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« The question(s) of representation »

Let us try to represent, they say. Maintain, cultivate, educate a possible “becoming a woman”

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Abstract

Focusing on the intellectual work as a movement of revision and revitalisation of the representations that drive us, we are carrying out a research work on the individuation processes, with regards to their psychological, relational and collective dimensions. Rooted in the female experience, based on an open perspective on human sciences and literature, our reflection includes the notion of return to childhood and the primordial, as a means to achieve a more authentic position and an increase in the potentials of people at work. Our interest in representations leads us to examine a set of elements, codes, norms, micro-cultures that set up the professional atmospheres in which we operate, and to revive lesser thoughts that will help us rise to and share new challenges. We think that women’s voices, through their interpretative power and the opportunities they provide of creating new mediations, help meet this goal.

Keywords: care, individuation, potential, representations, women's voices/ways, work

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“If the full and well established words have always been used, aligned, and stacked by men, the female may appear as this quite wild grass, a bit thin at first, which manages to grow in the cracks between old rocks and – why not? – ends up loosening the cement slabs, as heavy as they may be, with the strength of something long suppressed.”

Marguerite Duras and Xavière Gauthier, *Les Parleuses*
(Minuit, 1974, p. 8)

Intention

In this article, we will recount an experiment in research, reading and writing, which involves several women and is based on a survey of the literature on education, inequalities, as well as social and education practices.¹ One of the first facts that has drawn our attention pertains to the multiple interpretations and representations of the school situation of girls in France² (globally, a greater academic success and a lesser professional success), oscillating between the ideas of conformism and perspicacity. While these two kinds of attitude associated with girls may equally account for a form of success, they differ in the nature of the pupil that they presuppose: one considers a female pupil who would understand and meet what is expected of her, and the other involves a female pupil who would develop an ability to operate in an environment, the motives and issues of which she would understand. However, it seems that the latter view fails to impose itself, and the issue of the girls' success at school (when it is not expressed in terms of social success) still puzzles observers and fuels controversies.

Deliberately assertive,³ our approach focuses on the issue of the success of learning and development as a synthesis resulting from an active availability and an involvement in the situational *hic et nunc*. We define the question as one's propensity, ability and capacity to be aware of contexts,⁴ to understand the issues of situations and to maintain one's own actions within a group, based on the reasons for

1 Marie Duru-Bellat, *L'École des filles, quelle formation pour quels rôles sociaux?*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2004.

2 “Les discriminations entre les femmes et les hommes,” *Revue de l'OFCE*, 2010, vol. 2, no. 114.

3 Hélène Romano, *Harcèlement en milieu scolaire. Victimes, auteurs: que faire?*, Paris, Dunod, 2015.

4 The attention to the working environment supposes the dual ability to be present and adopt a reflexive position, exotopic with regards to situations (others, norms, techniques).

being and working in a collective.⁵ We would like to go further into the reflection on the conditions of women's development, blossoming and individuation. We would also like to consider the opportunities to extend the reflection to adult women's life paths, by paying attention to the conventions and standards in use. Finally, we would like to keep a few simple questions open: at what point, one's professional or social life can be considered successful or unsuccessful, and by whom? In the collective imagination, isn't professional success thought in male terms and standardised as such?⁶

Our study is based on the analysis of a radio broadcast,⁷ problematised around the situation of women coming from southern countries (and/or girls from emigrating families). In the confused perceptions and representations involved in the current French discourses and imagination, numerous questions remain unanswered. How can French women's thinking, influenced by universalistic feminism among other things, evolve so as to comprehend the potentials of women coming from southern countries? Is it possible to make women's voices hint at the possibility of a renewed humanism, by "offering to the world what the world has never asked for, yet is always ready to get"?⁸

Together with this analysis, we seek to initiate a commonly shared reflection on our situation as professionally committed women, as well as on the conditions of emergence of a women's civic discourse. We have gathered around the idea that many issues and ways to tackle them are yet to be questioned, broadened and confronted, by relying on both our concrete professional situations and a few simple observations: as professionals, we are always faced with contrasting representations⁹; they both inform and result from practices; it is possible to study their origins and functions, to deconstruct and create new views, in compliance with our ever-evolving professional, social or civic wills. The business world strives to induce a new intellection and a strong capacity to act as an educational player – through the development of a kind of *parrêsia*¹⁰ –, to acknowledge the specificity of our status as women involved in a professional activity and to open us up to new mediations between knowledge and action. The quality of our activities depends on the kind of mediations that we are able to implement, and on the concrete cooperation opportunities, while keeping in mind that learning and growing are not a question of conformism but rather of confrontation with otherness, decentering and conflict.

Therefore, our aim is to renew the support, mediation and analytical efforts of women's discourse as a civic act, both with young women expressing themselves via radio broadcasts and through our work and management experiences. The issue is twofold but consistent, in that it puts the topic of the concrete conditions of transmission and development at the heart of our reflection. Development is here to

5 Willem Doise and Gabriel Mugny, *Le Développement social de l'intelligence*, Paris, InterÉditions, 1981.

6 Luce Irigaray, *Je tu nous, pour une culture de la différence*, Paris, Grasset, 1990; "Women in leadership," *Citizen Today*, London, Ernst and Young, 2013.

7 "Ma cité, mon cocon. Jeunes filles entre elles et entre soi" (France culture, *Terrains sensibles*, 2006).

8 Karim Basbous, *Avant l'œuvre. Essai sur l'invention architecturale*, Paris, Éditions de l'imprimeur, 2005, p. 157.

9 Representations of public action, education and research, involving mostly implicit representations of the human subject, the State and power, among others.

10 *Parrêsia* is virtue, a duty and a technique. It is a culture of the self and of a relation to the self acquired and operating in forms of government, the self and others. (Michel Foucault, *Le Gouvernement de soi et des autres*, Paris, Gallimard, 2008).

be understood as the act of unfolding what is coiled on itself (in opposition to a linear and continuous progression). The aim is to broaden the field of possibilities¹¹ in areas that are experienced at once as restrained and democratic.

Women's voices and volition

We have focused on a radio broadcast involving six young women whose families have emigrated from southern Mediterranean countries and living in the Mordacs estate, in Champigny-sur-Marne, Ile-de-France. Throughout the years and the successive stages of our work, we have conducted numerous listening sessions, (partial or full) retranscriptions, confrontations between various receptions of the documentary (auditions/readings), collective debates on the effects of the symbolic alteration it induces, as well as comparative approaches to other bodies of works, namely institutional texts on gender equality policy at school.¹²

We would like to provide a general overview of this study, with a specific focus on methodological issues. Indeed, while we aim at conceptual formalisation, the ultimate step in a process of metabolisation at times painful and often risky, we take care to diversify the modes of access to meaning. While our initial approach to the report relied on a few simple ideas (1 - a radio broadcast is the result of a production choice; 2 - an active reception leads one to question the political intention and/or consequences of this choice; 3 - the production-broadcast-reception has an effect on all the protagonists involved in the relationship), the study and its poetic digression have enabled us to turn into finders-rebuilders of meaning and to assert ourselves as such. Changing methods to alter representations is a challenge in itself.

We first drew on Carol Gilligan's works. This American psychologist developed in 1982 a new understanding of women's moral judgment, and demonstrated their ability to integrate the constraints resulting from interpersonal relations into complex sets.¹³ She set about listening to the inaudible mumblings, unexpected formulations of the interviewed, paying attention to the way they tried to word the problems they were faced with. She managed to voice an intuitive moral ability, rooted in local situations, relating to singular entities and based on the care for others. In this, she perceives an ethical gesture, *care*, reasoning on the knowledge of environments and favouring moral imagination, which does not seek a legal generalisation, theoretical assessment (more largely observed in men), or an escape from the contextual and

11 Emanuele Coccia, *La Vie des plantes. Une métaphysique du mélange*, Paris, Rivages. 2016. We especially retain the notion of atmosphere – enshrouding humans, passing through them and produced by them ; and the notion of nature: not in the sense of preceding or opposite to culture, but as what allows one to be born and to become, a principle and power involved in genesis and transformation.

12 Among the notions used in the analysis of these texts is symptomatic reading, which consists in pointing out the unthought elements of a textual material, what remains at its fringes, and in formulating leads providing new thought processes from the apparent initial meaning (Judith Butler, *La Vie psychique du pouvoir. L'assujettissement en théories*, Paris, Leo Scheer, 2002). Thus, in the background of the neutral and asexual view of pupils conveyed by official curricula, the possibility of thinking the conditions of female individuation anew is brought out (Manon Bouchareu, *Interpellations à l'égalité et voix du care. De l'objectivation de la situation scolaire des filles vers des propositions alternatives*, mémoire de master 2, Université Paris 8, 2012; Elisabeth Schirmer, *De la construction socio-sexuée des élèves à l'étude des conditions d'émancipation par le féminin*, master 2 degree, Université Paris 8, 2014.)

13 The surveyed women indeed demonstrate a cognition that is sensitive to the common and based on the reason of others, rather than influenced by universality. These powerful and alternative voices maintain the quality of relations in a civic world of assumed interdependences (Carol Gilligan, *Une voix différente. Pour une éthique du care* [1982], Paris, Flammarion, 2008).

relational constraints of situations. Gilligan has completely inverted the way to hear women's voices, when the authority is not consistent with what they know is true from experience.

This is how we wanted to hear the voices of those young women from the Mordacs estate: by understanding the atmospheres in which they live and develop their own vitality, by listening to their life story. These life stories give prominence to their brothers, to boys, and to their parents. They acknowledge the complexity of life and accept its difficulties. The greatest strength and opportunities to change the stereotypes lie in an ethics of listening. "For human beings, life is expressed and displayed in words; to promote life values, one has to speak [*a contrario*] of the dominant powers that have put speech before them and speak through a rationality located outside their body."¹⁴ If Antigone's voice has so largely inspired the feminist thinking, it is because she keeps her word and yet does not give up on representing her fallen brother in the city from which he was expelled. She has an absolute freedom of choice and control.

Secondly, we engaged in an exercise in poetic writing, which gave us the opportunity to improve our understanding of the feminist voices.¹⁵ This task was determined by the need to write a short text on a set theme ("the city"), with a view to make an idea-strength emerge: in the minority position of the interviewed young women lies an *apeiron*¹⁶: potential, vitality, signs of a new comprehension of the feminine and speech as a civic act, which should be heard or facilitated, beyond the evocation of the numerous constraints structuring their-our lives; because they stand against them and stem from them. In this way, we would clear up or disperse the mist of representations of women with immigrant background living in suburban areas. The poetic diversion allowed for a new intellection of and a break away from the projective reflexes and ordinary classifications regarding the "dominated women from the suburbs." The inter-actualisation of theoretical concepts, images and trivial vocabulary – alluding to movement and space – revealed the dynamics at work among these young women: for instance, the notions of de-territorialisation and being-(in)-a-minority, dear to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari,¹⁷ have helped comprehend their movements (stairwells, buildings, floors, lifts, trips to Paris), the relations they untie and re-establish (critical separation and loyalty to the native, the heritage and the common) and the opportunity to "escape," as the opportunity to break away from the stereotypes.

The poetic gesture thus proved to facilitate the emergence of a poetic word "which makes truth, which acts,"¹⁸ by echoing the voices that we tried to understand. It could not have been achieved without a kind of return to childhood as an essential figure of the future: voice-over, persistently toned down, making one aware of the emergence of the essential and the potential. We will get back to this later.

14 Luce Irigaray, *Corps à corps avec la mère*, Montréal, Pleine Lune, 1991, p. 87.

15 Christine Bouissou, "Chronique d'une sortie en ville," *Les Cahiers d'Adèle*, no. 5, "La ville," 2010.

16 The notion of *apeiron* is borrowed by Gilbert Simondon from pre-Socratic philosopher Anaximander (Gilbert Simondon, *L'Individuation psychique et collective*, Paris, Aubier Montaigne, 1989).

17 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille plateaux*, Paris, Minuit, 1980.

18 Luce Irigaray, *Corps à corps avec la mère*, Montréal, Pleine Lune, 1991, p. 45.

For now, let us take this opportunity to recall the reflections of Karim Basbous¹⁹ on the *art del disegno*, and show the intertwining of graphic representations, visual media, sound media and mental or conceptual representations.

Firstly, the reference to architecture happens to be useful to understand the spatial, subjective and normative movements and their connections. It shows the psychic motion within young women's minds²⁰: consideration of and detachment from the heritages (the grey areas and excesses of which they comprehend), emergence of a singular perspective on the ordinary dimension of their life and of a normativity that is independent of the community and media atmospheres, which most of the time exceed their words.²¹

Secondly, the Lebanese architect advocates a way of thinking that glimpses more than it can immediately represent and which, because it tolerates confusion, discrepancy, irregularities, is able to "faintly see" and to "reduce the propensity of the line to strive to draw a figure at all costs."²² In our opinion, the suspension of the urge to hear, in favour of a long-term exploration relying on attentiveness, is a prerequisite of the alteration of ordinary representations: the *design* becomes "an act of listening to the unexpressed."²³ Therefore, one has to overcome the ordeal of the draft and of fleeting intuition, and to maintain that sharp thinking and the instability of representations can coexist. Tense mobility, neither freedom nor meandering, allows the acts of flitting around and exploring, as scattered as they may seem, to align with one another in order to mark out a progression, the objective of which is to find the position that is the most right, topical and resonant. The most noticeably reasoning.

Immersion in childhood

The genealogical return to the origin of a thought gives the task an untimely and modern impetus, an ability to renew the question of the elements in the present.²⁴ Meeting with and recognising the figures of the past that re-present themselves in the present (within a very large and unstable economy of knowledge) gives a feeling of continuity beyond crises and new directions, makes heritage possible and allows one to speak. It allows one to support duality and the authorial instinct. It opens up to poetry. While Walter Benjamin²⁵ drew an original thought on history from childhood, the spirit of which can still enliven us today, Nathalie Sarraute, Pierre Pachet and Yves Bonnefoy have put this figure at the heart of a work demonstrating, if need still be, that childhood development is all the more significant as one comes of age.

19 Karim Basbous, *Avant l'œuvre. Essai sur l'invention architecturale*, Paris, Éditions de l'imprimeur, 2005.

20 For example when they note that "it is not the same for boys": more tolerated than girls in front of their place, boys do not leave.

21 Christine Bouissou, "En quête des raisons de l'autre," *Le Télémaque*, vol. 2, no. 48, 2015, p. 65-74.

22 Karim Basbous, *Avant l'œuvre. Essai sur l'invention architecturale*, Paris, Éditions de l'imprimeur, 2005, p. 155.

23 "There are things that only intelligence can look for, yet will never find by itself; these things, instinct alone would find them, yet will never search them" (Henri Bergson, "L'évolution créatrice" [1907], *Œuvres*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France (PUF), 1991, p. 623).

24 Pierre Macherey, "*Il faut être absolument moderne. La modernité, état de fait ou impératif?*", 2005. [Online] <https://stl.univ-lille.fr> [accessed 4 March 2017].

25 Walter Benjamin, *Sur le concept d'histoire* [1940], *Œuvres III*, Paris, Gallimard, "Folio," 2000

This renewed perspective on childhood leads Nathalie Sarraute²⁶ to look into tropisms, these internal motions, unexpressed at the time, which added colours to her world and which she wanted to elucidate towards the end of her life. Expressing the unexpressed of sub-discussions, of micro-movements that occurred unbeknownst to the present consciences. This can be achieved by meeting with the sentient being of a re-discovered, and eventually understood, childhood.

The inner space of poet Yves Bonnefoy is circumscribed by the child he once was, who has experienced “hostile or loving [presences], yet always close to him, which later on, with the coming of conceptual thinking, the adult he has become will only be able to experience as things.”²⁷ The return to childhood constitutes a means to work on the relation to the self, in order to draw its essence and turn it into wisdom. Poetry, writing, the attentive and obstinate effort rekindle the possible.

According to Pierre Pachet,²⁸ solitude, secrecy and boredom encourage the relation to the self and a shift from negative to positive. The recognition of mental confusion allows one to extract something that is deeply rooted into it, and to establish an attentive relation with the intimate. Through a form of passivity, through the patience of mental life and spiritual value of attention, an ability is developed, which consists in making ideas appear while rejecting what is inadequate.

The attention to inner integrity also raises one’s awareness of the outside, of the appearance of what comes, makes us a witness, a guardian; the guardian of a pre-individual (see *infra*) which we inherit and which it falls to us to actualise. In this way, the interviewed girls become the voice of their mute fathers, and now prove to be the most capable of telling their story, lifting up²⁹ this heritage within their lives as French girls, a status that they acknowledge or even claim, yet also question (“what does it mean to be a French girl?”).

We now need to introduce the notions of incompleteness, *apeiron* and potential into our reflection: the individual, in the sense of materialisation of a living organism (this can be a group) is laden with potential, indeterminacy, infinity, uncreated. This is in substance the approach adopted by Gilbert Simondon³⁰ when tackling the issue of personal and collective individuation, an energetic movement spreading from an element to the next (singular individuals, collective, psychic, technical, psycho-social individuals). Unlike anxiety, which isolates the subject (it disindividuates the subject and exposes it to invasion), individuation invites the subject’s pre-individuated reality to partake in a renewed individuation through the collective, thus protecting the subject from the dangers of significant isolation.

This perspective optimises the ordinary representations, by demonstrating the perfect self-other (or internal-external) continuity and contiguity, through the phenomenon of transduction: effects of reality and structure result from the circulation of energy among individuals. The transindividual is what makes individuals communicate with one another, by putting in touch what, in them, is not yet individuated in pre-established social roles. Vital individuations is linked to psychic and psycho-social individuations.

26 Nathalie Sarraute, *Enfance*, Paris, Gallimard, 1983.

27 Yves Bonnefoy, *L’Écharpe rouge*, Paris, Mercure de France, 2015, p. 260.

28 Pierre Pachet, “Entretien avec Pierre Pachet,” *Rue Descartes*, vol. 1, no. 43, 2004

29 The term “to lift up” is here understood in the sense of *Aufhebung*, a process inherent to the cultural transmission-heritage, which both cancels and preserves (Jacques Derrida, *Qu’est-ce qu’une traduction “relevante” ?*, Paris, L’Herne, 2005).

30 Gilbert Simondon, *L’Individuation psychique et collective*, Paris, Aubier Montaigne, 1989.

Interdependence prevails over the assignment of beings and things, and asserts the importance of coping with and overcome phases of confusion. Let us also note that individualisation is synonymous with a poorer pre-individual. This impoverishment is temporary, since the subject still carries its pre-individual, essential, phaseless reality load, full of energy but not yet structured or expressed; the pre-individual is “more than one.”

Simondon’s anthropology avoids the division between the psyche and the social, as well as the minimisation of technique in the human work. It offers a global and kinesic understanding of human productions and social change. This approach also fosters a representation of work as a tension, a potential: a certain way of belonging to the world through an activity requiring a structure, although it is not a structure in itself, because it does, undoes and redoes itself. The problematisation work inherent to the intellectual activity becomes an individuation opportunity, when it sets up such a configuration that obstacles result in a “becoming,” comprehended in terms of problem solving. Individuation of the feminine and individuation of its understanding proceed from one another.

The common, the sharing, the essential energy

Both the return to childhood and the creative act “defragment” the connections and help one to recover the sense of the common. However, nothing is possible without mediations. The strictly relational dimension of the construction of the human subject indeed demands that one pays particular attention to what establishes connections with the other and what asserts one’s presence in their eyes, but also that one acknowledges that listening to the other amounts to setting up the circumstances of a meeting. Therefore, we are dealing here with a relational and interdependent subject comprehending humanity in its fundamental instability and opening up to an ethical perspective on care.

Borderline, individual or civilisational experiences, such as survival after the Holocaust or the ordeal of a psychic illness, have led practitioners involved in the support of suffering people to consider vulnerability. When it is not confined to pathos, vulnerability can indeed open up to the strength and depth of otherness – one necessarily stumbles on the limit set by the other – and to the respect of its preservation, which reinforces integrity.

By means of a long-established relation with autistic children, educator Fernand Deligny has grasped the primordial element of humans, the elementary Us, natural and common, escaping the symbolic and normative frameworks, both apolitical and political. The primordial is what is of the utmost importance, the most ancient, what serves as an origin, “what is the most important although most often, what in reality, through an effect of blindness, remains unsuspected and therefore, is the least important, what is determining in the final analysis, and ultimately what everything else depends on.”³¹ All of the human behaviours follow, as though naturally, from the primordial. The human persists, still in an a-conscious way. The coexistence of the natural and the symbolic, the “coincidences between two modes of being, each one endowed with its gravity”³² involve the conflict one has to accept and play with, so as to avoid choosing between the a-conscious individual and the self-aware subject. They represent the two borders of our existence, fighting over its control without any one of them being able to definitely take it whole.

31 Pierre Macherey, *Le Sujet des normes*, Paris, Amsterdam, 2014, p. 111.

32 Fernand Deligny, *Œuvres*, Paris, L’Arachnéen, 2007, p. 1401.

In this sense, otherness lies in the antagonism of the forces going through us and in an irreducible fragmentation of the intimate, but also in the relation to the other, which can prove to be reconciling. The encounter with the other, as defined by Martin Buber,³³ is driven by people's desire to get together. The dialogue that makes one express oneself, through the ability to formulate answers from an internal mutuality, relies on reciprocity and the responsibility of two sovereign beings, none of whom seeks to impress or use the other: the other is recognised and named as a singular being (not objectified, reified, or used in a *I-this* relationship), thus giving access to a rooted *I-you* subjective reality. The potential of subjectification is preserved by the atmosphere and the structure of the relational entity, the way one interacts in it and the importance interactions are ascribed with.

Philosophy specifies that this meeting has nothing to do with empathy, which would consist in projecting oneself, thus erasing the specificities of one and the other. Rather, the dialogue puts some distance between the self and the *alter*, distinct entities between which relations can be established. It allows for a broadening of the self, attentive to the dynamic core of the other. Buber's reflection and his involvement in education have led him to think that the education of adults could be beneficial in times of failure or despair, and could help redefine the contours of a humanist relation to life, including to the self. The educator (in the broadest sense) is fundamentally a mediator: he collects the constructive forces of the world, deciphers them, attracts them, absorbs them; he gives impetus and fosters the awareness of otherness.

Julia Kristeva³⁴ continues in this direction, via her psychoanalytical approach to the presence in the eyes of the other, integrating the possibilities of wider and more fertile psychic lives offered by psychic bisexuality on both sides of the encounter. According to the psychoanalyst, the female genius lies in the ability – not exclusive to women – to welcome otherness in oneself, with a view, not to devour it, but to fertilise it (and oneself) and induce a “becoming.”

We now have to raise the issue of an essential relation to the established knowledge and instability of a world in the making, with regards to the chain of transmissions which we are all part of. This issue is even broader, as it also concerns the evolution of the approaches to human development, which would integrate the symbolic dynamics and economy of knowledge, in order to reconfigure global relationships without disregarding the familiar and the common. In this respect, we retain the works of American Martha Nussbaum, who considers that economic development must guarantee sufficiently good and just living (in the broad sense of the word) conditions.³⁵ These basic capabilities meet the minimum requirements of human dignity, understood as the ability to grasp oneself, to generate a concern for the common, close or distant, and make it bear fruit, to break away from the paternalist or colonialist relations. The point is to draw attention to the circumstances that make one mute, inaudible, invisible and to apply to oneself the same virtues as those applied to the collective one wishes for, to combine individuals skills and the

33 Martin Buber, *La Vie en dialogue*, Paris, Aubier, 1959.

34 Julia Kristeva, *Le Génie féminin. La vie, la folie, les mots. Melanie Klein*, Paris, Gallimard, 2003.

35 She proposes to define the quality of regional development by taking into account the essential needs of the population, through ten indicators of personal, common and societal development: the respect for life; health; physical integrity; the senses-imagination-mind; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; the care for the living - animals, plants and nature; the game; the control of one's environment (Martha Nussbaum, *Capabilités. Comment créer les conditions d'un monde plus juste?*, Paris, Flammarion, “Climats,” 2012).

political, social, economic environments, to adjust the atmosphere by changing one's point of view, and to produce composite organisations in search of balance, be they individual or collective, progressing together.

Support work

The aim of renewing the representations associated with our environments through a research work is inseparable from the issue of the organisation of collective work, how to share it without weakening it, how to ensure its evolution. One has to get back to the initial meaning of the motives behind the codes and norms of our living environments, so as to maintain a genuine and active relationship with them, a relationship filled with *parrésia*. Therefore, it is crucial that we positively reconsider the act of administering (defined as the attention to others and their living conditions) or management (take in hand), and to get rid of the distrust it usually triggers in our professional environments.

In its landscape perspective, the approach adopted by Mary Parker Follet³⁶ (a social worker and consultant from the early 20th century) is particularly helpful, inasmuch as she has endeavoured to turn the movement of human organisations into an asset on which to base *leadership*. Her practical and ethical approach, breaking down the barriers between idea and execution, is based on the assumption that it is possible for us to get organised as individuals working for a public service, to create a richer and fuller life beyond our individual differences and interests. She is interested in situations regarded as the convergence of energies, flows and transformations. Social life is determined by logics of change; to circumscribe these logics amounts to finding their governing principle and to complying with it, including the leader, for the greater good. Focusing on a situation allows for its depersonalisation, the integration of all the stakeholders and a circular order. She proposes a creative management, based on the idea that nature helps us to understand the human configurations, so that one comprehends and tends to them as one would do with a garden: spot initiatives, stay close to the ground, prepare the ground for a better growth, choose the best orientation, prepare the blooming. In this sense, management is an outdoor art that tolerates complexity and mishaps. “The furrow is not a straight line, it often consists of twists, hesitations or even failures in acclimatisation.”³⁷

We also follow on from physician and philosopher Georges Canguilhem,³⁸ for whom health is related to the establishment of a normativity at work. This perspective, initially focused on human organs and bodies, can be usefully broadened to every collective that claims to be actively gathered and gathering, through a deontic activity of definition-revitalisation of norms. Discernment, in(ter)dependence and a critical mind are a few qualities that enable one to establish a relationship or on the contrary, to end it for lack of a common normativity, or because of powers overriding the act of deliberating and choosing. Normativity is a day-to-day process of integration and integrity, both of which potentially come undone.³⁹

36 Mary Parker Follett, *Creative Experience*, Longmans, Green, 1924.

37 Emmanuel Groutel, “Mary Parker Follett. La facette méconnue du management jardiné,” *Revue française de gestion*, vol. 2, no. 239, 2014, p. 22.

38 Georges Canguilhem, “Milieu et normes de l’homme au travail,” *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie*, vol. III, 1947, p. 120-136.

39 Christine Bouissou, “L’accès à l’âge adulte à travers une expérience préprofessionnelle,” *Revue 3D (Agefa PME)*, no. 7, 2015, p. 80-93.

Alterations

The feminist work has long demanded that one finds a specific place of performance for our ways of being in the world, of using it and representing alternative relations, of speaking and writing it. Virginia Woolf⁴⁰ advocated the creation of a society founded on the various cultural habitus of women, who are regarded as outsiders and “valued” as such. This society can only be achieved through an alternative education, capable of forging “this weapon of independent opinion” that is necessary to obtain equal rights and professional integration, not to reproduce it, but to change it from within by means of a different and independent female culture. Inheriting a knowledge structured by men does not prevent one from using it and developing a new sagacity for the greater good, in order to take a close look at the origin of social organisations and their mutations, to examine public policies with equanimity and mediate them, by developing the ability to distinguish between reality and virtuality. This approach is at odds with the overlooking expert position and strives to modify the atmosphere: one of the greatest powers involved in this struggle.

Feminism is “essentially a revolution of the symbolic field,”⁴¹ promoting something else than pathos, even if suffering is part of this quest. It is a matter of changing the symbolic system as well as the living and working atmospheres for other uses, of finding linguistic and representative contexts facilitating mediations and subjective rights: “What women will always need is mediations and detachment.”⁴² Changing the cultural atmosphere amounts to shifting the issues and “refusing to fuel the alienating discourse on women or the illusion of egalitarianism.”⁴³ As well, by recognising the importance of symbolism, we can delve into these issues and turn them into knowledge and social skills, pay attention to qualitative differences, contribute to the heightening of subjectivity. “It is about acquiring something more but also about being able to do something less, such as getting rid of one’s fears and others’ fantasies, freeing oneself from useless knowledge, duties or goods.”⁴⁴ The function of sisterhood, of reciprocal mothering, of *affidamento* (a relation of trust, mutual assistance, co-construction) in groups of women is essential: it is a choice mode of communication, confrontation and work, to create perceptible representations of ourselves, without worrying about their immediate and direct recognition. “Since 1973, in the wake of May 68, and at the same time as the rise of the women’s movement, the exemplarily transgressive line of thought has gone on: the analytical discourse has established links with politics, the female imagination has found an open space, the thinkers have strived to release the texts that have filled the West since Ancient Greece.”⁴⁵ Julia Kristeva considers that this commitment to re-mediate can also be explained by the fact that “like in many other fields [besides psychoanalysis], the time of geniuses and great systems

40 Virginia Woolf, *Trois guinées* [1938], Paris, Blackjack/Les Presses du réel, 2012.

41 Luisa Muraro, “En écoutant Françoise Collin: le prix payé et à payer pour l’exclusion des femmes,” Christiane Veauvy and Mireille Azzoug (eds.), *Femmes, genres, féminismes en Méditerranée*, Saint-Denis, Bouchène, 2014, p. 241.

42 Luce Irigaray, *J’aime à toi*, Paris, Grasset, 1992, p. 17.

43 Luce Irigaray, *Je tu nous, pour une culture de la différence*, Paris, Grasset, 1990, p. 138.

44 Luce Irigaray, *Je tu nous, pour une culture de la différence*, Paris, Grasset, 1990, p. 132.

45 Luce Irigaray, *Corps à corps avec la mère*, Montréal, Pleine Lune, 1991, p. 40.

has been replaced by adventure and personal risks, as well as interlaced networking.”⁴⁶

The themes of the authenticity of words, the exile and the native are thus interconnected. Because the word of truth consists in “speaking natively and naively,”⁴⁷ without relying on mastery, calculation or exposure; it is a matter of trying to prevent the power of norms and codes – to be understood as the simplified encoding of common meanings inducing reifications, controlled and stereotypical gestures - from replacing the power of words and thinking, which stand on the side of politics, of the city life, of the involving body.⁴⁸ In this sense, the reason for togetherness, defined by philosopher Joan Borrell as immanent, perceptible, shifting, non sovereign, deliberately exiled from the native soil, “a disrespectful challenging of the conceptual order,”⁴⁹ changes the relations between people and between people and their self, as soon as they allow themselves to venture their mind outside what’s common.

In this sense, the research work is likely to rekindle, to hear and to express what is silenced and forgotten, or even to produce, if the disappointed minds need healing, a “survival of the fireflies,” in the manner of Georges Didi-Huberman.⁵⁰

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