

About the interstructuration of the subject and the institutions¹

The notion of "*interstructuration of the subject and institutions*", proposed by our master and friend Philippe Malrieu, is undoubtedly a major one for many psychologists or sociologists (whether from Toulouse or not).

In the article written by the three of us (Malrieu, Baubion-Broye, Tap) in 1987 (n°65 in www.pierretap.com), we confronted and compared two conceptions of the links between personal conducts and social institutions: that of Jean Piaget (which I analyzed in greater depth two years later² n° 89) and that of Karl Marx and Henri Wallon (analyzed in greater depth by Claude Fronty³ and by Philippe Malrieu⁴ n° 88b). We then proposed a deterministic model based on the analysis of real conducts and the proposal of a model for the analysis of the structuring processes of social systems and the processes of personalization. I had proposed to use a temporal division based on the symbolism of the "holds" (grip, disengagement, resumption and enterprise to which one can add misunderstanding, surprise...), presented in Lisbon in 1986, to describe and explain the dynamics of the identity crisis in adolescence ⁵ (n°59b) and published in *Connexions* the same year⁶ (59a).

In the "three-way" article, we constantly used the term "conduct" and in particular "project conduct" and "conduct of project" which should not be confused. This term "conduct" has a long history, especially in French culture, and I think it should not be translated into English (or other languages) as "behavior". Daniel Lagache is one of those who have often used this concept, but he admits that it could be equated with behavior if we accept the definition of conduct:

"The concept of conduct, as it is used today, can be defined in the following terms: Conduct (or behavior) is the set of operations, material or symbolic, by which an organism in a situation tends to realize its possibilities and to reduce the tensions that threaten its unity and motivate it (...) Conduct is thus the central object of psychological investigations: the psychological field being defined by the interaction of the organism and the environment, conduct is reduced to the modifications of the psychological field of which the organism is the agent. The methodological problem then consists in asking ourselves in what forms conduct is offered to investigations and with what procedures these data can be approached "⁷. On the other hand, if we define behavior as all observable motor or verbal activities, it is preferable to maintain the notion of conduct. This is what we have done, as a precaution, in the English translation of the three-part article! Pierre Tap

¹ Alain Baubion-Broye, Philippe Malrieu, Pierre Tap (1987) L'interstructuration du sujet et des institutions *Bulletin de Psychologie* Tome XL, n° 379, Pp. 435-447

² Pierre Tap (1989) Jean Piaget et le constructivisme relationnel in P. Malrieu (dir.) *Dynamiques sociales et changements personnels*. Pp. 189-218 CNRS (CRP Toulouse) 273 pages

³ Claude Fronty (1989) Marx or history in search of authors: from the petrification of social relations to the free development of men. Pp. 15-44 in P. Malrieu (ed.) *op.cit.*

⁴ Philippe Malrieu (1989) L'articulation des socialités et des activités selon Henri Wallon. Pp.171-188 in P. Malrieu (dir.) *op.cit.*

⁵ Pierre Tap (1986) Personalization and identity conflicts in adolescence. *Primerio Encontro sobre desenvolvimento da adolescência e processos educativos* Instituto Piaget. Mayo, Actos

⁶ Pierre Tap (1986) Personnalisation et intersubjectivité. Pp. 149-154 Paris *Connexions*, 47

⁷ Daniel Lagache (1951) La psychologie : conduite, personnalité, groupe in D. Lagache and E. Rosenblum *The psychologist and the criminal. (Œuvres 1947-1952)* Pp. 305-332. Paris, PUF

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The interstructuring of the subject and institutions

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Introduction

The interstructuration of the subject and of institutions is the current object of reflection of a group of epistemological studies, in the "Personalization and Social Change" Laboratory. The ambition of this group is to propose a theory of changes in human conducts, beyond the traditional disciplinary divisions. It proposes to renew the models of approach elaborated about the evolution of the systems of actions of the subject, in relation with groups or persons by the mediation of constantly renewed material or symbolic instruments, within the framework of multiple situations which follow one another in the movement of the individual history and the history of the social institutions.

In ontogeny, as in collective history, conducts are transformed. What are the characteristics of the psychophysiological and psychosocial structures and processes that make these transformations possible? How can the interferences between individual and collective changes be understood and explained? In other words, do individual changes participate in the restructuring of social formations and do social changes have an influence on the evolution of individual structures?

In this field, two conceptions are present:

- The first presents change as a process of slow evolution based on the *progressive differentiation of structures*, a continuous extension of resources, and an ever-increasing capacity to adapt to changes in the relationship with the environment. Crises are seen as the direct consequence of an internal-external imbalance that will be overcome by compensatory rebalancing and integrative restructuring.

- The second puts forward the hypothesis that *change can only occur from the blocking, the breaking up, or the reshaping of structures by actualizing their contradictions*. The conflict thus brought to light, and its objectification, allow the overcoming of contradictions and the disalienation of the actors. This overcoming is obtained when a new, more complex, more integrated structure can be established, within which the previous contradictions are reduced. "The antinomy (...) is the indication that a new progress has become necessary. It must incite a new leap forward"⁸, and this "thanks to the return to unity, but on a higher level"⁹. Such a process implies the idea that the passage from one system to another, more integrated, takes place through mutations and qualitative changes, resulting from transformations produced in the conditions of existence or in the exogenous incentives, but also from internal modifications of the conducts, and of the relationship between the two. Change conceived in this way appears discontinuous, comprising critical integrative phases succeeding alternating dominances of the forces at work. It leads to progress both in the integration processes and in the complexity and richness of the integrated elements.

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But these two conceptions remain too global and must be put to the test, notably in the epistemological and methodological reflection on the construction, or the functional and structural transformations of conducts. Such a reflection poses the requirements of a deterministic study defining the relations, by and in the conducts, of the processes of structuring of the social systems and the processes of personalization.

To move forward in this direction, our assumptions are as follows:

1. The individual becoming subject, thanks to the *relations established with others* (RA) by and through the ambivalence in the game of identifications and oppositions, is placed in the heart of *interpersonal networks* (RI), and *cultural* (RC), inserted in multiple and complex *social relations* (RS). These relations, networks and relations constitute a *medium of works and institutions* that the subject uses as instruments in his efforts of adaptation to the situations, but they oppose between them and divide him between their solicitations, present and past. It is to say, consequently, that any human conduct has for character to be answer, at the same time to a maladjustment provoked by the situation (in an organic need, a specific desire, or induced by a social demand) and to the problems which are posed to the subject-actor, by the division between the institutions¹⁰, which can provoke in him, on the conscious or unconscious mode either the *submission*, by the choice of

⁸ Wallon H. (1945) *Les origines de la pensée chez l'enfant*. Paris, PUF, p. 179

⁹ Wallon, H. op.cit. p.206

¹⁰ The term *institutions* implies three nested definitions:

- The institution as a *social subsystem*: it is then confused, more or less, with the social organization;
- The institution as a *set of rules and instruments* used by an organization for, and in, its functioning;
- The institution as *passage, legitimations and consecrations*. Cf. on this subject Bourdieu, P. (1982) " Les rites comme acte d'institution " *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 43, 58-63

Even if the whole of the social and cultural institutions seem to be directed towards a totalizing harmonization, society and culture can only be illusorily perceived as homogeneous totalities.

the majority conduct (implying the repression of the conflict, either the *internal cleavage*, the compartmentalization of the behaviors provoking the impotence, the designation, the anomie, the devaluation or the derealization, the revolt or the escape, or the attempt of overcoming by the search for an integrative solution of the contradictory elements.

2. It can therefore be said that the structure of a conduct in a given situation does not depend only on external pressures for compliance, but on the intervention of internal processes, aiming at :
 - to an *effort of unification and coordination* (personality function);
 - to the *realization of a self-image* allowing the appropriation of diverse social identities, but in a continuity between the various temporalities thanks to the construction of a coherent personal temporal horizon, from the past to the future (process of *identization*);
 - to the search for *meanings, values, ideals* likely to legitimize the conducts and to make them more autonomous, by and beyond, the simple social recognition (construction of the *acts of person*).

These processes of construction of, and by, the personality, the identity and the person, are constantly under the influence of social regulations, whose plurality, oppositions, internal and external contradictions, are for the subject, under certain conditions to be specified, source of interrogations and inventions, if he succeeds in exceeding the double hold that constitute the power of the group, or of privileged persons within it, and the contradictions in the institutions.

3. The conduct, as answer to a quest of ideal image of oneself, operates in a restructuring, in two interdependent sides, of the subjective regulating processes, and of the solicitations and regulations emanating from the works and the institutions. This interdependence implies :
 - That the subject's conducts are, at various levels and in various ways, a manifestation of his participation in the maintenance or restructuring of the most diverse social formations;
 - That the "fundamental processes" which intervene in the elaboration of conducts (attitudes, affects, cognitive activities and their different levels... diverse "psychological functions") are dragged into the transformations of conducts and regulations. A conduct is not only the composition of a series of these processes, it is also their restructuring. Thus the study of the transformations of behaviors opens the way to the study of the transformation of "functions". One could thus (re)constitute the history of intellectual activities, of the quantitative increase and qualitative changes of knowledge (genetic epistemology), the history of feelings or of activities and decision processes, and the effect of these histories on the evolution of mental and behavioral structures. It is here to refuse to consider, without debate, the psychological functions as universal and timeless¹¹.

¹¹ The hypothesis of the universal character of certain human conducts is not inadmissible on the condition that it is supported by a generalization of the comparison of these conducts in the most diverse societies.

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It is to call for the existence of a psychology of relativity and change, a historical and intercultural psychology, allowing the analysis of the conditions of emergence of personalization, of the transformations in the practices and representations, in the conducts and the psychological functions, and the updating of the consequences, in return, of these transformations on the evolution of the institutions and social organizations.

4. The development of the psychosocial processes of interstructuring¹² can be presented in four phases:

Phase 1. Plural anchoring and socio-cultural hold: the individual, by means of appropriations and balancing and under the effect of multiple influences, anchors himself in dual (RA) or plural (RI) relations with others, integrates himself in cultural networks (RC) and social relations (RC) and constructs his own cognitive (rc), axiological (ra) and practical (rp) networks.

Phase 2. The conflictual disengagement, the contradictions in, and between, the institutions and the internal cleavages lived by the subject, on the mode of the frustration of the desires or the blocking of the aims, cause imbalances, conflicts between the modes of appropriation and the new situations, which make inadequate and inappropriate, the usual behaviors. The individual finds himself in a position of disenchantment, of uprooting, of disintegration of the self.

Phase 3. The mobilizing recovery: the situation of rupture, experienced by the subject, tends to provoke attempts to treat and resolve the conflict. Among these simultaneous or successive attempts, we can cite: a) the attempt, not analyzed, to manage the effects of the rupture: revolt and marginalization (aggressive defense) or syncretic transition (defense by escape and securitization), b) the attempt to manage and analyze the causes by

- *critical objectification (clarification);*
- *relational, affective and cognitive displacements* (identifications favoring the appropriation of potentialities, search for references and organization of new aims);
- *prospecting for confrontation* and definition of the ideas to which one is opposed (negative ideologization) and of the persons whom one considers as adversaries and on whom counter-identifications are focused, but also of the ideas to which one adheres and of the persons whom one considers as alter-egos.

¹² The interstructuring is analyzed here from the transformations of the individual conducts and the psychological functions. It was also possible, at the interface, to focus on collective transformations, from the economic to the social and cultural, and to see how individual or group practices participate in these transformations and become institutionalized.

Phase4 . The creative enterprise: the mobilization mentioned above could be ineffective if it did not lead to moments of individual or collective realization and invention, involving :

- *The crystallization of aspirations into projects of conduct ;*
- *The implementation of "works", realization of objectives, "project management", by programming, possibly cooperative;*
- *The setting in motion of new anchors through rebalancing, and the emergence of a new institute.*

1. The plural anchoring

The individual is introduced, through the interplay of educational incentives, work requirements, social and cultural constraints and prompts, to a plurality of institutions, each of which responds to an original purpose in society as a whole, and proceeds according to original modes of interpersonal relationship. Individuals learn to differentiate these modes, which leads them to behave differently themselves, in a family environment or in a school environment, in a group of comrades or in a professional group, etc. Each institution uses different methods to adapt individuals, by conditioning or regulation of habits, by empathy or affective regulation of attitudes, by appeal to ideological conviction or by reference to the reasoning capacity of individuals and to the supposed rationality of the collective objectives pursued.

1.1. Regulations and latent conflicts in institutions

Between the various instituted social organizations, sub-systems of the global society, there are multiple economic and political, social, ideological and cultural regulations, each of which tends to accentuate its prevalence and its autonomy.

Economic and political regulations are made necessary by the inequality in the possession of power, the control of instruments of production and working conditions.

The *social regulations* intervene because of the existence of multiple barriers, implicit or explicit, between individuals belonging to different classes, categories or social groups: material or symbolic ghettos simultaneously constituted by the rejection of minorities or the division into classes, and by the limitation, voluntary or not, to the members of the group only, of activities, rituals and exchanges. These regulations come up against the principle of intra-group conformity, the multiple calls to order, and the solidarity of conditions.

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"The most merciless call to order is constituted by the effect of closure that the homogeneity of the social universe exerts... the universe of possibilities is closed".¹³

The *ideological and cultural regulations* turn out to be important insofar as the attempts of totalization which characterize the ideologies, the beliefs and the various

¹³ Bourdieu P. (1979) *The distinction. Critique sociale du jugement*. Paris, éd. De Minuit, p.443-444

"visions of the world" and of the man, provoke such cleavages that a minimal regulation is necessary, so that communications are established, even if these operate on the mode of the insoluble confrontation between absolutes. Within a society, these regulations are supported by a totalizing ideology, based on consensus and harmony at all costs, between individuals as well as between groups. This ideology masks and minimizes differences. It also provokes the repression of conflicts, at the expense of socially disadvantaged or culturally oppressed groups and individuals, who are thus deprived of the means necessary for the desired changes, deprived of the possession or the enjoyment of their work, of their history and/or of their identity. This repression undoubtedly favors the immediate anchorage insofar as it implies that each one accepts the position which is prescribed to him in the concert of the executors, and does not question the current balance of the powers. But it is a source of revolt or future mutations, insofar as individuals necessarily react one day or another to any situation where they see their means of action limited, their capacity for personalization and their ideals challenged, and where they fail to become themselves.

But the alienating character of certain conditions, situations and social positions, can be lived and perceived, by the subject, only insofar as this one operates beforehand a *multiple anchoring* in the institutions which pre-exist to him, insofar as he integrates himself in the relational and institutional networks which weave around him.

1.2. The socialization of the child as an anchor in the institutions

From childhood, the individual is anchored in a plurality of social subsystems, in relation to which he adapts, and whose rules and instruments help him to construct his own conducts and his own evaluation systems. This initial institutional anchoring will gradually allow for insertion into complex systems of relationships, engagement in oriented collective actions, affiliation to groups and adherence to their norms and values. It is ultimately constituted by all the modalities of involvement and participation of the subject in instituted activities.

In each of the social subsystems, the child finds the affective, cognitive and practical instruments, allowing him to build a social personality, that is to say the whole of the means of control and regulation of his own activities, entering in relative concordance with the specific controls and regulations of each of the social subsystems. But he also finds there the means and arguments of installation of a socially valorized and personally valorizing self-image, and which will be the object of frequent revaluations. This process of *identity* is indeed a continuous quest marked by a succession of identifications and supports¹⁴.

But the mode of succession of the images of oneself, the styles of relationship with the models should not be perceived as automatic and imposing themselves on a

¹⁴ On the construction of the identity, cf. the collective works: *identité individuelle et personnalisation*, Toulouse, Privat, 1980 and *Identités collectives et changements sociaux*, Toulouse, Privat, 1980. About the theory of scaffolding applied to psycho-social transformations, cf. Kaës, R. Etayage et structuration du psychisme, *Connexions*, 1984, 44, pp. 11-48. "The history of the subject is that of its propping up: supports, models, drifting-recovery. The concept of support tries to account for the crucial relations of the psyche, the body, the group and the culture. The psyche is structured on a process of *multiple, reticular, mutual and critical propping* " (op.cit. p.32).

passive child. On the contrary, they imply a great activity on his part, in what constitutes his daily "dramas".

He relies on his parents, or on other adults or elders, and identifies with them, or imitates them, to fight against the anguish of his own powerlessness and subjection. By doing so, he appropriates their affective (capacity to love, tenderness, power of refusal...), cognitive (induction, deduction, recollection...), practical (manual and verbal skills...), axiological (hierarchy of values...) competences. But this quest is at the same time one of the attempts of unification, among those which characterize the genesis of the personality, an effort to find a style, implying unity and continuity. This effort implies regulations between contradictory identifications, between pressures of the organism, socio-cultural incitements and specific desires of the child, in particular the "desire to make alone", to be autonomous, not to limit himself to the image that the others return to him and to the expectations that they express. The child is thus brought to manifest oppositions by defense and affirmation. But, in the phase of anchoring corresponding to childhood, particularly between 6 and 12 years, the contradictions are not systematically brought to light by the subject, and the conflicts remain limited, or in simple derivation. The child's personality remains fundamentally oriented, although not totally, by the heteronomous mode.

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In the course of his many undertakings, the child has certainly elaborated a personal axiological system, but the values retained are those that value him in the eyes of adults (even if he rejects the negative definitions attributed to him), and his own activities will be considered as successes or failures, depending on the exogenous references.

Moreover, the family, and especially the school, allow the child to access social and cultural works. The initiatory learning that implies this accession supports the process of support and appropriation. These works are going to become from then on technical capacities, power of meaning and supports of imaginary activities, proper to the child, facilitating so the emergence, and the structuring of its personality.

1.3. Socialization as integration of the personality

The coordination and unification of conducts thus come mainly from the identifications developed in the relations developed with the support-persons of the instituted sub-systems (family, school...). But the heteronomous origin of the integration attempts should not lead to their being minimized. By conforming, the child confirms himself in his own identity as much as he supports himself on others (who thus reinforce him).

In the relations it institutes itself, at the same time, as *alter-ego* (dual intimacy), and as *socius* (active member of a society). Before 6 years the child has juxtaposed conducts and systems of reference. The socio-cultural anchoring and the internalization of values and standards that it implies will allow him to decompartmentalize his conducts, to hierarchize the situations and the answers that he gives to them, to plan his acts in the time of the projects, to give a significance to the new situations, to anticipate them, to take advantage of them, instead of

undergoing them, to also attribute new values to the previous conducts, to reconstruct memories to value his current Self.

But the child is constantly confronted with the inadequacy of certain conducts, among his own or those of others, to new situations. However, the need to conform to the values fed by the regulating social ideology, from which the child has tried as best he can to harmonize the social subsystems in which he acts, pushes him to repress the conscience of these inadequacies resulting from external and internal contradictions. The repression functions, as we have said, as a mechanism of alienation.

But the modalities of anchoring and integration made possible by the repression of the contradictions, are going to be called into question at adolescence, as much because of the biological transformations as of the emergence of the oppositions to the references and former models, of the rejection of infantile identifications. The subject finds himself more or less submerged by the awareness of contradictions, inadequacies and injustices. Adolescence is a characteristic example, although not systematic, of the emergence of the phase of imbalance, of conflict, of disengagement, a capital moment in the interstructuration of the subject and the institutions.

2. The emergence of conflicts

In order to understand and analyze the models of resolution and overcoming of conflicts, it is necessary to grasp, beforehand, how they are established and how they are, because of the multiplicity of the anchoring of individuals in the social reality, problems of which these individuals - unequally conscious of their sources and their consequences - give different translations and meanings.

From this perspective, we will first study situations where the terms of conflict experienced by individuals give rise to reactionary or "retracting" conducts. That is to say, for example, to aggressive opposition, flight or withdrawal behaviors: they constitute responses - or strategies - that are at the same time syncretic, partial, transitory, but whose frequency and meaning must be taken into consideration insofar as they manifest "failures" in the activities of disengagement from anchorages and conflicts suffered by individuals, insofar as they also produce effects in the entire social organization. We will then question the conducts that contribute to actively "positioning" individuals in the face of conflicts, to structuring their recovery through the attempts they elaborate to tear themselves away from them and to conceive, in project, their overcoming.

2.1. The disintegrating revolt and the syncretic transition

In aggressive and systematic opposition to people and institutions, formulated as rebellion, with or without criminal acts, the rupture appears as the impossibility of actualizing potentialities, as a temporary or prolonged loss of a capacity to be, do or have. Several ruptures can also cumulate their effects: to the rupture with regard to rules and institutional norms can be added relational ruptures and the rupture of

internal coherence. Destabilized, uprooted, de-socialized, rejected and unrecognized, denied in his identity, the individual has no other mode of communication, and no other language, possible than those of violence, insofar as the causes of the current conflict are not elucidated, and where the means to overcome them are absent.

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In this situation, the subject often comes to accept the stigma, the negative identity, the label that society puts on him. An unstable identity associated with a poorly structured personality will be replaced by an identity firmly anchored in hateful attitudes towards society, drawing its recognition and value from an anti-social group. If there is a re-anchoring, it takes place in opposition to institutional expectations and installs the individual in a "hard marginalization". Social insertion and personal integration then become difficult or impossible.

Through flight or withdrawal conducts - another mode of response to relational and institutional conflicts - the individual seeks to "cut the bridges", to distance himself from certain people or environments: he abandons social roles that he has previously assumed. Such a strategy leads either to a withdrawal into oneself, into narcissistic and corporal modalities of resolution¹⁵, or to a withdrawal into a fusional or simply supportive group, in which the individual accepts to lose his identity and his autonomy, in exchange for a secure reception, far from the persons and places supposedly responsible for his conflicts and anxieties¹⁶

Attempts to resolve conflicts, these two types of conducts have in common their syncretic character, to allow only a reduced objectification of the causes of these conflicts, or even to "ignore" them (or to establish themselves on a false recognition of their nature). If these behaviors seem doomed to impasse or failure, it is also because they do not allow the elaboration of projects that are both personal and participatory.

2.2. The position of the subject in front of the conflicts

If we follow the Lewinian "genetic" model, we can undoubtedly admit that the subject structures his conducts by coordinating and differentiating them in front of objects and situations on which they are exercised according to the tensions they have to face. But it is also necessary to admit that they are inscribed in conflicts concerning these objects and these situations otherwise than as the resultant of forces - or valences - opposed, that they form attempts constructed by the subject to control and master them.

We suggested it previously, the conducts of the subject are built on the double dimension: of an (inter)personal history and of a social history of the institutions in answer to the conflicts that he meets and discovers during the course of the one and the other of these histories. As J.P. Sartre affirms it "the man experiences his

¹⁵ Maisonneuve, J, Bruchon-Schweitzer, M. *Modèles du corps et psychologie esthétique*. 1981, Paris, PUF

¹⁶ One can evoke here, not only the new groups centered on the body expression, but also the sects with religious character. The two currents can moreover have some common points. As Bourdieu indicates it " (the) sects which are organized around new forms of bodily exercise... are registered in a problematic with strong religious coloration " (*The distinction...* p. 427).

alienations, his reification, initially as a child in the work of his parents... lives and knows more or less clearly his condition through his membership in groups"¹⁷. It is because he sees himself situated, primitively and without his knowledge, in social relations, in the cultures of his groups, educated to take place there, launched by the mediation of others in front of the contradictions or the potentialities of " his Society ". To which it is important however to add that it is because he is simultaneously placed in the test of conflicts inherent to these relations with his models and to the diversity of his anchorings in the circle of these relations (social, cultural, interpersonal, to others) that he is brought to take or to claim positions of assertion of oneself, of autonomy, of struggle, that he becomes an agent. Another way of underlining the role of these various types of relations in the determination of the personal conducts and the role of the imbalances which, by affecting these conducts, set them up as "principles" and "standards" of the transformation of these relations¹⁸.

2.3. Imbalance of conducts and contradictions

Imbalances are not a given. They are initiated by contradictions, of several levels, which run through these relationships:

- Historical contradictions that work - from afar and from within - the institutions, that disturb not only the modes of coordination of the means and the ends characterizing their specific place in the evolution of the global social formation, but also the links that they maintain between them, where each one of them fulfills functions and participates, in relative complementarity with others, in the socialization of the individuals.
- Contradictions that derive - especially in periods of crisis - from the loss of the power of legitimization and regulation of the old ideologies in the face of the social conducts that the transformations of institutions demand.

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- Contradictions internal to the subject, rooted in the experiences that mark out his original history, which alter or destabilize the psychological processes mobilized in his personalization activities.

The contradictions of the first two levels, indicated above, do not constitute a bundle of univocal determinations. They do not act outside of the imbalances that they have instituted in the personal conducts, nor independently of the attempts (successful or aborted) of the subject to represent himself and to evaluate the effects on his own trajectory of existence.

Recognizing, in fact, that there are "objective" situations that disrupt personalization activities is not enough if we do not also recognize that these situations stem from

¹⁷ Sartre, J.P. - *Critique of dialectical reason. Questions de méthode*. Paris, Gallimard, 1960, pp.47 and 49.

¹⁸ Baubion-Broye (A.), Curie (J.) Gaffié (B.) Hajjar, (V.), Lanneau, (G.), Larrue (J.) Malrieu (P.) - Social relations, interpersonal relations, relations to others : sketch of a problematic of interterstructuration. *Annales de l'Université de Toulouse Le Mirail Homo XVIII-XIX*, 1979, Tome XV, ffasc . 2, pp. 61-79

personal imbalances, through the meanings they take on in the subject's behaviors and in the aims he or she constructs to overcome them.

3. The project as an attempt to deal with conflicts

3.1. Social contradictions and project processes

Enveloped by contradictions of sources, of fields, of heterogeneous rhythms of development, the conducts establish "new determinisms" in the systems of relations which bind the subject and the institutions (and in their history). For, because of the uncertain and competing situations that he has to face, of the discomfort that they provoke in him, the subject is put in a position to reorganize personal conducts, to agree or to oppose them by the meanings and the role that he lends to them in the treatment of his conflicts (*determinism by the meaning*). Confronted with "urgency", he is obliged to choose between different representations (ideals) of himself, between antagonistic values (*determinism by choice*), to make himself exist in the future as a potential actor (generally with others, within groups) of aims of overcoming these conflicts (*determinism by the project*).

These aims, outlined in the feelings of dissatisfaction, in the anxiety of the subject, in the anxiety of the subject, need to be structured by a project which specifies them, unifies them, inserts them - to the investigation of the self - in *a work of resumption of the contradictions and the conflicts which are at their origin*¹⁹.

An essential component and function of project conducts is, in fact, that they attempt, on the basis of an individual imaginary, an *objectification of the conditions* of dissatisfaction, the maintenance of which is unbearable for the subject, but whose causes are not immediately revealed. Another component and another function of such conducts is that they instruct the research of *personal and social possibilities* to be born, by preparing the ground for the acts to be accomplished so that they are realized.

These conducts embrace a plurality of processes, they command the restructuring of them during the personalization.

3.2. Components and interdependence of these processes

Thus in the elaboration and the deployment of these conducts interfere :

- Processes of *exchange and communication* (in the desired dialogue with *others*, in the choice of alliance with partners turned towards the achievement of close goals, in the refusal of insignificant relationships);
- *Affective* processes (linked to the previous ones, and which are expressed singularly in the suffering or the revolt due to the blockages of the subject's aspirations);

¹⁹ This is quite different from the syncretic rebellion, withdrawal and withdrawal behaviors that we presented above.

- *Intellectual and cognitive* processes intervening in the more or less advanced and distanced analysis of the multiple sources of dissatisfaction, in the examination of the convergences and incompatibilities between the means (the resources) which the subject has and the ends which he gives to his various conducts, also mobilizing in the definitions of the possible to reach or to create;
- Processes of *temporalization* (in the need to order and plan - on the axis of the individual history and according to its participation in the institutional developments - the moments of the realization of these possibilities).

These processes *are articulated in reciprocal dependencies* that command their implementation in the personalization activities. The processes of communication with peers orient the subject's displacements on foreign/new poles of comparison and differentiation. They are actualized in the affiliation to groups favoring the expression of opposite and complementary requirements: of identification and assimilation to others, of personal autonomy recognized or valued by this other²⁰.

By the detachments they operate with regard to previous experiences of relations and thanks to the displacements they allow, they participate in the support of the personal and collective criticism of the social sources of dissatisfaction and alienation, in the emergence, in the subject, of new cognitive attitudes.

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For their part, these attitudes will guide the methodical intelligence required by this critique, the "logic" of the adjustment of means and ends and the ranking of possibilities. But these attitudes are, themselves, a function of the questions posed to the subject - and to his partners - by this hierarchy of possibilities, their organization, and the conditions of their realization in time. In the same way, the processes of temporalization at work in the project are largely dependent on exchanges with others, on the subject's displacements, through successive and hesitant references to past and present models that seem to him to be free of the divisions he feels. The communications renew the attitudes and the temporal positions of the subject, insofar as they open him to the discovery of the gaps of his previous socialization, and of the institutions where it took place; they feed the confrontation (in an internal debate) between the past experiences and the current necessities of his relational and social life, dispose him to connect his future enterprises with those of other actors, challenging his own anchoring in the groups and the institutions that have - in spite of everything - formed him.

Thus one can more easily conceive:

- That these project conducts, as an instance of unveiling and elaboration of new possibilities for the subject, are linked in the conflicts of its personalization with the changes of the social structures;
- That under these conducts, watch and act the contradictions of the movements of the institutions and the ideologies;
- That these conducts constitute a work of recovery and overcoming of these contradictions by the subject - in his singular history - starting from a deliberation on

²⁰ Wallon (H.) - The environments, the groups and the psychogenesis of the child. *Enfance*, 1959, n° 3-4, pp. 287-296

the representations and the values that these institutions and its ideologies designate and/or oppose to him;

- That they are initiatives of this subject, engaged in relations of cooperation and adversity with others.

It is to the subject, in these relations, that falls to imagine and to choose, by placing in front of him as possible tasks (but always uncertain): *the transformations of the institutions* by the restructuring of the social relations and the groups able to recognize and to welcome his aspirations and his desires of personalization.

4. Personalization and social innovation

In the project the transformation of the objective situations as well as of the attitudes and representations that have given rise to the emergence of conflict is inaugurated, and it will be unceasingly structured in the course of the "undertakings" that it has served to orientate. It remains that these - real confrontation of the problems, inventions, restructuring of the social or cultural "given" - require beyond the project original conducts, where new aspects of the circularity of the psychological and social determinants are manifested;

An example will allow us, while returning briefly to the phases that precede the "enterprise", to grasp the characteristics of the latter.

4.1. The Social Engagement Project: An Example

As a result of the profound and rapid transformations of production systems, work techniques and exchanges, many farmers are forced to abandon an individual mode of exploitation and to seek solutions to the imbalances they feel by making the project of engaging in cooperation with others. We will draw on the biography of a young farmer who has made such a journey.

This commitment of the subject is preceded by dramatic ruptures: those of the fabric of family socialities, of his privileged links with his father, with the members of his immediate circle, with his friends, with his region.

Consented by him - at the sacrifice of an essential part of the achievements of his past and other commitments - these ruptures are as if prefigured in the contradictions that disintegrate the whole of the rural institutions. They are not only an "individual fact". In a period of social crisis, many young farmers, dissatisfied and distraught within "comparable situations", will be led to these ruptures: to leave their land for the city or to consider joining innovative or reforming organizations or groups (technical, cooperative, cultural, union). It is that the conflicts caused, in particular by the previously "coded" passages of the individuals in the institutions and the milieus (successive and secant) of their socialization, become more pronounced, because of the very crisis that shakes, in these institutions and these milieus, the processes of their regulation, of their "taking in charge". In this crisis the modes of resolution and denouement of such conflicts, become, of the way, more uncertain.

But if these conflicts appear determined by the social crisis, it is by the mediation of projects by which the subjects determine - in possible - the conditions of restructuring of the institutions and the social relations.

We can say that the ruptures come in response (individual and collective) to psychological and social "structures" of multiple subjection of which the subjects are not necessarily conscious from the start.

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Complex subjection of the small peasant exploitation - of the individual parcel - to the industrial and commercial imperatives that generate its decline and its slow destruction, but also its resistances and its sporadic struggles. Subjection to a collective imaginary that supports the belief in this plot of land that welds and conceals the class distinctions within the peasantry, but that is weakened by the concrete experience that individuals have of these distinctions. These subjugations have their distant roots in the history of the global Society, in the relations of the peasantry with the State, with the other layers of this Society, in the relations between city and countryside, in the dominations (more or less direct) of the feudal landlords and then of the land and financial capitalism...

To a certain extent, they are reinforced - actualized - in the tenacious attachments of traditional small-scale producers to routine social behaviors, to insufficient forms of mutual aid, to know-how that has become obsolete. Through the education of young people, they are present in the relational and cultural learning (of respect and fear of paternal authority, of dependence on him...), in the practical representations of solitary work (considered as a guarantee of freedom to decide and to undertake), in the symbolic representations of a sovereign nature recalcitrant to the effort of invention and transformation of men and in the images of a cyclical recommencement of time on the model of the rhythm of the seasons, of the succession of generations. These relationships of subjection overhang the systems of socialization and training of young (future?) farmers. They tend to be reproduced under the aegis of ideologies and representations that justify the separations (or cleavages) that exist in social and cultural relationships (for example, between intellectual and manual activity, between noble and commoner work, between "city identity" and "peasant identity..."), and in interpersonal relationships and relationships with others (for example, in the distribution of responsibilities and tasks between fathers and sons, and in the rights and duties of each...)

These separations (or cleavages) are objects of interrogations and doubts in these different relationships where the subject has been - remains - exposed to conflicts and where he is led both to the painful acceptance of his divisions and his lacks and to the (hesitant) discovery of his alienations - awakened to the desire to overcome them.

Our farmer knows at least that in the situations in which he is placed, nothing new can happen, that his work, like that of his father and the members of his social category, is doomed to the repetition of conducts that are rendered meaningless by the current constraints of his environment. Confusingly, he apprehends that the efforts to adapt to this environment will not allow him to reach the expected results, that he will have to pay with their increase the right to remain a farmer, illusory master of his property and his time. He knows that a possible exodus to the city - he has experienced it and has the living example of his former comrades - will be a source of frustration, deprivation and loneliness for him.

We see it, on the dimension of the personalization of the subject, the access to the possible, the powers that he possesses to structure them in projects, are overdetermined by his personal history: in systems of interrelated relations (social, cultural, interpersonal, affective relations).

This history has plunged him into conflicting socialities, has linked him to close models through bonds of identification, has led him to dramatic disappointments, has confronted him with failures and limitations that deprive certain possibilities of meaning and future, or that forbid their integration into reality. But it is also marked by successful experiences: of learning about cooperative exchange in the workplace, of meeting with "counter-models" that initiate ideologies and practices of extended solidarity, in opposition to the solidarity restricted to the peasant family unit. It is in reference to these experiences and under the incitement of the desire of the subject to escape the circle of subjection, to marginalization, to unproductive revolt, and to be different from what his environment wanted to make of him that the transformation of the institutions is outlined through the project conducts.

This example illustrates as well what was exposed above on the work of disengagement as the operations - personalization and social creations indissolubly - of the "social and/or cultural enterprise".

On the first point, we see how the comparisons lead the subject to *feel that his conducts are - depersonalizing*: accomplished without the possibility of choosing his ends, his means - *alienating*, insofar as, blocked by his models, he realizes that he sacrifices some of his potentialities, that he places himself outside the field of the social and cultural transformations of the time. He feels that his true self is elsewhere.

The project management finds its motivation in this suffering, in this anguish. We see the young farmer doing information work (in dialogues, readings), imagining other lives. He does this in his ideological investigation - whose terms and methods come from the groups he meets - which will serve to analyze his situation. This investigation proceeds by a back-and-forth between his experience and that of his contemporaries: the solution that he envisages for himself is a particular case, in his eyes, of what ON (the global Society) should do for all.

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As we have said, this project work depends on the history of the subject, and in particular, on the temporal attitudes that have been developed. Attached to the past (singular/collective), one will build a project of "reserved" rupture; for another, the feeling of urgency will give rise to projects of flight ahead: or else the awareness of the difficulties, of the sequence of conditions to be fulfilled, develop a planned project.

But our example is also enlightening with regard to the realization of the project: social innovation. It requires a continuous and renewed *work of re-personalization* at each stage.

In addition to the intention to readjust means and ends, it requires the inhibition of habits that tend to resurface, a redoubling of self-control to prevent the project from being captured by routines. At each stage, it is necessary to measure what it brought, the deficit compared to the initial expectations. Also, the subject returns to his personal history, to discover the origins of some of the difficulties he encounters. He must also readjust his project according to the changes in the social situation, criticize it as he goes along, recognize what was illusory in it. And always keep in mind the general idea of the end he had set for himself, not to be satisfied with the first results of his enterprise.

4.2. The realization of the project as a social act

It is accompanied by a revision of interpersonal relationships: the abandonment of old ties, rivalries with new allies, opposition from those who would like to retain him/her... often give

rise to profound conflicts. It is the identity of the subject that is affected: the image of oneself being enlightened by the image of others, and by the images that others have of oneself, the modifications in the interpersonal choices affect its regulating role.

The way is opened to the revision of the hierarchy of values in the ideological justification. This occurs for a part in the participation in the practices and beliefs of the new groups that the subject frequents - restricted groups or large groups. But it is not a question of an impregnation, nor of an absorption in the "collective conscience". It is necessary the active participation of the subject, in the objectification of the solutions proposed by the different groups, the personal estimation of what each one can bring to him: the existence of a plurality of groups is essential for the formation of the person. It leads to hesitations and criticisms. The act by which the subject adheres to some of these groups rather than to others differs profoundly from the spontaneous affiliations of childhood: these, which lead to the anchorings of socialization, are carried out in restricted groups (family, peers, school), according to identifications generating imitation and conformism: they obey cognitive processes of preoperative type, characterized by the syncretism and the fragmentation of the real. From adolescence, the subject realizes the divergence of the groups, confronts the rules of life, as formal thought and the systematization of the representations develop, often under the aegis of ideologies. He feels bound to wide groups: nation, church, class, trade body... He disciplines his conducts according to the ends that these propose to him, acquires the feeling of being a responsible member.

However, insofar as he belongs to several of them, he is led, by his practices and by his preferential links, which are a reflection of his singular history, to find a personal path. He does this in discussions where he places himself in the divergent points of view of the others, where he learns that he could follow the example of one or the other, *if he decided to*. He then has the feeling that it depends on him to choose a definitive path.

This feeling of being free is essential for the restructuring of the conducts; it heightens the conscience of the social constraints, it exasperates the protest against the contradictions which they impose. Thus is formed the desire to find a way out. This desire develops by the objectification of the incompatibilities between the ends, or between the ends and the means proposed by the society. One looks outside of it for examples of different life, in comparisons, which always obey the logic of passions, in imaginary proposals where disparate aspirations confluence. So much so that the social creation often mystifies itself because of its incapacity to discover its contradictory sources and to embrace the totality of the social becoming. It will be necessary new doubts, criticisms of the regulating ideology, the objectification of the omissions, to find the way of a new organization of the social relations. It will have only a provisional value.

In the end, the restructuring of the conducts appears as the effect of a dialectic between the first experiences indispensable to the formation of a fundamental social aptitude - capacity to the attachment, desire of surpassing, image of oneself - and the conscience that the social contradictions paralyze the development of the potentialities which reveal themselves to the subject, each time that he makes the exalting experience of one of the works, one of the creations of the history. This reorganization is certainly not the fact of an isolated subject.

The example given indicates that it is in group struggles - supporters or opponents of cooperation, trade unionists - that each subject finds himself involved and defines his choices. These close groups are linked to other larger groups, on the scale of the region, of the nation, and are dragged along by economic transformations that go beyond them. The work of personalization essential to a change in an institution participates in a very broad social movement, of which the social actor that is the subject only very partially perceives the extent or the stake.

Conclusion

This perspective does not fail to raise methodological and epistemological problems. We will only mention a few of them.

1. The status of social psychology

Psychology became scientific the day when, going beyond the description of psychological "facts", it studied the determinisms of the construction of conducts. The theories of learning have detected some fundamental traits; the starting point is in an imbalance of the organism in relation to its environment, it provokes, not innate response patterns, but through trials, and the resulting sanctions, the selection of information and activities that lead to a liquidation of the imbalance.

However important this problematic may be, it does not account for the transformations of human conducts in their specificity:

- On the genesis of generative imbalances;
- From the construction of information that guides responses;
- The formation and functioning of the regulatory processes of the latter.

It ignores the complexity and the contradictions of the social formations, and that it is on the basis of the divisions and the hesitations that they impose to the subject that he is brought, according to the history of his interpersonal links, to build deliberate answers. In any conduct, the man puts to the test the works, the institutions, the attitudes with regard to others, and constitutes himself, consciously or not, in social actor, susceptible to introduce modifications in the social formations within which he lives.

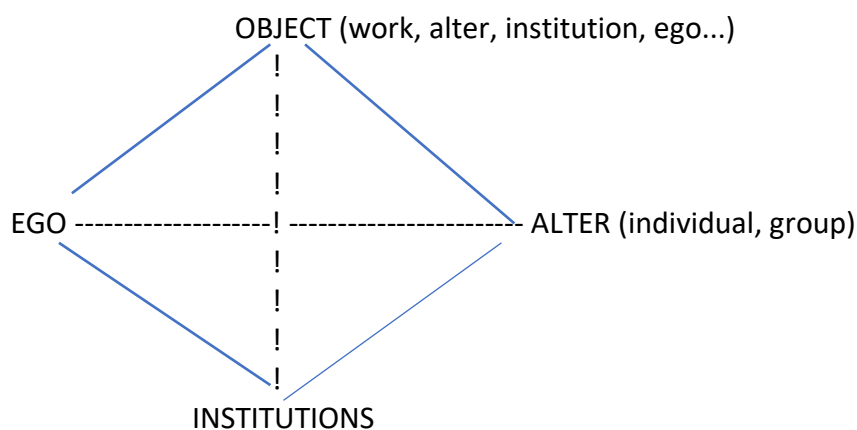
"Individual psychology, says Freud, is also from the outset and simultaneously, a social psychology"²¹. This supposes, according to the remark of S. Moscovici, "that it is necessary to substitute to the relation with two terms subject-object (...) a relation with three terms: individual subject-social subject-object"²².

But is there an individual subject dissociated from a social subject? And in the social "subject", don't we meet structures of relations, forms of subjectivity very different from each other? In the ternary scheme proposed by Moscovici (ego-alter-object), the alter can be a person or a group: it is necessary to consider that it is an institution, a system of rules and values which has an indisputable autonomy with regard to the ego and the alter.

²¹ Freud (S.- *Essais de Psychanalyse*, Paris, Payot, 1982, p.123

²² Moscovici (S.) (under the direction of) - *Psychologie sociale*, Paris, PUF, 1984, p. 9

We can think of a quaternary regulation:



The ego-alter relations are "framed" by the institutions. It is these institutions that propose or impose the "objects", in a direct way, but indirectly above all, by means of the others - and it is necessary to grasp their action in the most diverse forms. The influence of the Others on the ego cannot be studied by ignoring the determinations that emanate from the system of institutions. The social psychologist cannot ignore the work of the sociologist - who in turn cannot ignore the contributions of psychology. The ego is thus placed in front of multiple, heterogeneous solicitations, between which it must seek its way. This diversity is essential in the production of new conducts. We first understand its importance in the advent of crises that generate innovation.

2. The genesis of imbalances: conflicts at the human level

We cannot understand the origin of motivations for change if we do not take into account the complex overdeterminations of conducts within interpersonal relationships, in the network of institutions, and in the conflicts between them.

First divisions: at the level of the influences exerted by the relatives. The same Other, within a group, changes attitudes towards the subject according to the situations, and also to the answers that this one addresses to him. The relations vary from one group to another, from the family to the nursery, to the school, from the company to the cultural group... These divergences make identifications fragile, through which are constituted, sorts of implicit value judgments, the attitudes of attraction or opposition. Essential point already for the subjectivation, because it results from it uncertainties, sources of questioning and comparisons...

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Other divisions: by the original style of the rules that emanate from the institutions and by the inevitable contradictions between them. Each one, economic, social, political, ideological, scientific, cultural... can only fulfill its function at the price of a certain closing in on itself (desired by the individuals), which leads to a certain type of opposition to the other institutions. The subjects, already caught up in the ambiguities of interpersonal relations, are going to be caught up in these contradictions of institutions, without being able to objectify the complex terms of the conflicts experienced. Various types of answers are then observable: denial of the contradictions in opposition by underlining the interpersonal conflicts, or reciprocally, cleavages, transfers, imaginary conciliations...

The analysis of the imbalances that generate "disengagement" cannot be satisfied with listing the differences between the instances, and how they are marked in the individual typologies. It must *be deterministic and dialectic*, seeking the ways in which one type of relationship, interpersonal or institutional, acts on the others, situating the subject in relation to them, in a hesitation, an anguish, which can open the way to innovation, provided that he or she manages to objectify the terms of the conflict and to discover the means of overcoming it. The search for determinants cannot ignore this intervention of subjectivity.

3. Information as an organizer of social innovation

How are innovative cognitions formed? This is the problem of the project, which must be examined in its evolution, from elementary intention to reasoned planning. We will only come back to it to show its relation with some current questions of cognitive psychology. Piaget showed the impossibility of sticking to associationist theories, the necessity of considering the regulations, of various levels, which govern the exchanges between assimilation and accommodation. Should we not, more than he did, insist on the systems of knowledge of social origin, inscribed in the use of instruments, language, interpersonal relations, science? In the adult as well as in the child, they intervene in the interpretation of a situation under diverse syncretic forms (Henri Wallon), which can be fixed in social representations, and which will be exceeded only in the operative initiatives of the subjects. There is a dialectic of socially constituted knowledge (knowledge and methods) and a critical work of the subjects.

But where does the desire to advance the knowledge essential to the project, the need to question, to discover, come from? Here again it seems necessary to take into account the *social dimension of cognition*. At the level of interpersonal relations, a displacement on the position of others pushes the subject to confront two perspectives. At the institutional level, the contradictions between the knowledge offered by different social milieus question the subjects, give rise to discussions and criticisms: myths take over the knowledge emanating from practices which resist this absorption, ideologies tend to dominate the sciences which are constantly inspired by them to go beyond their first assertions, and constantly criticise them.

This is the problem of awareness. The adoption of an interpretation: opinion, belief, is linked to a position, to social attitudes which come from the belonging of the subject to a group. It does not go without ignorance, without bias, without repression of the beliefs of "others". The discussion will only put an end to it through school struggles, likely to awaken

in some of their members the recognition that they were locking themselves into a collective egocentrism, incompatible with the facts. This awakening to doubt has affective aspects, it comes through emotions, astonishment, worries, desire to assert oneself. But it is also the object of a social culture: the scientific method itself is constantly threatened by the group bias.

4. Active interiority

It is the essential contribution of Freud and his disciples to have demanded the recognition of a subjective work, made of constant exchanges between unconscious and consciousness. This is an ancient claim, variously presented by philosophers. The danger lies in substantialist simplifications: the ego is an "instance", a transcendental structure, a power of *epoche*...

At the basis of this recognition, there is the observation of an activity of internalization of the multiple solicitations of the environment, which because of their multiplicity involves their differentiation, and a research of constitutive situation of oneself.

The body, the needs of nutrition and motricity, are not at the origin of these activities, but the relation to the other, with its sexual component. It consists in the alternation of a series of activities of opposite direction which grant to the subject a certain autonomy, since he feels the author of their comparison, of their integration. It is, on the line of introjection, the modeling of conduites by the example of others, of verbal meaning, of instrumental practices, of attitudes and beliefs. It is only possible on the line of projection, by the success in the attempts to be recognized, loved, to influence, to model the others.

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This is the level of interpersonal relations, and since Baldwin, G.H. Mead, Wallon, Bales and Heider, the idea of a subjectivation in these exchanges has been imposed. What must also be recognized is that the others, mediators of the instituted norms, place the subject in front of the dilemmas raised by the oppositions between these norms. It happens then, either that one of them prevails, forcing him to his law or that their unstable balance (due to the confrontation of the groups which defend them) leads him to hesitate between them.

It is then that the role of *an interior deliberation* becomes apparent: the subject will be able to insert between the call coming from the environments where he lives, the comparison between the various consequences of this choice, "his" representation of the future, and to direct his acts according to it. To speak of interiority should not imply an absolute initiative of the subject: his representation is formed in the discussions with the opposite groups, and it can happen that because of the sequences of personal experiences, one of them is better heard. It remains that it is at the level of this discussion that the influence of the subject occurs: in his activity to *signify* the various answers in conflict by the memories of his existence (and the value that he grants them), by the imaginary of the changes in the social structures, in his lived experience, by the representation of the obstacles to be overcome, by the displacement of his individual point of view on that of a subject-institution (class, nation, church, humanity...).

The struggles between social forces, where the orientation of the history is defined, contain in them, like an indispensable ferment, the questionings of the subjects, the feeling of their originality, the representation of their role in the various social instances. To study them requires the knowledge of the history of the subjects, their attachments, their anxieties, by

placing them in the social context of their time and their civilization... The psychologist cannot dispense with the biographical and historical methods.

In these conducts of project and social innovation processes, the social history of institutions and personal history meet. One and the other interconstruct themselves there. If they become, one with the other, the (collective) work of subject(s), it is to the extent of the attempts they make - more or less consciously, in opposition and in alliance with others - to deal with, objectify and contain, in their choices and through their projects, the contradictions that the history of society designates to them as problems to be faced. These problems are issues in the personalization and in the future of institutions.