Tap, 1981, 1988 ; Beauvois and Joule, 1981, Joule and Beauvois, 2002).

Ecological psychology can take into account very current models and practices, with the usual scientific precautions. For example, the model and methodology proposed by Marisa Zavalloni under the title "ego-ecology"¹⁸ are particularly attractive and should be linked to the adaptive dynamic and its identity transactions. They open the way to more naturalistic and interdisciplinary conceptions, insofar as the (internal) identity system has a cultural

¹⁵ Morin, E. (2001) p.45

¹⁶ Morin, E. *op.cit.* p.107 et seq.

¹⁷ Gibson, 1977; Barker, 1968; Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1996; Varela and Maturana, 1974, Varela et al. 1993.

¹⁸ See his latest book: Zavalloni, M. *Ego-ecology: a naturalistic approach*. 2007. "The term *ego-ecology* was introduced to draw attention to the specificity of identity processes reflecting the transactional activity between the person and his/her socio-cultural environment.

function insofar as it is used by the person to convince, persuade and deliberate. Moreover, any transaction between the internal and external worlds facilitates dialogue and argumentation¹⁹. We will have to specify the importance of argumentation in the identity dynamic

In addition, many American researchers have followed in the footsteps of Theodore Roszak²⁰, who proposed, as early as 1992, an "Ecopsychology" that includes, in the analysis of psycho-social processes, the effects, positive or negative, of planetary problems and the need to preserve Nature at the same time as the health and living spaces of human beings. Among the authors who have made new contributions are Jean Twenge (University of San Diego) and his works on the exacerbated narcissism of Generation Y (young people opposed to Generation X before 1968)²¹.

Questions that ecological psychology should answer about adaptation in relation to the Self and identity?

1. Adaptation, as a process, involves an interaction between an organism and an environment, between an actor and a context. But what is the nature of this interaction? Is it a submission of the organism to the demands of the environment? Or is it the primacy of the organism which imposes its internal organisation and constructs the environment in which it will live? If the answer to the latter question is yes, how far can man benefit from the environment without preserving it in order to achieve 'sustainable development'?
2. If we assume a reciprocal interaction between the internal (organism) and the external (environment), what comes first? The biological capacities of the organism (with or without a brain) or the constraints imposed or the opportunities offered by the environment and which the organism can seize (we will have to discuss Gibson's theory of affordances)?
3. Are the adaptation processes of simple organisms, e.g. homeostasis and 'survival' dynamics, applicable to complex organisms?
4. What is the place of consciousness and self-awareness in adaptation? Does the answer to this question change the answer to the previous question?
5. Are consciousness and self-awareness purely cognitive processes? Is it not necessary to associate affective and conative processes with them²²?
6. Most authors compare the processes of self-awareness and self-expression, identity strategies to narratives. Are identity dynamics limited to narrative identity: is identity established by the fact of telling oneself? Does self-consciousness only come into play through language? If we criticise this hypothesis, what about consciousness before language? Aren't there identities that use language that are more 'mature' than narrative?
7. Is it not necessary to analyse the role of identity in the dynamics of submission, in violence and aggression, in conflict and crisis management?

¹⁹ Zavalloni, *op.cit.* p. 21.

²⁰ See Roszak: 1992, *The voice of the Earth: an exploration of ecopsychology*; and Roszak et al. 1995 *Ecopsychology: restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*.

²¹ See his books *Generation Me* (2006) and *The narcissism epidemic* (2009)

²² On the "conatus" cf. Spinoza (*Ethics*, Paris, Gallimard, 1954. See also Reuchlin, M. (1990) *Les différences individuelles dans le développement conatif de l'enfant*. Paris, PUF.

The Self: consciousness, representation, characters and behaviours :

It is of course necessary to analyse here the interaction between the Self and adaptation. It is not so easy to define the *Self*, especially if we stick to the Anglo-Saxon *Self*. But for the moment, if we take the Self as a global entity²³, we note the difficulty of authors to give a definition other than "personality" or "identity". For example Damasio states: "Identity and personality, the two notions that immediately come to mind when we think of the term Self..." (1999, p.224), but this author sticks to a definition of identity limited to a stable reservoir of memories. "At any given moment in our conscious life, a *coherent set of identity records* is explicated, providing a *backdrop* for our minds, which can be quickly pushed into the background if necessary²⁴. Personality is said to be made up of traits that constitute 'temperament'. Reuchlin also expresses the difficulty of defining the Self: "self-concept, self-image, self-representation, self-model? He comes to limit the self in reference to its "representation": "In every situation and at every moment an individual makes a certain representation of the character he believes himself to be and he acts, if he must act, by reference to this representation. This intuitively trivial fact can be described as an awareness or knowledge, a sense of self²⁵. Reuchlin thus introduces his chapter on the 'self-concept'. He will show that most authors quickly come to differentiate several instances in the personality, in the Self. Before discussing these instances, it should be noted that Reuchlin uses the notions of 'characters', 'beliefs', 'representations' and 'actions'. We know the importance that Pierre Janet gave to the notion of "character"²⁶: "In relation to others and to ourselves, we are characters, we are individuals capable of playing a particular role"²⁷. It will of course be necessary to discuss the importance of the characters or "*social roles*" taken on by the Self. Are these characters merely contents or do they participate in the structuring and structure of the Self? Many authors rely on the internalization of "social roles" to explain the formation of the self. These theories can be called '*external theories*' insofar as they are based on the explicit assumption that the Self is constructed from the practices and representations of social roles. The most significant examples being the theory of 'symbolic interactionism' by George Herbert Mead (1934, ed. 2006) or the theory of the 'looking glass self' by Charles Horton Cooley (1902 review 1922)²⁸, often contrasted with William James who, in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890, tr.fr. 2003), refers to the importance of self-awareness, emotions and their links to the brain and to the processes of attention and conception. Internal theories", such as those of William James, value the organism in its inherited biological capacities of self-organisation, relative autonomy,

²³ There is of course a danger in confusing the Self with the 'total person'. For example, Pontalis (1975) criticised Jung for distinguishing between the Ego and the Self, but limiting the Ego to consciousness and associating the Self with the totality of the psyche, 'including the unconscious' (*op. cit.*, p. 281), whereas psychoanalysts tend to consider them as 'instances', 'parts' of the person. However, when referring to self-consciousness, self-knowledge and self-esteem, the self we are talking about remains unclear and seems to be considered as a global entity.

²⁴ Damasio, A. *op.cit.* pp. 226-227.

²⁵ Reuchlin, M. (1990) *Les différences individuelles dans le développement conatif de l'enfant*. Paris, PUF, p.59-60.

²⁶ Janet, P. () *The Psychological Evolution of the Personality* (1st edition) 1929 Edition Chahine.

As part of the collection: "Les classiques des sciences sociales" Website:
http://www.ugac.uguebec.ca/zone30/Classiques_des_sciences_sociales/index.html

²⁷ Janet, P. (1929) p. 178

²⁸ The self-image is, according to Cooley, associated with the gaze of others, which constitutes a "looking glass self", a mirror in which I perceive myself.

uniqueness and unification. For example, according to Damasio, "Shakespeare could use the internal conflicts of the Self to model a whole series of key characters in Western theatre; a great writer such as Fernando Pessoa would create four distinct figures of the poet with a single pen. But it is one and the same Shakespeare who will end his days in the tranquillity of Stratford, one and the same Pessoa who will seek oblivion in alcohol and die in a Lisbon hospital' (op.cit. p. 227). This statement is obviously open to discussion: the internal conflicts and their translation into addictive terms force us to analyse the internal psychological cleavages, the dysfunctions in self-control, the variations in identity, the paradoxical processes and the individual's difficulty in functioning as a 'total person', unique and unified! The importance of this issue in the explanation of adaptive processes can be seen.

In the work cited, Reuchlin revalorises the notion of 'conduct', a notion developed in the past by Janet, Wallon, Malrieu and with the latter by the Toulouse team of the 'Laboratoire Personnalisation et changements sociaux'²⁹. *Conduct* is often considered as synonymous with behaviour. It is necessary to differentiate them. Pierre Janet called certain actions, certain *particular forms of human behaviour* (expectation, triumph or failure behaviours, etc.) *conduits*. Behaviour is supposed to be "objective", observable, whereas conduct introduces the non-visible dynamics of the same behaviours, the mental activities and feelings before their expression.

In 1929³⁰, Janet wrote: "The *psychological fact* is *the behaviour* of the living being". Behaviour, externally perceptible (movements, actions, words) is certainly part of the psychological fact, but it also includes motivational dynamics, intention, awareness, deliberation, which are not perceptible. One could say that *conduct is the organised set of mental activities and behaviours oriented by desires, motivations, values to be defended and defences to be engaged*. Thus convictions and beliefs, fantasies and daydreams, inner language, feelings of love or aggression, mental evaluations in professional activities are all psychological operations that allow representations and acts, the body and social communications to be articulated. *The notion of conduct refers to the hypothesis of the organised, structured, unified character of the person* (Lagache, 1951). Conduct cannot be reduced to its physical or social aspects. "By *behaviours* we mean those which are externalised in action, but also those which are internalised in the form of fantasies or in the form of intrasubjective relationships between the various tendencies of the psychological apparatus" (Widlöcher, 1973). It is therefore necessary to analyse the articulation of mental activities and behaviours within a behaviour, but it is also a question of analysing the way in which the behaviours organise the life of the total man. On the subject of work behaviour, Meyerson wrote: "(We must) try to grasp as well as possible the fullness of behaviour, especially of complex human acts, tasks and works, and thereby understand *the total man*. A

²⁹ See in particular Malrieu, P. (1967, 1980, 1989), Baubion-Broye, Malrieu, Tap (1987a and b), Tap (1980 a and b). Malrieu defined *conduct* as follows: "Only the totality of behaviours have a meaning. We call it *conduct* to distinguish it from its elements, to which we reserve the name of *behaviour*. *Conduct is the set of acts by which the individual not only reacts to a situation, but first feels the need for action, acts and derives joy from it, shapes his responses and his personality, and transforms himself by acting on his environment*. But it is not enough for us to know the behaviours, we must know their conditions... psychology has no other reason to exist than to find the conditions of the self". (1967, p. 11).

³⁰ We are inspired here by the analysis of the concept of *conduct* proposed by Doron and Prévost in Doron and Parot's *Dictionary of Psychology* (1991), p.135.

human behaviour can only be understood in terms of its meaning and its place in the totality of behaviours"³¹.

Meyerson (1948, 1987), Malrieu (1967, 2003) and Damasio (1999, 2003) have also shown the importance of emotions, feelings and value systems in the emergence and functioning of self-images. In *fact, conduct includes everything that allows the person to give meaning to his or her situation, to legitimise his or her own behaviour according to the values he or she defends and the projects he or she develops*³². The diagram below evokes what one of us calls "The seven processes involved in human behaviour"³³ (learning behaviour, eating behaviour, sexual behaviour, professional behaviour, etc.). As we can see, *representations (including self-representation) are indeed involved in any behaviour, but they cannot be reduced to them. To these we must add motivations and energetic processes, mobilisation, legitimisation and processes of control of actions, which themselves provoke feelings (success-failure, satisfaction-disappointment, etc.)*. Pierre Janet defined feelings as "reactions to one's own action", but we will have to discuss this statement insofar as feelings are to be associated with but also differentiated from emotions. Feelings, like emotions, can occur in interactions with the environment (other people, groups) or with the natural environment (including objects, Nature) or socio-cultural contexts (institutions and community spaces).

³¹ Meyerson, I. (1948) "Le travail, une conduite" *Journal de psychologie*, *XLI*, 7-16, reprinted in *Écrits 1920-1983. Pour une psychologie historique*, 1987, Paris, PUF, p.221. On the links between conducts and works in Meyerson's conception, see Malrieu, Baubion-Broye and Hajjar (1991).

³² Cf. Tap, Da Silva, Roudès (2005) p. 18.

³³ See Tap, 1981, 1988; see also Tap & Antunes, 'The paradoxical dynamics of professional identities' (2010, forthcoming).

Adaptation and its functions: adjusting, conforming, integrating, defending, building, being recognised?

Before analysing in more depth the issues related to the Self and identities, their construction and their role, it is of course important to take up the discussion in the previous chapters on the nature and functions of the adaptation process, but in relation here to consciousness and self-awareness.

Authors favouring *biological adaptation* tend to emphasise the importance of phylogenetic evolution, the primacy of potentialities and structures linked to genes, the nervous system and even the brain, and the major importance of biological capacities for self-organisation³⁶. The organism has "structural and functional characteristics specific to living beings that enable it to survive by adapting to the conditions of existence (Cuvier's static conception)" (...). The more dynamic understanding defines adaptation as "beneficial transformations enabling the organism to respond effectively to new conditions (acclimatisation)". Finally, adaptation is confused with "the mechanism by which transformations between species can occur in the course of evolution (genetic variability/natural selection). *Exaptation* (by Gould) corresponds to the "opportunistic modification by natural selection of structures already present in the organism, which will see their functions modified in a new ecological context in response to new selective pressures" (evolutionary innovations) (*bricolage de l'évolution*)" (de Ricqlès, 2007).

However, adaptation can be considered as a result or as a process and the functions assigned to it can change. We can talk about a "good adaptation or a bad adaptation", we can differentiate between a closed or open adaptation, an immediate or longer term adaptation (anticipation, initiative, orientation), a permanent or temporary adaptation. As many authors have said for a long time, "The adaptive character of a behaviour can only be judged in relation to a norm" (Pavelco, 1987, p.168).

Adaptation is different from all or nothing. It implies gradations, significant hierarchies (which make sense). A *dialectic of adaptation* must be introduced (just as a *dialectic of identities* must be introduced here), if we want to understand and explain the contradictions and paradoxes that arise in the process as well as in its results. For example, "Spencer's adaptation was limited to the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations". For Piaget (1967), this is only the definition of one of the dimensions of adaptation: *accommodation*. *There is a "tendency to forget endogenous structuring and to interpret adaptation as being undergone from the outside, instead of seeing it as the product of active responses, in other words compensatory regulations operating by constructive recombination and by adjustment of effective responses given by the environment"* (p.68) (...) "At any level of adaptation, the organism modifies the environment (...), so that the organism-environment relationship is a circular one that consists of modifying the environment as well as being modified by the environment" (p.151). Through multiple behaviours, the organism *chooses from the environment* what is in line with its needs, even if

³⁶ The theories of *enaction* and *autopoiesis* proposed by Varela et al. (1974, 1993) and Maturana and Varela (1987) can be cited here. The theory of enaction or 'embodied mind' is critical of disembodied cognitivism, and reminds us that the mind is 'enacted', put into action and inscribed in evolution. The process of autopoiesis intervenes as self-creation, self-production of systems, including biological systems that have the capacity to regenerate themselves, to regenerate the network that produced them (example of the eukaryotic cell, etc.). These systems are autonomous (concrete unit in a topological network) and 'self-knowing'.

it means changing the environment. But it must also take into account the environment, which can limit the satisfaction of its needs, cause shortages, dysfunctions or losses. The example of the theory of affordances can be introduced here in relation to the interaction of the relationships between the organism and the environment. The concept of *affordances* proposed by Gibson (1977) is interesting in relation to the links between the animal's adaptive capacities to the environment and the corresponding characteristics available in that same environment. Affordances depend on both the environment and the animal: the notion of complementarity between the two is very important in an ecological approach. "Species occupy niches in the environment. Gibson describes a niche as a set of affordances. Niche and animals are complementary. When humans change their environment, they actually change the affordances in a way that makes it easier to live in. Since the affordances are not the same for all animals, by doing this he often makes the environment more difficult for other animals to live in³⁷.

In short, the individual is only adapted to his environment, i.e. functions completely well, insofar as he succeeds in constructing this environment according to his own conceptions of it, with a view to transforming situations and carrying out his plans and projects.

Such a position tends to move away from the definition according to which adaptation is confused with the process of *homeostasis*. This notion was proposed by Cannon in 1932³⁸. He considered homeostasis as the return to equilibrium. It is the mutually co-ordinated physiological reactions that "maintain most of the stable states of the body... and which are so peculiar to the living organism". It is the maintenance or return to a state of well-being that results from three successive processes: 1. an internal or external change threatens the organism or prevents it from achieving well-being; 2. this change alters the organism's functioning; 3. the organism detects the change and responds to it to eliminate the disorder (Damasio, 1999, p.39). The word 'homeostasis' alone would summarise the set of regulations and the resulting regulated state of life in the variations of 'approach-avoidance', 'arousal-calm' or 'competition-cooperation' (*op.cit.* p.34).

Is this homeostatic process applicable to the functioning of complex organisms? This is what Damasio asserts, following Spinoza, by showing the importance of bodily functioning in the dynamics of the human being. "All the phenomena regulating life, from chemical homeostatic processes to emotions proper, are without exception linked to *adaptations of the state of our body*" (2003, p.54). By controlling the interactions with objects and people that cause emotions, the individual effectively exercises some control over the life process and leads his organism towards more or less harmony, as Spinoza intended (*op.cit.*, p.57). This harmony can be confused with a "functional equilibrium" characterised by ease, fluidity, speed, power. We thus find what Spinoza considered to be the very essence of being: the natural effort to preserve oneself, the 'conatus'. This would be activated when we are

³⁷ From Wikipedia: *Ecological approach to visual perception*.

³⁸ Cannon, W.B. *The Wisdom of the Body*, New York, Oxford University Press

confronted with the reality of suffering or death, actual or anticipated, our own or that of others. This perspective would disturb the homeostatic process. The effort to preserve oneself and achieve well-being would respond to this disruption "by fighting to prevent the inevitable and restore balance. This struggle invites us to find compensatory strategies for our now disordered *homeodynamics*³⁹" (2003, p.265).

Damasio goes so far as to assert that "social conventions and ethical rules (are) extensions of basic homeostatic devices (ensuring survival and well-being) at the level of society and culture" (1999, p. 172). This is of course open to discussion.

In the well-known book on "*The Processes of Adaptation*" (Bresson et al. 1967), Malrieu criticised Piaget in relation to the analogy of biological and psychological levels of adaptation: "I felt embarrassed earlier by the comparison that Mr. Piaget made between the biological and the psychological, and I found myself closer to Mr. Nuttin. Mr. Nuttin seems to me to be right in opposing levels: is it not an essential methodological rule to differentiate before trying to discover analogies? But it is also necessary to understand the passage from one level to the other; and on this point Mr. Nuttin does not seem to me to go far enough in the search for the conditions of passage from adaptation of the biological type to adaptation of the personality" (1967, p. 158). Piaget replied: "I would reply to Mr. Malrieu that I find it difficult to follow him if he only distinguishes two levels, but if he proposes fifty, then I would agree completely! Malrieu: "Me too! (*op. cit.*, p. 164).

Awareness, knowledge and recognition of oneself... and of others

In order to introduce the complex issue of the relationship between consciousness, self-awareness and self-recognition, we will use the work of Cofer and Appley (1964) and the discussion of this work by Ernst Boesch (1964, 1975). Cofer and Appley analyse stress reactions, their strength and effects, and the difficulty of controlling them. The reactions range from adaptive attention through frustration to the perception of danger, causing anxiety. "It is at this threshold that forms of reaction are transformed from exclusively problem-solving behaviour to include ego-oriented behaviour, maintaining the self and its integrity. If stress increases, "one can observe the elimination of all task-oriented behaviour, and an exclusive preoccupation of the organism with the protection of the ego" (p.252)⁴⁰. From this finding the authors hypothesise that changes in self-awareness vary according to the nature of the actor's situation. This result can of course be compared to the one studied by Lazarus concerning the opposition between coping centred on the problem and its resolution and coping centred on emotions. We will show that there is a close link between consciousness and emotions. Emotions can divert us for a while from solving the problem, but they allow us to refocus on ourselves, possibly a temporary withdrawal which, after a

³⁹ The term *homeodynamics* was proposed by Steven Rose in *Lifelines. Biology beyond determinism*. According to Damasio *homeodynamics* is more appropriate than *homeostasis* in that it suggests the process of seeking adjustment rather than a fixed equilibrium point.

⁴⁰ The French translation of this reference to Cofer and Appley's work is by Ernst Boesch (1967, p. 101)

diversion, can allow us to better solve the problem. The question of the relationship between self-awareness and emotions is therefore important, and we need to answer it. But let us proceed step by step. First of all, we need to introduce the question of evolution, of the construction of consciousness and self-consciousness.

From levels of consciousness to active self-awareness

Of course, there is no question of discussing the philosophical and scientific problems posed by consciousness. We know that modern psychology, in order to develop, had to move away from the introspective conception and display the importance of observable behaviours, whereas nothing could be said about consciousness if it did not manifest itself in some way outside the body. But to speak of consciousness or self-knowledge, to speak of personal identity, requires highlighting some indicators in phylogenesis (is the animal conscious? Are there several levels of consciousness in animals, levels prior to speech, prior to access to language?); but also indicators in ontogenesis (What are the levels of consciousness gradually reached by the child? What relationships are established between these levels and the child's character and personality? How is personal identity constructed and what links are made between it and mental images or representations, desires and actions?).

Many authors have shown the importance of the links between levels of consciousness during childhood and adolescence and emotions (for example: Wallon, 1976a, Malrieu, 1967a, 1967b, Zazzo, R. 1975, 1980, Tap, 2005). These links are obviously decisive in defining levels of adaptation

For example, Malrieu (1967b) proposes three levels of adaptation:

- *Anticipatory adaptation* (pre-adaptation by conditioning): preparing to act, saving time;
- *Adaptation through progressive differentiation*: need to overcome the conflict between the old and the new through integration processes: opening up to new influences, introducing conflicts to be overcome (over-adaptation).
- *Retrospective adaptation*: remaking the past to invent the future. Three imbalances introduce a "dramatic" aspect into the construction of the self (in the sense of the Latin: *drama*: emotionally charged action): a) changes in the environment; b) intrapersonal, endogenous imbalances; c) imbalance resulting from interpersonal and social conflicts.

Malrieu presented the levels of consciousness and adaptation of the child from birth to three years (1967a). In this work he defines what, according to him, constitutes the triggering process of self-consciousness: "The first self-consciousness is the awareness of an initiative with social value, with the value of surpassing oneself and as such signified to others" (p. 77).

More recently, Damasio (1999, 2003), based on his neuropsychological observations, analyses the multiple functions of emotions in the dynamics of construction and actualisation of self-consciousness. "Emotions are curious adaptations that are an integral part of the cogs that ensure that organisms regulate their survival" (1999, p. 63).

He also mentions three levels of consciousness, and therefore three levels of adaptation, the first two of which can be applied to many animals, the third being specifically human:

- The *proto-Self* is a "preconscious biological precedent". "The proto-self is a coherent collection of neural patterns that, moment by moment, map the state of the physical structure of the organism in its many dimensions. We are not aware of the proto-self. It has no perceptual powers and holds no knowledge (1999, p. 159). A '*core-consciousness*' would correspond to the proto-self, in the here-and-now, through a 'subtle and evanescent sense of knowing, at every moment renewed', in the here-and-now, (p. 199).
- The *Central Self* could be metaphorically represented by "a non-verbal account of the object-organism relationship", allowing for the enhancement of object images (*op.cit.* p. 174). This non-verbal account, in the here and now (which Damasio goes so far as to call, in an abusive manner, a "narrative without words", p. 175) is based on neuronal configurations that become images, which would constitute an inner narrative incorporated into the stream of thoughts. According to Damasio, consciousness and the self do not emerge after language; they are not a direct construction of language. "Consciousness begins when brains acquire the power, the simple power, to *tell a story without words*, using the universal non-verbal vocabulary of body signals" (p.39).
- But language will make an important contribution to the higher form of '*extended consciousness*' that facilitates the emergence of the *Autobiographical Self*. In extended consciousness, the sense of self "comes from the coherent and recurrent presentation of some of our personal memories, the objects of our past which give, hour after hour, their substance to our identity and personality" (p. 201). Storytelling comes before language since it is in fact a condition of language. But with language, combined with memory and consciousness, the person will be able to choose between multiple patterns of action, and optimise the implementation of the chosen action. The images and associated emotions will extend the domain of the projected and realised actions, increasing their scope and effectiveness.

Damasio also refers to the 'dramatic' character of the extended consciousness and the autobiographical phase: 'Your extended consciousness can make you the central character in an epic novel, or set you on the path to creation. It is the same central self, but now connected to the past already lived and the future prospects that are an integral part of your autobiography' (p.199). We find the importance of the narrative as a major process for the emergence and reinforcement of self-awareness, of the self-image: "The self is born only at

the moment when the story is told, within the story itself" (p. 195). We can thus make a link between self-awareness and the "narrative identity" proposed by Ricoeur (1990, 2004). But we must now make the diversions to the "self-concept" and/or personal identity. Let us note that for Damasio "the autobiographical Self rests on the 'self-concept', in the true cognitive and neurobiological sense of the term: the backdrop of healthy mental life" (1999, p. 177). "The self-concept corresponds to the higher levels of the autobiographical self" (*op.cit.* p. 343).

Self-concept or Identity(ies). The dynamics of identity

Can self-concept and identity be fully assimilated? According to L'Ecuyer, the notions of personal identity and self-concept evoke and measure the same processes and contents. But for other authors they should be differentiated. For example, Honess and Yardley (1987) consider that the notion of identity gives priority to interactive, social and cultural processes to account for the action of the individual, whereas the theory of the self-concept presents the individual in his internal structure and as an agent of action. However, it is necessary to take into account both structural (biological and cerebral) and social determinations and personal determinations (history and experiences). An interactionist or transactional theory seems necessary to explain both the modalities of identity construction and their relationship with practices and representations.

We will define identity as the mental and social structure of *qualifying attribution*, from which the individual *describes, evaluates and recognises himself, but also from which others describe, evaluate and recognise him*.

Identity is made up of representations and feelings. It is therefore not a purely cognitive system, whereas the "concept" emphasises the cognitive dimension of the self. The importance of affectivity, emotions and feelings, in the dynamics of personal identity must be introduced. But there is a major advantage in using the notion of identity. This can be applied to the self, but it also concerns collective identities (sexual or gender, professional, family, marital, parental, national, religious, etc.). In constructing his or her own identity, the individual will have to articulate these multiple identities within him or herself and in relations with others, in particular situations, on the occasion of daily events. Identity is not only "I", it is also the multiplicity of "Us", differentiated or opposed to "Them".

But what is important, in our view, is that the notions of *identity* and *otherness* involve processes of *comparison, both internal* (the way in which the person associates or contrasts some of his or her identities) *and external* (models, persons or groups, with whom the person can identify).

Etymologically, identity is associated with remaining 'identical' to oneself over time (the 'meme' of the philosophers). But this first definition (by *idem*) is opposed to the one that defines identity as the affirmation of one's own characteristics, as a target object (definition by *ipsity*). It is not a question of remaining the same, but of being oneself. The articulation between memeticity and ipsity is characteristic of Paul Ricoeur's⁴¹ *narrative identity*. The Self emerges only on the condition that it is constructed through the narrative of what one has just experienced, in the recent past, and then more and more distantly. The narrative identity allows man, by telling himself, to build and strengthen his personal identity, and with it multiple sectorial identities linked to sex, age, marital, family and professional situation. These multiple 'qualities' are linked to activities and roles. Identity is therefore not

⁴¹⁴¹ Ricoeur P. *Soi-même comme un autre*. Paris, Seuil, 1990, p. 167 ff.

only cognitive and affective, but also involves the actualisation of identity through practices and the assumption of responsibilities. Marcia (1991) mentions three facets of personal identity:

- A *subjective facet*: with a multiplicity of feelings, in particular real or supposed feelings of unity and continuity of self, in relation to representations, images and emotions on the one hand, and to opportunities and external (physical, social, cultural) constraints or pressures on the other;
- A *behavioural facet*: consisting of all habits of all kinds, attitudes and motivations, reactions that are both observable and predictable;
- A *structural facet*: including the ability of the subject to control, organise, maintain or change his or her overall personal functioning, in relation to the different current contexts, but also in relation to his or her personal history and way of regulating time.

According to Lehalle (1995) the establishment of identity introduces *three distinct processes*: *descriptive* (self-description), *evaluative* (self-esteem) and *integrative* (internal cohesion). This diversions reveals the characteristics of narrative identity, as proposed by Paul Ricoeur (1990), which articulates *meme* and *ipsity*. By recounting himself, the person becomes the hero of his own story; by recounting his experiences, the person builds an *anchorage* and a *historical depth*. It also allows for the orientation of a future and the construction of a substantial ideal of a "good life, of well-being".

These processes are articulated with eight *dimensions of personal identity* orienting and adjusting its cognitive (representations), affective (emotions and feelings) and conative (action patterns, tendencies, realising tension) content.

These eight dimensions are: 1. the temporal dimension associated with *feelings of permanence or continuity*; 2. the structural dimension linked to *internal feelings of coherence and unity*; 3. the multidimensionality of the identity system associated with *feelings of internal diversity and richness*; 4. The empowering dimension associated with the needs for *self-assertion, separation but also recognition*; 5. The singular dimension linked to *feelings of originality and uniqueness*; 6. The evaluative dimension linked to *feelings of positivity and self-worth*; 7. The anticipatory dimension involving the ability to construct action projects associated with *feelings of self-liberation through openness to the future (life project, self-project)*; and 8. The realising dimension linked to *feelings of "doing something" for the benefit of more than oneself*.⁴²

Of course, the number of dimensions may vary from one author to another, or within the same author at different periods⁴³. Codol and Tap (1988) also propose eight, but including two more synthetic dimensions (internal and external differentiation)⁴⁴.

⁴² The term "work" comes from the Latin *operare*, to act, (Old French "ouvrer", cf. ouvrier, opération). In an article in the *Année psychologique* (1951), Meyerson wrote: "Man's behaviour leads to works. The work develops in a particularly prominent way the characteristics of form and artifice, and moreover translates a search for the completed and the permanent. The animal makes the passage, man builds the formed and the durable. He makes "things" and wants to preserve them (...). He does not work to pass the time, he works to build (...). What is reflected in the notions of work of experience, of work, is man's participation in the physical and social environment - with all that this participation implies in terms of reciprocal actions - and his construction of a world, of human worlds" (1951 reproduced in 1987, p. 70).

⁴³ See the analysis of these variations in Cloutier, Gosselin and Tap (2005). Codol (1980) proposed three: unity, coherence and positivity, Tap (1980, 1988, 1991) proposed six, Codol and Tap (1988) proposed eight! This is of course also true in Anglo-Saxon works (Erikson, Marcia, Jackson, etc.).

Differentiation (Breakwell, 1983, 1986) is an important dimension because it implies both internal integrative processes (coherence and complexification) and external processes of empowerment and separation (distancing, separation for independence and autonomy). Depending on the research, the differences or similarities are valued differently. Jarimowicz (1988) shows that differences (specific traits) are socially necessary for comparability and to analyse proximities as well as distances. According to his results, subjects who have a strong sense of distinction between themselves and others are also those who evoke the greatest number of categorical and group memberships in social life. On the other hand, Doise (1988), on the subject of gender identity (male-female), mentions the importance of similarities (egalitarianism, androgyny) as a means of affirming oneself, as opposed to stereotyped, possibly stigmatising differences (sexist discrimination), of which women are above all victims. Thus, "difference is perceived either as the essential support for the affirmation of identity, or as the establishment of discrimination, of negative distance from oneself and from others" (Codol and Tap *op.cit.* p. 120).

Personal identity and narrative identity: being yourself by telling your story

Paul Ricoeur was responsible for the in-depth analysis of the relationship between the '*Self*', *personal identity and narrative identity*⁴⁵. The aim was to show the importance of time and history, of action and language, in the emergence and stability of subjectivity and intersubjectivity. The difficulty lies in the fact that identity is semantically reduced to 'sameness' (to being the same, substantially permanent). On the other hand, pragmatics (speech act theory) "is able to move from the question of identity to that of self-identity by means of the theory of interlocution" (Rasmussen, 2006, "from identity to self", p. 255). But the point is to show that identity (absolute sameness) can be reviewed on the basis of "sameness and the uninterrupted continuity of change, a *principle of permanence over time*. This will be, for example, the invariable structure of a tool of which all the parts have been gradually changed (...) thus the relational character of identity is confirmed" (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 142). The subject continues to be himself, retaining a certain substantial permanence (ipseity) even if some of his characteristics have been changed. But personal identity is the complex result of the regulation between 'meme' and 'ipseity'. The concept of sameness thus makes it possible to include various discontinuities and changes in identity. The ipse manifests itself as idem, through 'habits' and 'acquired identifications' ⁴⁶In this way, "character ⁴⁷ensures both numerical identity⁴⁸, qualitative identity⁴⁹, uninterrupted

⁴⁴ Among the eight dimensions, Codol and Tap include the recovery dimension associated with 'coping' and which can therefore be confused with coping strategies (*op. cit.* p.170).

⁴⁵ See in particular the fifth study "Personal identity and narrative identity" (pp. 137-166) and the sixth study "Self and narrative identity" (pp. 167-198), studies included in *Soi-même comme un autre* (1990).

⁴⁶ As Ricoeur states, "egology requires the intrinsic complement of intersubjectivity" (1990, p. 14). Put differently, personal identity implies a second dialectic, that of the self and the other than self (internal alterity, that which in me is not me, oneself as another, and alterity of the other, alter-ego or stranger. On multiple identifications and their dynamic and dialectical relationship with identification, see Tap, 1988. Identification with an other implies 'assumed otherness'.

⁴⁷ Character: a set of enduring dispositions by which a person is recognized

⁴⁸ Digital identity: "being one": uniqueness versus "being many": multiplicity.

⁴⁹ Qualitative identity: extreme similarity or not.

continuity in change ⁵⁰and finally permanence in time that define mememe" (*op.cit.* p.147). The reference to character tends to value the 'sedimentation' of the self (at the expense of innovation).

But in order to bring out the temporal dimension of ipseity (covered by "memeticity")

Ricoeur appeals to *narrative identity through narrative*: "Narrative is the guardian of time insofar as there can be no thought of time without a narrated time" (Ricoeur, 1984, p. 241).

The three moments of narrative: describing, telling, prescribing. The narrative allows for the 'redeployment' of what has been sedimented (perseveration and continuation of character).

For many narratives, the autobiographical reference concerns the whole life.

The narrative allows the past and the future to be linked (fidelity to oneself, constancy in one's friendships, etc.) by attributing a sense of continuity to the constantly changing history of the self. It alone is capable of expressing the constant dialectic of selfhood and meme. But it also makes it possible to give meaning to subjectivity (dramatic articulation, through memory, between the descriptive and supposedly realistic account of past action and the constructed fiction of self⁵¹). It is precisely this dialectic between the adapted, effective and realistic action and the character (the fictional hero of my own story through which I value myself) that builds the dynamic of subjectivation. The person, understood as the character of his or her own story, is associated with the coherence of the story told. "It is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character, and therefore of the person who tells his own story. The character derives his singularity from the unity of his life considered as the temporal totality, itself singular, which distinguishes him from all others" (*op. cit.*, p. 175).

It is through the narrative that the event becomes history. It is one of the conditions of the authentic and fundamentally human character of existence.

From narrative identity to argumentative and reconstructive identity

Narrative identity alone, however, cannot provide an understanding of the emergence, maintenance and complexification of personal identity.

"Autobiographical accounts are not simply "life stories" in which the subject describes the course of his life. It is a question of formulating *reflexive questions* in which he asks himself what he could have done and, on the basis of an assessment of his experiences and the situation of strength or weakness in which he finds himself, what he could do. A more or less coherent *plan for the future is developed*. "(Malrieu, 2003, p. 159).

To the dialectic between memeity and ipseity must be added the dialectic between ipseity and otherness, without which the person can remain locked in the present, in narcissistic omnipotence and irresponsibility.

For these reasons, Jean-Marc Ferry (1991a, 1991b, 1996) proposes to continue the analysis of identity processes and phases, beyond the narrative and the story.

Its descriptive/explanatory system could be called NIAR, because of the successive evolution of four identity processes: 1. *Narrative*; 2. *Interpretation*, 3. *Argumentation* and 4. *Reconstruction*.

⁵⁰ Time is a factor of dissimilarities, gaps, differences, diversity, variability, discontinuity, instability.

⁵¹ "Exalted subject, humiliated subject, it is always by such a reversal of the for or against that we approach the subject" (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 27).

- *NARRATIVE IDENTITY* allows both the individual and the group to construct (or reconstruct) their identity, if it is based on descriptive accuracy and expressive authenticity. But narration is permeable to fiction. It is about expressing the emotions that link the event to the self. "The narrative is like the cauterisation of a psychic wound". We can even sometimes speak of a "narrative compulsion", the narrative making it possible to compensate for anguish or failure, to ward off absence or loss.
- *IDENTITY becomes INTERPRETATIVE* when the narrative can become a law, a prescription (La Fontaine's fables are interpretive through their "moral"). The story becomes "exemplary" or "emblematic" when it proposes a *destiny*, a moral of life and death, a reference to Justice, to metaphysics, to religion. It is a tragedy from which some fundamental questions emerge: injustice, inequality⁵². For personal identity, the enigma of the end relates to the mystery of death.
- *IDENTITY becomes ARGUMENTATIVE* through the "rational and legal justification of claims". Argumentation engages the "responsibility of the subject of law" and directs ethics towards a procedural idea of the just society. It always has the value of an attempt to justify what is said, thought and intended. It claims to fight against external (intercultural confrontations, antagonistic conflicts, submission to the established order) and internal (self-criticism) destabilisations in favour of a normative correctness, an ethical legitimacy. It is a question of fighting against the established order, if it is perceived as inadequate and illegitimate. The law must do justice.
- Finally, *IDENTITY becomes RECONSTRUCTIVE* through History and Language. It is a question of accessing the historical understanding of structures in order to reconstruct the processes (individual or collective). But reconstruction is not limited to reconstructing a development logic, a history. It also has an ethical value: to understand the fatal causality of wounded life (1996, p. 15), to access verbal intelligibility, expressive and evaluative statement, authenticity of self-presentations. Reconstruction implies recognition, but "reciprocal recognition is recognition of reciprocal violence and demands reconciliation" (1996, p. 62). In fact, violence exists at all four levels of identity.

Identities	Functions	Reference	Category
<i>Narrative</i>	<i>Telling, listen to</i>	<i>Event described</i>	<i>Be</i>
<i>Interpretive</i>	<i>Explain, understand</i>	<i>Story Moral of the story</i>	<i>Saying and making sense</i>
<i>Argumentative</i>	<i>Defend or justify Challenging, problematizing</i>	<i>Claims</i>	<i>Truth Validity</i>
<i>Reconstructive</i>	<i>Analyse and recognise each other</i>	<i>Persons making such claims</i>	<i>Recognition</i>

⁵² The importance of Amartya Sen's work on the need to introduce ethics into the economy and politics, through the issues of justice (2010), equality (1992) or identity-based violence (2006), can be mentioned here.

The passage from a narrative and interpretative identity to an argumentative and reconstructive identity implies the confrontation, internal and external, between ipsity and otherness, in order to allow the accession to a *political (citizen) identity* always perceived as a *personal identity, but collective and based on reciprocal recognition*. "The men of refusal are the first candidates for citizenship. They are the first to be politicised. The citizen is born only from the ideal legal act that recognises in him a disposition to reciprocity, to reciprocal recognition (1991b, p. 161 ff).

The identity struggle for recognition

Several of the authors taken as references here (Malrieu, 2003, Ricoeur, 2004, Ferry, 1991, Honneth, 2008a, Sainsaulieu, 1977⁵³, Sen, 1991, 2010) rely on the importance of the reciprocal recognition of identities, via equality and justice. Here we will focus on the analyses and proposals of Axel Honneth.

In analysing the process of recognition, this author compares Hegel's position on the "death struggle for recognition" (1803) with George Herbert Mead's position on "symbolic interactionism" (1934).

The young Hegel (1802-1803) ⁵⁴was 'convinced that the struggle of subjects for the mutual recognition of their identity produces within society a movement tending irresistibly to establish on the political and practical level institutions guaranteeing freedoms; it is the demand for intersubjective recognition of individual identity that introduces from the outset a moral tension into social life' (2008a, p.11).

In an aggressor-victim situation, the subject-victim must defend the integrity of his person. He makes this 'personal injury' a matter of his 'whole personality'. He wants to see his 'honour' restored (p. 33). Each of the protagonists (individuals or groups) seeks to convince the other that their whole personality is worthy of recognition. Yet, according to Hegel, they can only do this by proving to each other that they are willing to put their lives on the line (through a struggle to the death). The spirit is only fully realised by knowing that it is recognised by others. The individual can only be sure of this by experiencing the practical reaction by which the other responds to a deliberate challenge, or even a pure provocation. According to Hegel, these conflicts are not purely negative. It is through such destructive gestures that more advanced relations of recognition are formed, from which a 'community of free citizens' can actually emerge" (p. 34). In passing, Hegel differentiates between the 'person' and the 'total person'. The person refers to an individual who bases his identity primarily on the intersubjective recognition of his legal capacity, whereas the 'total person' acquires his identity only in the intersubjective recognition of his 'particularity', his 'subjectivity'. The result would be the increasing emancipation of individual subjects and the strengthening of their communal bonds through movements of reciprocal intersubjective solidarity. The three processes coordinated by Hegel could be schematised as follows:

Individual → Person → Subject
Love Right → → Solidarity

⁵³ See in particular Chapter 8 "Collective identities and self-recognition at work" 1977, pp. 302-343, in which Sainsaulieu rereads the Hegelian scheme of self-recognition and uses it to understand the processes of loss and regaining of identity at work.

⁵⁴ Hegel, G.W. *System of ethical life*. Tr.fr. 1976

At the individual level, there is a back-and-forth between externalisation and return to oneself, in an "incessant repetition in which the spirit realises itself step by step".

In spite of its dramatic character, the process of mutual recognition of whole persons comes to show its positivity in terms of personal, individual or collective development. But we must now mention processes perceived as dramatically negative, those developed by Edgar Morin, in relation to *homo demens*. The 'irrational, mad and delirious component of the human being' (2001, p. 105 ff)

Rationalisation, submission, alienation and subjugation: the limits of adaptation ⁵⁵

After the television programme 'Extreme Zone', ⁵⁶which reproduced Milgram's 'submission to authority' experiment (1974)⁵⁷, almost 80% of the volunteers turned into torturers, to the applause of the audience. What concerned Milgram most after his experiment was 'the disappearance of the sense of personal responsibility, by far the most serious consequence of submission to authority' (1974, p. 25). The morality of obedience often takes precedence over the morality of mutual respect and autonomy. Studies are multiplying, evoking the pervasiveness of the manipulations of those in power, even to the point of social harassment.

Le Goff speaks of the 'soft barbarism' of blind modernisation, Marzano of the 'perversion of management in companies', Gaulejac and Aubert of the 'cost of excellence' in a society sick of management, etc. The question of imposed submission or "freely consented submission", and of manipulation (Beauvois and Joule, 1981, Joule and Beauvois, 2002) is more than ever raised. It is true that some authors show the limits of this.

For example, Courpasson and Thoenig (2008) show that P&MS are far from being as docile or credulous as they are said to be, vis-à-vis management. Many P&MS are at the same time rebellious, highly critical of their management, and highly invested in their work. "The theory of voluntary submission is not finally in line with what surveys on work involvement show"⁵⁸.

⁵⁵ On this history see Tap, 1980, 1988.

⁵⁶ Cf. the book based on the television experience: Nick, C. and Eltchaninoff, M. *Expérience extrême* Paris, ed. Don Quichotte, 2010.

⁵⁷ The subjects of the experiment are asked to play the role of "teacher" in charge of punishing the "pupil" who is presented to them as a volunteer. The punishment consists of electric shocks of increasing intensity (15 to 450 volts), administered by the teacher, who is in fact unknowingly in front of a sinister mise-en-scène: the student-victims, accomplices of the experimenter, are tied to a sort of electric chair, electrodes attached to their wrists. The teachers are placed in front of a dummy device with thirty joysticks (each one supposed to add 15 volts to the previous one) and are instructed to administer an electroshock of immediately higher intensity for each new error committed by the pupil in a learning process. At 150 volts or more, the student must simulate intolerable pain and express a desire to stop the experiment, but the experiment "must" continue. Contrary to the opinion of the experts (who thought that most teachers would not go beyond 150 volts, 60% of the "teachers obeyed the experimenter (an academic representing science!) to the end, i.e. to the maximum volts.

⁵⁸ Dortier, J.F. "Les salariés sont-ils des victimes consentantes ? *Sciences Humaines*, 2010, No. 213, pp. 45-47.

Following the television experiment, Bègue and Terestchenko⁵⁹, authors of an investigation after the "Extreme Zone" programme, write: "Once the deception was revealed, the docile questioners were told that they had nothing to feel guilty about, because it was only the situation that was at fault; besides, the others had acted like them. It was not necessary that, after having behaved like perfect torturers, they should also lose confidence and self-esteem. What if one were to apply such an accommodating understanding to murderers caught in real conditions of mass genocide? The authors, after investigation, find that "disobedient action is more difficult for those who are most integrated into the system. Conversely, those who feel least satisfied with their lot or have an inclination to reject the social status quo have a much greater propensity for rebellion. The authors point out the "ordinary destructiveness factors" in some companies and the effects on some employees, who are driven to despair and suicide.

According to Koestler, four causes can explain social pathology, *homo demens*: 1. the explosive growth of the neocortex and the insufficiency of its domination over the old, reptilian brain (McLean's schizophychology); 2. the long impotence of the human newborn (neoteny) and its subsequent consequences: unreasoning submission to authority, the docile receptor child to ready-made beliefs; 3. the double curse of language: the neocortex and the reptilian brain. The long impotence of the human newborn (neoteny) and its subsequent consequences: unreasoning submission to authority, the docile receptor child to ready-made beliefs; 3. The double curse of language: riot-maker (We don't go to war over land, but over words) and builder of ethnic, religious, etc. barriers; 4. The discovery of death and the mental split that provokes the fear it inspires. According to this author, man (individual or group) is a "*holon*", a "whole-part": he experiences himself as a unique, autonomous and independent whole (assertive function) and as a "part", dependent on his natural and social environment (integrative function). Paradoxically, it is the 'deviations' of the individual integrative function to the benefit of the assertiveness, the egotism of groups (which are nourished by the altruism of their members) that provoke chauvinism and sectarianism, proselytising and fanaticism of groups from the faithfulness, obedience, communion, solidarity and dedication of their members.

In more individual terms, Kelman (1958) had shown that social pathology is linked to three psychological processes: 1. submission to the authority of the father or his substitutes (charismatic leaders, saints or demagogues, sages or maniacs); 2. unconditional identification with a social group to which one belongs; 3. blind acceptance of a belief system with its precepts and dogmas.

Conclusion

⁵⁹ Bègue, L. and Terestchenko, M. "Extreme zone: can reality TV turn us into torturers? *Le Monde*, Tuesday 09 March 2010, p. 19. Several participants were interviewed by the press. Their reactions are particularly "questioning": "I was told that my attitude was exemplary (I stopped) but in my eyes it wasn't, I still pushed those damn levers" (Nadège); "I was called a torturer, a Nazi. These words hurt! (Jérôme); Sandrine, a nurse, stopped but not immediately, "she didn't want to be booed by the public. (...) Those who went all the way are not potential murderers". "At the SNCF, we are used to carrying out orders without questioning. *Now I sometimes say to myself that we are entitled, sometimes, to disobey*" (Elie)... All of them "must face up to criticism and their conscience". *Le Monde*, Sunday 11 April 2010, p.12. We can therefore see how arguments from external influences (authoritarian pressures) provoke internal processes of guilt and shame and reactivate stress.

A model allowing the analysis of the dynamic links between adaptation, the Self and identities, is necessarily complex. It obliges us to take into account the question of the evolution of species, phylogenesis and the place of man in this evolution, to see how the levels of consciousness, the levels of action (from reflexes to behaviours and from behaviours to "acts of person") evolve.

To symbolise this complexity and diversity, we will take two quotes from Malrieu. The first one is proposed in the introduction of his first book (his thesis) on *Emotions and the personality of the child (from 0 to 3 years)*. How can we define the process of adaptation at these rapidly progressing ages?

According to the author, "Conduct consists in the passage from dissatisfaction and desires to satisfaction, through the *act of adaptation*. It is to the interaction of affective phenomena and *behaviours of adjustment to the world* that the relative equilibrium at each stage is due" (Malrieu, 1967, Introduction, p. 12). This definition for the early years of life is now used by many authors as a lifelong goal, based on a hedonistic, liberated philosophy associated with well-being and quality of life.

In the conclusion of his last book on *The Construction of Meaning in Autobiographies*, Malrieu summarises what he rightly calls the "acts of the person", beyond behaviour and even conduct; those acts that are carried out in critical situations and which oblige the person to find or rediscover the meaning that he or she gives to his or her life, to his or her own history, with reference to values, and linked to the most diverse adherences and commitments.

"The individual (...) *imagines what* he must do by freeing himself from the *conducts* in which he has been engaged, from their limited significance, in order to engage in an *act* of rupture, which allows him to resignify his personal history. But (...) he only succeeds in doing this in multiple dialogues with *tu* who reorient him, (and by taking into account) the immense social movement in which he is caught. (He becomes) a subject who debates with others, and within himself, about the future of mankind. (Malrieu, 2003, p. 276). This strategy would be rather linked to a 'heroic' philosophy that is quite opposed to the hedonistic philosophy of well-being.

Of course, Malrieu considered these two definitions of human behaviour as 'adaptive' according to the characteristics of people, physical or social contexts, and finally according to times and cultures.

In terms of the possible progression of an ecological psychology, let us take a few examples. In her book "*Generation Me*⁶⁰" published in 2006, Jean Twenge (Ms.) states that members of Generation Y (post 68) are characterised by an overvaluation of their abilities and an exaggerated level of self-esteem, an exacerbated narcissism. In 2009, Jean Twenge and W. Keith Campbell even asserted the existence of an epidemic narcissism based on an education founded on the individualistic overvaluation of children, which could even explain the origins of the current economic crisis. This hypothesis is open to discussion: the authors downplay the existence of stable low levels of self-esteem accompanied by psychological suffering and multiple adaptive difficulties. Furthermore, Baumeister et al (2003), referring to

⁶⁰ With a significant subtitle: "*Why today's young Americans are more confident, assertive, entitled -- and more miserable than ever before*".

research with Generation Y, state: "We found no evidence that building self-esteem (through therapeutic or school-based interventions) is beneficial. Our results do not support the promotion and extension of self-esteem in the hope that it will improve academic performance. Given the heterogeneity of high levels of self-esteem, undue praise could just as easily promote narcissism and its undesirable consequences. ⁶¹Twenge's suggestion of humility has been widely discussed. On the other hand, the notion of 'self-compassion' (Schoendorff, 2009b), much studied today, in particular by Kristin D. Neff et al. (2009a, b, c), introduces new hypotheses that could reorient the understanding of the links between stress, coping and self-esteem.

In addition, in 2008, Greenberg and Weber published a book entitled "Generation We" ⁶²in which a thousand examples of commitment and solidarity mobilisations are mentioned.

The opposition between an individualistic society (primacy of the Self) and a supportive society (primacy of the We) is not new, but it is enriched by the need to better understand the transaction between sustainable development and positive defence. The emergence of an ecological psychology based on the complex interaction between the individual, groups (with cultural diversity) and Nature seems to be able to rely today on the parallel emergence of *Positive Psychology* founded by Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, 2000 ⁶³.

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⁶¹ Quoted in Schoendorff, 2009a

⁶² Again with a catchy subtitle: "How millennial youth are taking over America and changing our world forever".

⁶³ See the *Journal of positive psychology dedicated to furthering research and promoting good practices*. Published by Taylor and Francis Group. Publisher: Routledge.UK

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